

# Case Study 1: Reigniting Creativity and Innovation

## The Challenge

Naresh, a talented 29-year-old professional found himself facing an all-too-common hurdle in his career journey: a creativity block. Fearing that transitioning to a new vertical would bring higher expectations and the need for innovative thinking, he felt stuck. He complained of constant fatigue and mental fog which was leaving him feeling creatively drained. He attributed it to post pandemic adjustment. Spending more time trying to find new ideas impacted his relationships on the personal front.

## Impact at the workplace

The spark of inspiration had dimmed, and he struggled to generate fresh ideas. Naresh yearned to rediscover his creative thinking abilities to make a meaningful contribution in his role.

## The Counsellor Intervention

Our dedicated therapist embarked on a transformative journey with Naresh, helping him embrace a holistic approach to regain his creative prowess. Naresh was guided to slow down, allowing himself the grace to recharge and accepting that not every day required groundbreaking innovation. The therapist introduced techniques from Arts and Expressive Therapy, encouraging Naresh to tap into his creative wellspring and equipped him with techniques like journaling that helped clear his mind and liberated his thoughts. Furthermore, Naresh envisioned success and transformed his work desk into an inspiring haven of daily motivation. These seemingly small changes ignited his creative thinking once more. As he slowly rekindled his creativity, his personal life benefited as well.

# Case Study 1: Reigniting Creativity and Innovation

## Why these matters for the People Function

Imagine the implications of such a situation in your organization: stagnant progress, diminished enthusiasm, and the potential for valuable talent to burn out. This case illustrates the profound impact of personal development on professional contributions and by nurturing creativity, organizations can foster innovation that drives growth and competitiveness.

## *Related studies*

*A recent study by Indeed found that employee burnout has worsened over the last few years, more than half (52%) respondents felt burnt out, and more than two thirds (67%) believed the feeling has worsened post pandemic. WHO lists three main symptoms – feelings of exhaustion, mental distancing from one’s job and reduced professional productivity. Employees across ages and demographics are experiencing fatigue and mental health challenges. Burnout can impact critical areas like innovation, productivity, and retention.*

*(Source: Employee Burnout Report: COVID 19 Impact, WHO News – Burnout, an occupational phenomenon)*

## Case Study 2: Cultivating healthy coping mechanisms.

### The Challenge

Sarah, a dynamic 26-year-old professional who, until recently, found herself teetering on the brink of personal and professional turmoil. Burdened by an overwhelming personal life marred by stress and disheartening relationships, she sought solace in excessive smoking. She was struggling, feeling low and frustrated.

### Impact at the workplace

This unhealthy coping mechanism was pushing her to the edge, threatening to unravel her promising career where she was known to confidently take sound well-informed decisions which added value to the organization.

### The Counsellor Intervention

Our seasoned therapist created a safe space for Sarah, helping her uncover the hidden stressors and beliefs that had shackled her to this self-destructive cycle. Through personalized strategies for smoking cessation and mindfulness, Sarah identified the triggers that led her to smoke excessively - self-doubt and loneliness - and learned to channel her work-driven determination into her personal life. Mindful breathing became her weapon against cravings, reducing her reliance on unhealthy coping over a few months. What's more, Sarah's newfound self-awareness permeated her professional life. With enhanced communication skills and a newfound emotional balance, she not only regained her assertiveness and decision-making prowess but exceeded her previous performance levels.

## Case Study 2: Cultivating healthy coping mechanisms.

### Why these matters for the People Function

Imagine the concerns such a scenario could pose within your organization: declining performance, eroding assertiveness, and wavering decision-making prowess. This case illustrates the powerful synergy between personal well-being and professional success: healthier, happier employees are more engaged and committed. By investing in employee well-being, organizations can expect reduced absenteeism and higher retention rates.

