

Abstract Title:

How Can Industrial Psychologists Collaborate with Other Psychology Disciplines to Future-Proof Mental Health in the Workplace? Navigating Psychopathology and Ethics for the Greater Good

Introduction/Rationale

The world of work is rapidly evolving due to technological advancements, shifting employee expectations, and a growing emphasis on mental health and well-being (Moralo & Graupner,2022). In South Africa, these global trends intersect with unique local challenges, such as high inequality, unemployment, and historical trauma, contributing to a higher prevalence of psychopathology, including mood disorders, anxiety disorders, and personality disorders among employees (Harriman et al.,2022). These conditions affect individual well-being and present significant ethical and organizational challenges (Moralo & Graupner,2022; Kock et al.,2025).

Industrial psychologists, alongside counselling and clinical psychologists, play a pivotal role in addressing workplace mental health (Kock et al.,2025). However, industrial psychologists have historically hesitated to engage in counselling roles, despite it being within their scope of practice as defined by the Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA) in 2019 to conduct short-term counselling, including crisis, post-trauma and occupational stress related counselling (Kock et al.,2025). This reluctance highlights the need for greater collaboration between psychology disciplines to develop holistic, sustainable solutions for workplace mental health and reskilling IOPs to successfully handle workplace mental health issues and answer organisations wellbeing concerns (Kock et al.,2025).

Panel Discussion Outline

This 60-minute session explores how industrial psychologists can collaborate with counselling psychologists, clinical psychologists, and other professionals to address psychopathology in the workplace. The discussion will include:

1. Introduction (5 mins): Context and purpose of the discussion.
2. Panel Insights (30 mins): Each panelist shares experiences and approaches to psychopathology, ethics, and future-proofing mental health in organizations.
3. Q&A (20 mins): Open-ended questions to stimulate dialogue with the audience.
4. Closing Remarks (5 mins): Summary and key takeaways.

Discussion Questions

1. How does psychopathology manifest in the workplace, and what are your experiences in addressing it?
2. What ethical dilemmas arise when managing employees with psychopathological conditions?
3. How can organizations create fair, non-discriminatory, and supportive policies for employees with mental health conditions?
4. How can emerging technologies, such as AI and digital tools, be leveraged to address workplace psychopathology?
5. How can industrial psychologists collaborate more effectively with other psychology disciplines to address psychopathology in the workplace?

Conclusion

This discussion highlights the increasing prevalence of psychopathology in the workplace and underscores the importance of interdisciplinary collaboration. By integrating the expertise of industrial, counselling, and clinical psychologists, professionals can create ethical, culturally sensitive, and sustainable mental health strategies. Such collaboration not only improves employee well-being but also strengthens organizational resilience, fostering a culture of care and support in an era of rapid change.

Value

The panel provides practical tools for addressing workplace mental health, resolving ethical dilemmas, and leveraging interdisciplinary approaches. It underscores the potential of collaboration to improve employee outcomes, boost productivity, and reduce absenteeism, ultimately creating healthier, more resilient workplaces.

References

Harriman, N. W., Williams, D. R., Morgan, J. W., Sewpaul, R., Manyapelo, T., Sifunda, S., & Reddy, S. P. (2022). Racial disparities in psychological distress in post-apartheid South Africa: results from the SANHANES-1 survey. *Social psychiatry and psychiatric epidemiology*, 1-15.

Kock, R., Graupner, L. I., & Baloyi, S. (2025). Cultivating a culture of mental health in organisations: Reading the room. *SA Journal of Industrial Psychology*, 51, 2233.

Moralo, T. S., & Graupner, L. I. (2022). An industrial psychology perspective of workplace counselling in the changing world of work. *SA Journal of Industrial Psychology*, 48, 1988.