



Workplace stress | Photo source Pixabay

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## CHATBOT AIMS TO REDUCE WORKPLACE STRESS

 WORK & LIFESTYLE

**A startup has devised a chatbot that uses machine learning and natural language matching to identify and reduce stress in the workplace.**

For many, life is becoming ever-more stressful. In response, more startups are focusing on ways to relieve this stress. We have already seen a [mobile meditation](#) studio and a [sensory pod](#) that uses biometrics to help users relax. Now, an Australian startup is using an AI chatbot to help address workplace stress. Entrepreneur Danielle Owen Whitford formerly ran her own consultancy to guide companies in addressing workplace stress. She saw first-hand how stress impacted both employees and employers. She has now come up with a way to scale up her approach to coping with workplace stress through using machine learning and natural language processing (NLP).

Whitford has founded [Pioneera](#), which uses a chatbot to help spot employees in need of stress reduction. The chatbot, which Whitford refers to as a ‘whingebot’ helps people to get things off their chest. While chatting, the bot also looks for language that indicates different types of stress, and then provides users with tailored tips and tools to address the issues they are facing. Whitford used her experience in corporate wellness to help train the bot in what to look for. She noticed that certain words and phrases can indicate high levels of stress or burnout. The more the users engages with the Pioneera platform, the more it learns, and the more tailored the responses.

Pioneera also provides regular updates to users to help them see how well they are succeeding at reducing their stress levels. Employers can also access an aggregate report, indicating the level of

wellbeing in their workforce. While individuals can't be identified, employers are able to see any themes and trends that may need action. When a trend towards stress is spotted, Pioneera can work with employers to help them take action. Pioneera is being developed with the help of the SheStarts program at accelerator [BlueChilli](#). Will an AI chatbot be as helpful as a human counsellor in reducing levels of stress?

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