

# The Cost of Keeping Systems Running: The Human Side of IT & GCC

## Summary

IT and GCC teams run at full pace most days. Global handovers, late calls, early mornings, and constant delivery have become routine. Over time, the pressure doesn't switch off. Boundaries blur, roles change quickly, and people are expected to keep up without slowing down.

This case study looks at how these realities began to show up across IT and GCC environments, and how organisations worked with 1to1help to respond. It follows the shift from ad-hoc support to a more embedded approach to emotional wellbeing, designed to fit how people actually work and sustain performance over time.

## Inside India's IT and GCC Work Environment

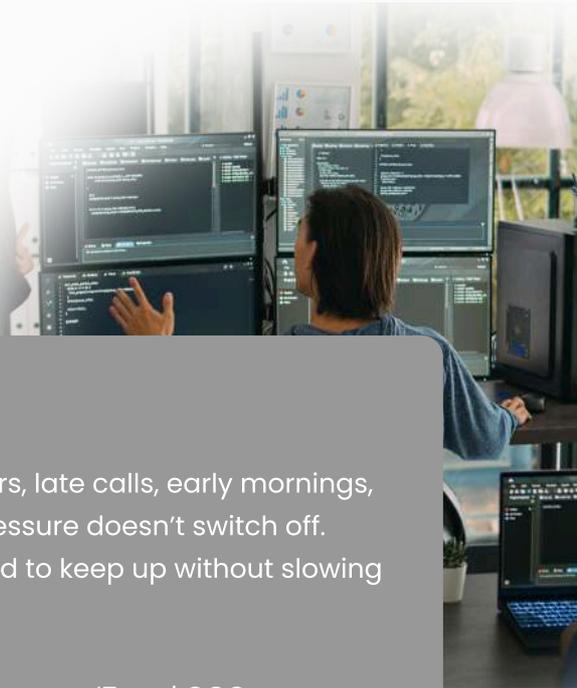
India's IT and Global Capability Centre ecosystem sits at the core of the global digital economy. From software engineering and analytics to finance, customer experience, and emerging technologies, delivery centres in India support some of the world's most complex and time-critical work.

What began as cost-led outsourcing has shifted. Today, IT services firms and GCCs function as strategic hubs. They own products, run platforms, manage transformation programs, and keep global operations moving day after day. This work runs at scale and without pause.

Most IT and GCC environments are shaped by:

- Large, layered organisations with thousands of employees
- Globally distributed teams working across time zones
- Multiple stakeholders with competing priorities
- Fast technology cycles and constant upskilling
- Growing integration of AI and automation, reshaping roles, expectations, and job security
- High expectations for speed, accuracy, and reliability

The result is a work environment where delivery is continuous and margins for error are thin.



At the centre of this system are people. Early-career professionals taking on responsibility quickly. Managers leading teams while navigating client pressure. Senior leaders balancing delivery, growth, and change. Their performance sustains:

- Client relationships and trust
- Innovation and problem-solving
- Knowledge continuity and leadership pipelines
- Organisational stability during transitions

As IT and GCC organisations mature, it has become clear that performance is no longer driven by systems alone. It is shaped by how people experience work, handle pressure, and sustain themselves over time.

This operating reality sets the context for the challenges that follow.

## The Hidden Cost of Continuous Delivery

On the surface, IT and GCC organisations perform exactly as designed. Teams deliver across time zones, manage global stakeholders, and meet demanding expectations for speed, accuracy, and reliability. Output is visible. Performance is tracked. Delivery continues.

What is less visible is the cost of sustaining this pace, quarter after quarter.

### 1. A culture where pressure compounds

Across IT and GCC environments, employees operate in conditions shaped by:

- Tight, client-driven deadlines with limited recovery time between projects
- Extended working hours aligned to global delivery cycles
- Ongoing restructuring, role changes, and shifting priorities

Over time, being “always on” stops feeling temporary. Exhaustion becomes part of the background. Data shows that:



**83%** of Indian IT professionals report experiencing burnout



**25%** work more than 70 hours per week



**72%** regularly exceed the standard 48-hour workweek



**59%** of Indian employees report symptoms of workplace burnout

Burnout is no longer an exception. It has become a defining condition of high-performance IT and GCC work environments.

## 2. Global work stretches the workday

Distributed delivery models add another layer of strain. Employees routinely navigate:

- Early mornings or late nights to accommodate global calls
- Limited overlap hours that compress critical decisions
- Cultural differences in communication and expectations
- Pressure to remain responsive beyond standard working hours

What begins as flexibility gradually turns into an extended workday. Boundaries blur. Recovery time shrinks.

## 3. Career acceleration without a pause

Many employees are moving through critical career stages at speed:

- First-time managers leading former peers
- Individual contributors handling senior stakeholders early
- Mid-career professionals under constant pressure to upskill
- Leaders absorbing team stress alongside delivery accountability

These transitions carry unspoken questions around readiness, performance, and sustainability. Slowing down often feels risky.

## 4. Work pressure meets personal life

Alongside professional demands, employees are also managing:

- Young families or caregiving responsibilities
- Financial planning and long-term security concerns
- Health challenges and lifestyle strain
- Relationship and parenting pressures

The emotional load accumulates. What starts as manageable stress shifts into fatigue, disengagement, or burnout.

