

Effectively Managing Stress and Mental Health in the Workplace

 PSHSA.ca



Mental Health Demographics?

34-million
(people in Canada 2011)



7-million
will experience a mental health issue

How Does Mental Health Affect the Workplace?



On any given week, at least 500,000 employed Canadians are unable to work due to mental illness."

Centre for Addiction and Mental Health



Perception vs. Reality



Number of executives who state that their company promotes a mentally healthy work environment



Number of employees who believe their company promotes a mentally healthy work environment

What is Getting Lost in Translation?

- Unable to recognize cues
- Lack of education/ training
- Limit on resources such as time and money
- Stigma
- Perception that EAP fixes everything
- Systemic communication tools not in place
- Lack of recognition as to the impact that workplace stressors have on the worker personally and collectively



What Role Does Stress Play?

- Fight or Flight response
- Good stress (moderate bouts of stress)
 - Productivity
 - Competition
 - Security
 - Health
- Bad stress



What Causes Stress at Work?

- Work load
- Long days
- Expectation to stay 'connected' after hours
- Social and professional interactions
- Culture or climate of the workplace
- Lack of knowledge or training



What Causes Stress at Work?

- Violence/ harassment
- Poor leadership
- Exposure to hazards
- Lack of support
- Poor change management
- Having a high degree of demand/ effort required at work with low control/ low reward



What Causes Personal Stress?



- Relationship difficulties
- Family issues
- Abuse in the home
- Health
- Financial situation
- Major life changes
- Pressure to 'stay connected' evenings and weekends

Stress Warning Signs and Symptoms



Cognitive Symptoms

- Memory problems
- Inability to concentrate
- Poor judgment
- Seeing only the negative
- Anxious or racing thoughts
- Constant worrying



Emotional Symptoms

- Moodiness
- Irritability or short temper
- Agitation, inability to relax
- Feeling overwhelmed
- Sense of loneliness and isolation
- Depression or general unhappiness

Stress Warning Signs and Symptoms



Physical Symptoms

- Aches and pains
- Diarrhea or constipation
- Nausea, dizziness
- Chest pain, rapid heartbeat
- Loss of sex drive
- Frequent colds
- Facial features- ashen, tired

Behavioral Symptoms

- Eating more or less
- Sleeping too much or too little
- Isolating yourself from others
- Procrastinating or neglecting responsibilities
- Using alcohol, cigarettes, or drugs to relax
- Nervous habits (e.g. nail biting, pacing)
- Snappy, short tempered, defensive

The Impact of Continuous Exposure to Stress



- Depression
- Anxiety
- PTSD
- Mood disorders
- Addiction
- Impact on physical health, for example-cardiovascular health or ulcers
- Headaches or stomach issues
- Changes in eating and sleeping patterns
- Lowered immunity
- Skin conditions- rashes



Impact on the Workplace

- Absenteeism
- Low productivity/ low quality
- Presenteeism
- Fatigue
- Greater susceptibility to illness and injury
- Changes in mood and/ or behavior
- Social withdrawal

So what is the COST?

At any one time 10% of employees are dealing with mental illness!



STRESS TO ILLNESS PHASES

Exposure to *Stressors* may affect a person by their:

- Combined effects
 - Personal response to stressors
 - Indirect or moderated links
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- This may occur in a non-linear manner
 - Effects may arise immediately, mid-term, or long-term
 - Stress processes and perception of stress need to be considered in designing interventions



STRESS TO ILLNESS PHASES



Strain = consequences of stress:

- Behavioral – alcohol/drug abuse
- Psychological – burnout
- Physical – cardiovascular, ulcers and pain
- Work-related – absenteeism, presenteeism



Moderators of Stress



- **Individual's characteristics** – coping styles, personality, self-esteem, Type A or B
- **Social relationships** – co-workers, bosses, clients, home-life
- **Environment – support from others**
 - Culture of the organization, trust, authority, discretion, control, climate
- **These moderators may magnify, reduce or enable strain**

Case Study - Fred

- Safety-sensitive, physical education teacher
- Suffering from depression for the past year after his marriage ended.
- Due to funding cut backs, Fred was assigned to teach grade 6 math, although he is not a math teacher
- Began suffering anxiety during the first semester due to feeling ill prepared to teach a subject for which he is not adequately trained. Feels that he has little to no control over the situation and his efforts have gone largely unrecognized by management

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Case Study- Fred

- Begins calling in sick and missing work at least 2-3 times per month. When at work, he engages in presenteeism, is very distracted and his mood has changed from his usual easy going self, to quiet, withdrawn and has begun to snap at his colleagues and the students.
- His colleagues are concerned. He has limited his social contact during breaks and has stopped attending the monthly social after work activity. He has become forgetful and often is not reliable to fulfill his duties around yard duty.
- He has started to drink during the week and often comes in to work hung over and not feeling well, sometimes smelling of alcohol.

Employer Response to Fred



- Immediate appointment to assess safety and stabilize

- Immediate EAP or substance abuse specialist

- Employer input to counsellor
 - Observations of behaviour
 - Performance
 - Previous assessments/testing
 - Any other pertinent work history

- Next steps- offer peer support during and post

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The Goal of Managing Mental Health?



