
ERA policy paper on mental health and wellbeing

ERA - LGBTI Equal Rights Association for Western Balkans and Turkey mental health and wellbeing issues policy outlines our willingness to prevent, address and support mental health and wellbeing among our employees as well as our member organisation activists and LGBTI+ community. For ERA, it is of great importance to ensure the wellbeing of its members, especially in a society that discriminates and it is hostile against LGBTI+ individuals, as some of our member organisation activists and LGBTI+ community members are dealing with mental health challenges and/or trauma. We want to help our members to heal and to recover. With this policy, ERA aims to support our member organisation activists and LGBTI+ community as well as employees and to create a healthy and happy events and workplace. We want everyone to feel appreciated and be treated fairly.

Mental health and wellbeing issues in the workplace and events are any conditions that affect employees' and/or our member organisation activists and LGBTI+ community state of mind. These conditions may include mild depression, stress and severe anxiety which may result in burnout and nervous breakdowns, employees also may experience mental health issues for various reasons that an employer cannot control such as hereditary, family conflicts, general health, etc. To every extent possible, ERA leaders and whole team aim to recognize and address cases of workplace pressures (compensation, job insecurity and work-life balance) that can contribute to mental health and wellbeing issues. In order to recognise ERA leaders and whole team will treat any mental health and wellbeing issues seriously, identify possible issues proactively and resolve them, support employees and/or member organisation activists and LGBTI+ community members who face mental health and wellbeing issues, and will strive to create pleasant workplaces and events.

As a way to prevent any form of distress, ERA will not tolerate any form of discrimination, retaliation, violence and will strive to secure mediation in conflict situations, to have open channels for communication, for the employees' and for the member organisation activists and/or LGBTI+ community members. ERA's HR procedures will be including the support for the employees' in terms of work from home and or flexible hours, short-term disability leave and well as mandatory sabbatical leave for long time employees. All of these mechanisms aim to preserve a harmonious workplace atmosphere where employees can enjoy and balance their work with their personal lives and this list is not exhaustive and can be adjusted as the need for specific situation arises.

ERA will provide to its employees a health care insurance package that covers mental health issues (treatment, counselling) and employees may reach out to any mental health professional when they are in need of counselling. Anything they share with this person will remain confidential. In cases of specific need from member organisation activists and/or LGBTI+ community ERA leaders and whole team will engage the services of a mental health professional (e.g. psychologist) who will visit our offices and provide support that is needed. ERA will provide to its employees wellbeing package that will consist of providing physical, social, emotional and spiritual space and benefits for employees (first aid training, fitness passes, prevention of burnout consultations, organising wellbeing weekends, providing silent spaces, etc.).

In order to raise mental health and wellbeing awareness and combat the stigmas associated with them ERA will have information session for employees, compile helpful resources and publish them on social media, and will provide sensitised Mental health and wellbeing professional if the need arises.