## 5. The measurable impact on health, productivity, and retention

The consequences are visible in workforce data:



**\$1 trillion** in global productivity is lost annually to depression and anxiety, projected to reach **\$16 trillion by 2030**



50% of lost workdays are linked to **stress, anxiety, and depression**



Workplace stress costs an estimated **\$200 billion per year** in absenteeism, turnover, and productivity loss

Health risks rise alongside work intensity:

- Long working hours increase stroke risk by 35%
- Risk of heart disease increases by 17%
- Chronic stress is linked to sleep disorders, fatigue, and metabolic risk

Pressure is also shaping workforce stability:

- Large numbers of technology professionals are expected to exit IT roles in the coming years
- Burnout and work-life strain are cited as key drivers of disengagement
- Emotional exhaustion is increasingly linked to reduced intent to stay

## 6. Sustained demand signals a structural shift

Support-seeking patterns reinforce this reality:

- Counselling utilisation increased 5X during Covid
- Usage in 2022 and 2023 remained over 30% higher than pre-Covid levels

## The core challenge

What IT and GCC organisations are facing is not episodic stress. It is a structural condition created by continuous delivery, global work patterns, and accelerating career demands.

Responding to this requires more than isolated initiatives. It calls for an integrated, organisation-level approach aligned to how people actually work, live, and sustain performance in global delivery environments.

## Designing Support for How IT and GCC Work

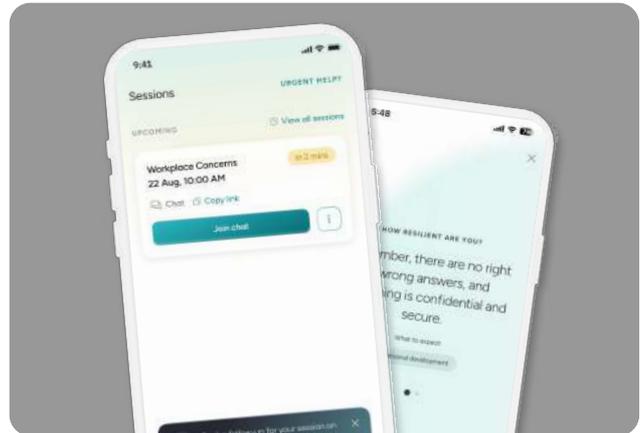
As pressures in IT and GCC environments became clearer, it was evident that isolated initiatives would not hold. Stress was not episodic or individual. It was built into delivery models, role expectations, and the way work accumulated over time.

At the same time, organisations recognised the performance and risk implications of emotional wellbeing. Industry evidence showed that every 1X invested in psychological support could return up to 6X through improved productivity, reduced attrition, and lower downstream health and performance costs.

Against this backdrop, ItoIhelp partnered with organisations to implement an integrated emotional wellness and psychological safety framework designed to operate at scale while staying human in delivery.

## 1. Always-on access aligned to real work patterns

Support was designed for global delivery realities. Employees could access counselling through telephonic, video, chat, and e-counselling modes, supported by 24x7 crisis care, local language options, and automated follow-ups to ensure continuity. Help was available when pressure showed up, not only during office hours.



## 2. Structured risk and incident management

To address periods of acute stress such as restructuring or critical incidents, structured protocols were embedded. These included critical incident stress debriefing, high-risk case monitoring, clear escalation pathways, and sustained follow-up beyond the immediate event.

## 3. Digital enablement for scale

A web and mobile platform enabled easy booking, self-guided resources, digital assessments, stress audits, and guided e-workshops. This allowed employees to engage at their own pace while giving organisations visibility into emerging patterns.

## 4. Collective learning and shared spaces

Group-based formats such as webinars, focused group sessions, Ask-an-Expert forums, and practical workshops helped normalise conversations and reduce isolation in high-pressure environments.

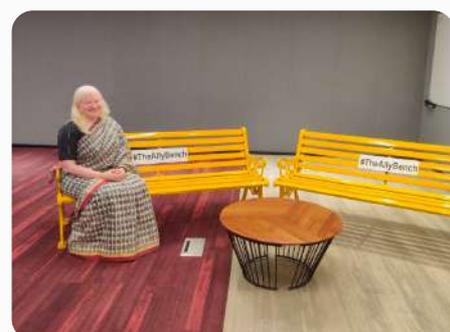
## 5. Managers as early responders

Managers were equipped through sensitisation programs, consultations, distress identification training, referral pathways, and guidance on empathetic leadership and crisis handling.

### Wellness Fair at Adobe



### Ally Bench Support at Microsoft



## 6. Embedding wellbeing into the organisation

Awareness campaigns, live sessions, confidentiality-led communication, HR enablement, governance, reporting, and continuous optimisation ensured emotional wellbeing became part of everyday organisational life rather than a parallel service.

### What Engagement Looked Like in Practice

Following the rollout of ItoIhelp's integrated wellbeing framework, organisations saw consistent engagement across employees, managers, and HR teams. The metrics reflected not just awareness, but growing trust in the program as a reliable support system.

#### Program reach and adoption

- ✓ **60% employee** registration, indicating strong visibility and access
- ✓ **20% to 35% platform engagement**, showing repeated use of digital resources
- ✓ **30% to 40% participation in group sessions**, reflecting comfort with shared learning

Emotional wellbeing moved from a peripheral benefit to a visible part of organisational life.

### 1. Sustained use of professional support

- **3% to 6% counselling utilisation**, strong for large-scale EAP programs
- Continued elevated usage over time, signalling relevance beyond crisis moments

### 2. Quality and early intervention

- **97%+ member satisfaction**, reinforcing confidence in care quality and confidentiality
- Earlier identification of distress
- Increased manager-led referrals
- More timely engagement during organisational change

### 3. Manager capability and cultural shift

- Managers showed greater confidence in recognising early signs, escalating concerns, and engaging support. Over time, stigma reduced, group participation increased, and help-seeking became part of everyday work conversations.

### Final Note

Over time, emotional wellbeing stopped being optional or peripheral. It became something employees turned to, managers relied on, and leaders stood behind to sustain performance in demanding, always-on IT and GCC environments.