



Be Well, the Microsoft Way

Tech giant Microsoft has heavily invested in the cause of employee mental wellness, including the use of neuroscience to enable leaders to think agile, and Machine Learning for prioritizing expert counsellors' support. Read on to know more

RAPID ROUNDUP

- Registrations to MS Cares platform grew by nearly 30% in FY20 (over the previous year)
- Use of neuroscience and machine learning to anticipate and understand mental behaviours and tendencies, and help provide help early on
- 12-week paid pandemic school closure leave for parents with children under age 12

Microsoft Cares: Counselling support for employees and family members are offered under the employee assistance program, Microsoft Cares, which covers **personal and work issues, relationships, and parenting**. Some examples are counselling and support for stress management, emotional and behavioural support for individuals and families and grief counselling, support groups, and referral resources.

Microsoft Rethink: Provides support to Microsoft employees with children with learning or behaviour challenges, or developmental disabilities., Under the program employees have access to materials developed by behavioral experts to help parents and guardians teach children new skills, address behavioral and learning challenges and collaborate with teachers.

BeWell: Microsoft recently launched a new wellness platform called “BeWell” with the aim of elevating the employee experience around health and wellness. The platform brings together employee well-being (both physical and mental), engagement, inclusion, gamification and communications solutions in a single platform.

Ally Bench: The company launched the “Ally Bench” program with an objective to build allyship on mental health, creating a safe space for inclusive sharing in small, trusted groups. These meetings were facilitated by the inhouse employee assistance program, counsellors and leaders.

Best of Mental Health Repository: To help employees better manage the stress and anxiety they might be experiencing during this time, Microsoft developed a new “Best Of Mental Health” page. The page on mental health resources contains a collection of the most viewed articles,

webinars, Ted Talks and trainings on a variety of topics related to mental health and well-being.

Pandemic School Closure Childcare Leave: The company offers paid leave globally for employees who are taking responsibility for the childcare, supervision and educational duties of any child under the age of 12 (or over the age of 12 but has special circumstances or special needs).

ML for Prioritizing Expert Counsellors' Support: The company is working with **Talklife**, an online mental health community, to analyze how language can reveal more about the way people express and support each other. In collaboration with the National Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences (NIMHANS) India, Microsoft is building an app that can help people discover their distress and connect to mental health professionals for support.

Neuroscience For Reimagined Conversations: Over the last few years, Microsoft has been using neuroscience-based research to reimagine feedback conversations within the company. This can dramatically reduce the amount of stress associated with seeking and giving feedback to employees.

Change in Competitive Assessment Metrics: In 2013, Microsoft changed their Performance & Development Approach to move away from competitive ranking based evaluation, to focusing on an employee’s key individual accomplishments, his contribution to the success of others and results that build on collaboration.

