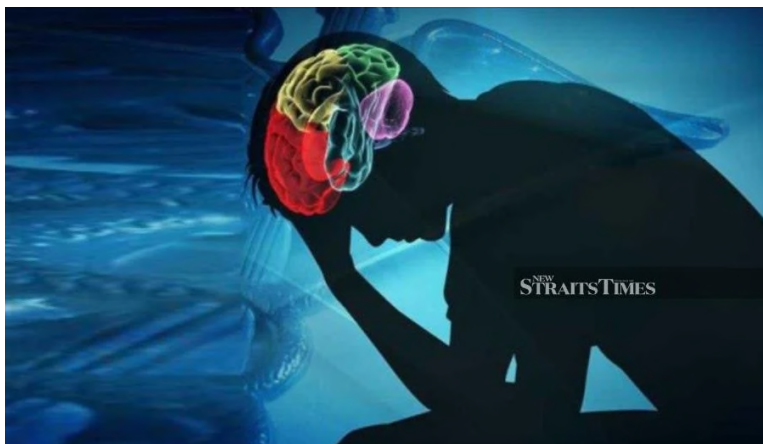


## MEF urges prioritising mental health problems at work to ensure productive workforce

By [Dania Nabila](#) - September 17, 2022 @ 4:14pm



The Malaysian Employers Federation (MEF) has urged stakeholders to prioritise mental health problems at work in efforts to sustain a highly productive workforce. - NSTP file pic

PETALING JAYA: The Malaysian Employers Federation (MEF) has urged stakeholders to prioritise mental health problems at work in efforts to sustain a highly productive workforce.

Its president Datuk Dr Syed Hussain Syed Husman said unless handled with care, employees may even attempt suicide as a result of inadequate management of mental health.

"In total, 1,142 suicides were reported in Malaysia in 2021, and the rate of increase has been terrifying over time," he said in a statement.

MEF said in 2015, one in three Malaysians has mental health issues, with the highest proportion among those between the ages of 16 and 19, according to the National Health and Morbidity Survey (NHMS) survey by the Health Ministry.

"It was upsetting to see that those who attempted suicide may get a fine or a jail sentence rather than receiving mental health assistance.

"Therefore, to avoid risking productivity of the entire workplace, workplaces need to take action about the issue," he said.

In a workshop on "Behaviour and Mental Health in Organisation" organised by the University of Malaya in the past, he said mental health concerns were least discussed by the Safety and Health Officers (SHO).

"The problem is not addressed in depth in the OSH (Occupational Safety and Health) Act 1994 or in their training, which leads to employees' lack of awareness of mental health.

"I suppose the OSH and the Safety and Health Committees should be more concerned with the mental health of the employees by detecting issues at work and taking steps to enhance their mental health.

"Also, engage with employers to alter the environment and let individuals with mental health issues continue to work rather than being sent home.

"A healthy work force is a highly productive workforce," he said.