



Mental Health in the Workplace

Petroleum Safety Conference 2018

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02 May 2018

Version for distribution



St. John Ambulance

SAVING LIVES
at work, home and play

Topics

- Definitions
- Stigma
- Signs and Symptoms of MH Problems
- Key messages to help in the Workplace
- Programs and Services Available
- Self-Care and Resiliency
- Questions

Why is it important to me?

Background in...

- Management and supervision
- Military background (peer support)
- Medical Background (paramedicine)
- Domestic Violence

- MY FAMILY!!!

Why Talk About Mental Health???

- 1 in 3 Canadians experience a Mental Health Issue in their lifetime
- Suicide is a leading cause of death
- 500,000 Canadians have missed work due to mental health issues or as a result of helping a family or friend this week

- Mental Health Issues affect us all!

Definition

- Psychological Health

- A state of well-being in which the individual realizes his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make contribution to his or her community.

Source: Assembling the Pieces, Guidebook, Canadian Standards Association

- Psychologically healthy and safe workplace

- A workplace that promotes workers' psychological well-being and actively works to prevent harm to worker psychological health due to negligent, reckless, or intentional acts.

Source: Guarding Minds @ work

Alberta Workplace Health & Safety

- The Workplace can be a source of psychological hazards
- Psychological hazards can impact physical and mental health
- Psychological hazards must be included in the hazard assessment process
- Worker training should include psychological hazards
- Reporting and investigation of all incidents involving potential psychological injury should be encouraged
- Focus on prevention by fostering a respectful workplace

Workplace

- 30% of disability Claims are due to MH Problems
- 21.4% are currently experiencing MH issues
- 500,000 people missed work each day
- Fewer than half receive treatment
- 23% won't talk about it...
- Increased cost of accidents, health, premiums, recruitment, workloads on others, etc. etc.

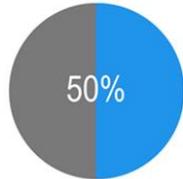
Stigma

- Stigma is real!
- Many people will not talk about mental illness
- Many supervisors avoid the topic of discussion



42%

Canadians are unsure about socializing with a friend with a mental illness



Would talk about a family member with a mental disorder.



Would talk about a family member with a mental disorder.

From 2008 National Report Card on Mental Health
the Canadian Medical Association



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Signs and Symptoms

Heart Problems, Aggression, conflicts, substance abuse, reduced adaptability, impaired learning and memory, increased passivity, infections, other injuries and illness, cancers, back pain, etc.

These are not specific to workplace!

Signs and Symptoms - Workplace

- Consistent late arrival or frequent absences
- Lack of cooperation or a general inability to work with others
- Decreased productivity
- Increased accidents or safety problems
- Frequent complaints of fatigue or unexplained pains
- Difficulty concentrating, making decisions or remembering things
- Making excuses for missed deadlines or poor work
- Decreased interest or involvement in one's work
- Working excessive overtime over a prolonged period
- Expressions of strange or grandiose ideas
- Displays of anger or blaming others

How you can help?

- Ensure safety & Decide how you can help
- Accept that you may not be the right person
- Listen to them – Literally, sit down and ZIP IT!
- Reassure them – Job Security, Office Talk
- Professional Help
- Supports
 - Family
 - Friends
 - Co-workers

Resources...

- Leave policy/Flex time
- Employee & Family Assistance Program
- AHS Crisis Help Lines (24/7)
 - Addictions - [1-866-332-2322](tel:1-866-332-2322)
 - Mental Health - [1-877-303-2642](tel:1-877-303-2642)
- MH System Navigation (211) – Not provincial
- Health Link (811)
- EMS & Police (911)



How to Come Back/Accommodate



Flex time

Return to work programs

Education amongst the office

Removal of Triggers

Efforts to decrease stress and psychological triggers

Discuss the return with the employee, **BREAK STIGMA!**

Self-care

- Know that you need to take time for you!
 - We come from a species that take time for themselves.
 - We are dealing with a lot of problems.
 - We see a lot of disturbing things.
 - People expect a lot from us.
 - We have a lot to do.
 - We are busy.

CCOHS Recommends...

Schedule me time daily
Reward yourself
Play to your strengths
Ask for an offer help
De-stress your diet
Press pause once in a while
Get regular physical activity
Set goals and stay on target
Practice relaxation techniques
Choose a positive attitude

So...

- You have the ability to help
 - Recognize any changes
 - In yourself and others
 - Act on it
 - Ask, with the intent to receive
 - Open the dialogue
 - Recognize if more help is needed
 - Get someone involved

In summation...

- Be Better!
- See Something?!
- Do Something!!!

And Remember...

- Stress Happens...

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May 2nd 2018

Recognize the Signs and Symptoms Specific to the Workplace

- Consistent late arrival or frequent absences
- Lack of cooperation or a general inability to work with others
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What Can You do in the Moment?

- Ensure safety and offer to help
- Listen to them, do not offer forced solutions
- Reassure them, job security and privacy
- Investigate supports
- Offer information on professional help

Professional Supports

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What about coming Back?

- Employer must meet employee's right for reasonable accommodation.
- What does the employee want others to know?
- Who should know about the return
- Use open communication to curb rumours
- Make environment welcoming and prevent office talk

May 2 - Mental Health in the Workplace - Kris Porlier

Follow-up Questions:

1. How do we balance the right to privacy and need for care?

Preservation of life always trumps privacy. I have no issues, ever, if I think that someone is having thoughts of either suicide or self-harm to do something about it. I think with many subjects that people broach these days, they are afraid of offending. Often times it is finding the right person to bring up the subject or doing it in the right way. In my experience, people do not get offended if they know that your questions are coming from a place of genuine concern. I would also suggest consulting a subject matter expert if there was any question on how to bring up a subject, or talk to Human Resources.

2. What are examples of “reasonable” accommodation?

A lot of different things could count. Altered hours of work, posting security, or increasing spending on security, education programs for people in the office, or even making the workplace more hospitable could even be considered accommodation. This could be simply adding comforts into the office, plants, different lighting, heck even an animal if your workplace allows it. It all depends what the reason was for the person being away and what might “trigger” the person or bring about stress. Once you know that, you can tackle accommodations.

3. We work in an industry where “macho” mentality prevails. What strategies do you have for encouraging people with this mentality to actually go to counselling?

So I guess on this one, counselling is not always for everyone. People may not need counselling either, there are a lot of different options for people out there when it comes to Mental Health. You need to find someone that the person in need of help trusts in order to have them admit that there might be an issue. I think that what you have to do when you are facing this mentality is to find a champion. Find someone who can break the stigma and open the dialogue as well. There isn't one thing that can cure a person, there shouldn't be an expectation that you will be able to say one thing to win someone over to the side of tolerance and acceptance.

In my experience, I have found that just comparing the brain to other organs and making the connection that sometimes the brain gets sick too. People often just haven't heard an analogy like this that can really make them think about mental health in a different light. People do not look down on someone who has something go wrong with their lungs, heart or pancreas, so why do we do it for the brain?