

Transcript

Volker Patent:

Hello and welcome. My name is Volker Patent, and I'm a lecturer at The Open University. I'm here to welcome you to a new Applying Psychology at Work Hub. This is a new resource developed by my colleagues and myself in response to the pandemic.

In August, last year, we collected some data from businesses in the UK, and we identified gaps in the capabilities of organizations in addressing psychological impacts of COVID. Isolation while people are working from home, the impact of a lack of face-to-face, anxiety, trust in the workplace and uncertainty, managing well-being and mental health are just some of the things our research highlighted as areas in which businesses need help.

We found that around 33% of businesses reported gaps in addressing many of the issues. Small- to medium-sized businesses had bigger gaps than larger companies, but quite often did not have the resources to address them. Some of the challenges faced by businesses were in having to adapt rapidly using digital skills which, in many cases, helped businesses to be flexible and continue to thrive even during the pandemic.

We found the bigger the gaps in addressing the digital aspects and other issues faced by people, the more negative the overall impact of COVID, including being able to retain employees. Thus, not being able to address the psychological dimensions has a direct impact on business performance, as well as the impact of staff being made redundant or other adverse effects on them.

So to address these gaps, we spent the last 10 months working to build the Applying Psychology at Work Hub-- curating content, writing new material, and developing ideas for resources. We're now really proud to officially launch our new hub.

The pandemic will eventually be managed, and working lives reach some sort of new normal. However, the issues that the pandemic has highlighted will not disappear. They'll be present, and unless acted on, create weaknesses in flexibility and business resilience when future disruptions impact.

While nobody wishes for this to happen, future pandemics are a growing threat, in part caused by population growth and environmental destruction and climate change. It is for this reason that our hub is not simply a COVID resource but pursues a bigger aim of improving psychological literacy in the workplace and beyond, aspiring to engage employees at all levels of developing healthier, more productive, resilient, and sustainable workplaces.

Our plans are to build on this hub with more articles in the future, possible collaborations with industry partners, and reporting on research in this area. Please get in touch if anything you see sparks your interest and you have some feedback for us, or you want to look for a way of working with us. We hope you're as excited as we are with the launch of our hub, and hope you enjoy browsing the content, and find something useful for you or your business.