### *Related studies*

*Smoking is a common modern day coping mechanism to manage stress, anxiety, and other mental health conditions. Longer or more frequent smoking breaks result in reduced work performance, less productivity, and more absenteeism. Smoking also affects cognitive abilities like decision making and problem solving. A recent study indicates that (24%) Indians are struggling with stress, women are more stressed than men, stress levels have increased from (25%) to (27%) among women and (14%) are stressed due to relationship troubles. According to the study, current times are creating unprecedented stress in a rapidly changing world, high stress levels can be controlled with appropriate changes in lifestyle, diet and sleep. Stress and mental health are integral to physical well-being and overall quality of life, and stress needs to be addressed with a healthy and wholesome lifestyle.*

*(Source: GOQii's Annual India fit Report 2022-23)*

## Case Study 3: Transforming emotional turmoil into workplace harmony

### The Challenge

Rakesh, a 25-year-old professional was grappling with an overwhelming challenge -an unrelenting barrage of work deadlines that triggered anxiety and palpitations. A diagnosis of Generalized Anxiety Disorder compounded the situation. Fearing the impact on his well-being, the client sought counseling. The emotional turmoil raised concerns about his overall health and its potential repercussions for the organization.

### Impact at the workplace

The client grappled with more than just anxiety; he carried the weight of self-imposed perfectionism. The belief that asking for assistance or time off would be interpreted as a lack of confidence in his abilities haunted him. This relentless pursuit of perfection extended to his interactions with colleagues, leading to daily friction and emotional turbulence in the workplace.

### The Counsellor Solution

Our therapist skillfully uncovered the origins of his behavior by enhancing self-awareness - an upbringing marked by an unyielding demand for perfection. From childhood, he had been conditioned to achieve perfection at all costs, where anything less was deemed a failure. While this trait had propelled him to early career success, it now threatened to pull him down. The therapist empowered him with breathing and relaxation techniques to mitigate the physical symptoms of anxiety. Recognizing the connection between physical and emotional well-being, the client initiated a regular exercise regimen, working out two to three times a week. Through Cognitive Behavior Therapy techniques, he learned to dissect his beliefs and cultivate realistic expectations for himself and others. This process helped him confront his inner critic and embrace the courage to seek assistance when needed. Over time, the client learnt to manage his anxiety symptoms and regain control over his emotions. The workplace, once a battleground of emotional turmoil, began to transform into a space of harmony and collaboration.

## Case Study 3: Transforming emotional turmoil into workplace harmony

### Why these matters for the People Function

Imagine the implications of such a situation: derailed targets, strained workplace relationships, and a climate of emotional turbulence. This case study highlights the important link between self-awareness, self-regulation and social skills with team play at the workplace. By helping employees alleviate emotional turmoil in the workplace, organizations can cultivate emotionally balanced and collaborative teams, poised for success.

### *Related studies*

*Research indicates that emotional intelligence abilities (well-being, emotionality, self-control) are on the decline. The biggest of this self-regulation meant that individuals are more prone to rage, panic, and anxiety now than in the past years - this can have serious impact on how individuals show up at work. Another study found that emotional intelligence abilities declined globally by (3.4%) over the last two decades, corroborated by findings that 40% of leaders had severe gaps in their Emotional Intelligence. Studies indicate that (42.5%) of corporate employees suffer from Generalized Anxiety Disorder or depression and (40%) of India Inc is showing high levels of distress, anxiety, and depression. Emotional Intelligence is a complex construct characterized by well-being, self-control, emotionality, and sociability and associated with better team performance, better relationships, and better health outcomes. Also, the strongest predictor of performance (58%), it is the most in-demand skill at the workplace. Emotional regulation can reduce the impact of stress at the workplace, augment resilience and help in carrying out work responsibilities more effectively. Self-awareness is imperative to better emotional intelligence and lack of it can make regulation difficult.*

(Source: 2021 Study by Khan et al, Journal of Personality, State of Heart Survey by Joshua Freedman, ESCI by Korn Ferry Institute, TalentSmartEQ, WEF, Assocham, McKinsey Global Survey)

