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## Toxic workplaces kill talent - expert

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It is important for one to understand one's stress triggers in order to become the best version of oneself in the workplace.

This is the advice of Dr Layani Makwinja who specialises in Human Development and Educational Psychology.

When one knows what triggers one's stresses, one is able to manage it so that one becomes the best version of oneself on a daily basis. Stress in the workplace can lead to an employee failing to deliver at work and this is how talent gets killed but if managed well, there can be reduced workplace conflicts, improved health and wellbeing, as well as better employee engagement and retention. Makwinja observes that a toxic work environment leads to some employees getting stressed and depressed. "So as workmates, always strive for a conducive working environment which is healthy for all and where people are able to freely express themselves," Makwinja says. Workplace toxicity spreads at a fast pace when colleagues are not willing to put an end to it. When one colleague badmouths the other or abuses them and the other encourages it or does not speak out against it, they are equally toxic.

And this is how the workplace turns sour, with backstabbing and office gossip taking centre-stage. Some employees, she says, can get stressed without even realising it, and there are issues that can keep one awake at night.

"I recommend that people should see therapists, even if it is once in a year. Go out and talk about it. One can be stressed without noticing because stress affects individuals differently," she says.

She adds that stress also comes from within. Many get stressed because they feel that they are lacking. They compare themselves to others - what they want and their achievements.

"Do not compare yourself to anyone, let everything be about you, decide what you allow and block out of your mind. Effective stress management techniques include being mindful and relaxing, managing your time well, exercising and eating well, positive thinking and resilience," Makwinja says.