## Case Study 4: Triumph over urban loneliness and adjustment challenges

### The Challenge

Maya, a 23-year-old newcomer to a bustling city, was trying to cope with the daunting task of adjusting to unfamiliar surroundings. As she tried to settle in, her colleagues, while cordial at work, rarely included her in their after-hours plans. Her roommates reveled in partying, a costly endeavor she wished to avoid due to high financial responsibilities stemming from a debt situation back home. She bore the weight of this financial burden silently, reluctant to share her struggles with her family and upset them. Loneliness took a toll, manifesting in episodes of crying spells and panic attacks. Her evenings after work were all about doom scrolling on her social media accounts. A senior colleague initiated a check-in conversation, and Maya gathered courage to share some of her concerns. The colleague shed light on navigating the dynamics of building peer relationships - a process of trial and error that required time and patience and guided her to the service.

### Impact at the workplace

Maya's dilemma encroached on her professional life. Overthinking and tearful episodes eroded her ability to make sound decisions and concentrate on her work tasks. She felt dreadful, increasingly isolated from her peers and harbored fears of workplace mishaps. She was apprehensive that her inability to form friendships would negatively affect her job performance loomed large.

## Case Study 4: Triumph over urban loneliness and adjustment challenges

### The Counsellor Solution

The therapy space offered Maya refuge in an unfamiliar city, a safe haven where she could share her struggles. Through therapy, she found an outlet for her thoughts and feelings and began to realize that her anxieties were often magnified in her mind compared to the reality of her situation. The therapist encouraged her to explore possibilities for maintaining connections with her family and friends, prompting her to schedule weekly times for these meaningful connections. This practice served as a mirror for self-discovery and need to nurture her sense of self. During this process, Maya also acknowledged the need for financial planning to address her money-related insecurities. Over time, Maya learnt to find comfort in her own company. She embarked on solo adventures, explored nearby malls, and even enrolled in a hobby class, cultivating new friendships along the way. Her participation in community sports events further bolstered her sense of belonging. The open conversation with her senior colleague catalyzed trust, safety, and reassurance in her new workplace.

### Why these matters for the People Function

Imagine the implications of such a situation: increased health risks such as depression, anxiety, and cardiovascular disease and at the workplace disengagement, reduced job satisfaction and broken sense of belonging. This case illuminates the importance of strong social connections and open conversations at the workplace, which can enhance inclusiveness, sense of belonging and improved well-being. Additionally signposting employees to services can help.

## Case Study 4: Triumph over urban loneliness and adjustment challenges

### *Related studies*

*Loneliness is a growing health epidemic in our technologically advanced age and is linked to a reduction in lifespan, similar to that caused by smoking 15 cigarettes a day. People spend more time at work than in any other domain of life, workplace loneliness can have a negative impact on performance. Jenkins pointed out in a webinar that loneliness makes employees 7 times more likely to be disengaged at work. Modern day workplaces offer flexibility, however opportunities for meaningful connection have reduced - employees feel they cannot bring their authentic selves to work as nobody knows them as a person. Loneliness can lead to chronic stress and is said to be the key cause of workplace challenges like quiet quitting, great resignation, and employee burnout. Studies indicate that globally (50%) adults feel lonely, (79%) of Gen Zs feel lonely. In today's digital age, where social media has become ubiquitous, (71%) of heavy social media users (particularly for maintaining relationships) report feeling lonely. On the other hand, a survey highlights the importance of open conversations and psychological safety at the workplace where with personal openness, honest feedback and mutual respect, employees are (80%) more likely to report high emotional well-being. This leads to the development of a supportive work culture that fosters a sense of belonging and acknowledges mental health as a crucial aspect of overall well-being. Sense of belonging at work makes employees motivated, engaged and 3.5 times more likely to contribute to their fullest potential.*

*(Source: HBR, Social relationships and mortality risk – A meta-analytic review, Research on Workplace Loneliness by Ryan Jenkins, Cigna 2020 Loneliness Index, Center for Talent Innovation, Forbes, Atlassian)*