- The goal of managing wellness and wellbeing in the workplace is to support physical, psychosocial and the mental health of workers
- Promotion and implementation of knowledge, and practices that are effective in improving the wellness
- Assessing the needs of workers and identifying necessary resources
- Ensure appropriate support mechanisms are in place to support workers in a variety of ways
- Recognizing that resources and support must be a systemic mechanism that supports workers any point of crisis

Wellness in the Workplace



How do you manage wellness in your workplace?

- Internal wellness programs
- Internal resources- on site counseling
- External resources- EAP, benefits
- Optional educational (lunch n' learn)
- Communication strategies
- Peer support and debriefing
- Multi tiered support



Managing Mental Health in the Workplace

CSA Z1003/BNQ 9700-803

PSYCHOLOGICAL HEALTH AND SAFETY IN THE
WORKPLACE



Overview of the Standard

Vision

A workplace that promotes workers' psychological well-being and allows no harm to worker mental health in negligent, reckless or intentional ways



How CSA Z1003 Addresses Workplace Factors That Impact Psychological Health

13 Workplace Factors

Organizational Culture	Psychological And Social Support	Clear Leadership & Expectations	Civility and Respect	Psychological Demands
Growth & Development	Recognition & Reward	Involvement & Influence	Workload Management	Engagement
	Balance	Psychological Protection	Protection of Physical Safety	

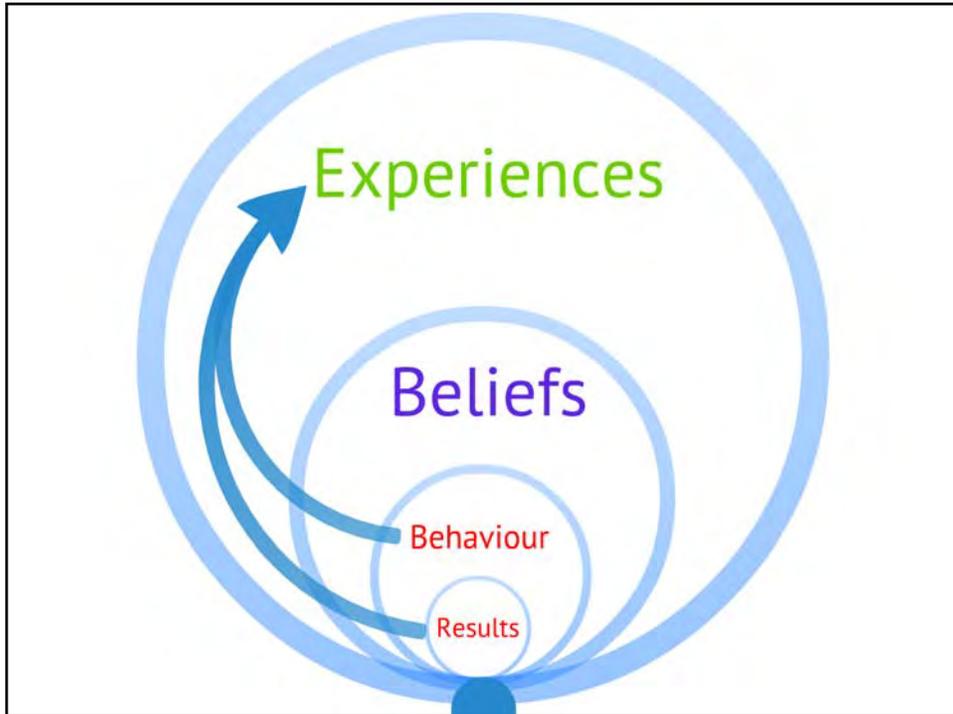
1. Organizational Culture is Psychologically Healthy and Safe



Is a mix of norms, values, beliefs, meanings and expectations that a community hold in common and use as behavioral and problem solving cues

A psychologically health and safe work culture is characterized by trust, honesty, respect, civility and fairness

Values psychological and social support, recognition and reward



Psychological and Social Support

Refers to the degree of social and emotional integration and trust among co-workers and supervisors. Considers the level of help and assistance provided by others when performing tasks.

Employees perceive their organization:

- Values their contributions
- Are committed to ensuring their psychological well-being and
- Provides meaningful supports if this well-being is compromised

Coworkers and supervisors

- Are supportive of employees' psychological and mental health concerns and
- Respond appropriately as needed

Psychological and Social Support

- Regular feedback and constructive coaching from senior leadership
- PD and learning opportunities- wellness training, educators mentor newer educators
- Peer counseling and debriefing
- Having 'wellness ambassadors' championing mental health
- Ensure that support mechanisms are properly communicated and offered as part of regular activities

Clear Leadership and Expectations



There is support that helps employees know:

- What they need to do
- How their work contributes to the organization

Leaders are transformational:

- Change agents who motivate to do more than what is expected
- Concerned with long-term objectives
- Transmit a sense of mission, vision and purpose
- Have charisma
- Give individualized consideration to their employees
- Stimulate intellectual capabilities in others, and inspire

Clear Leadership and Expectations



- Communicate deadlines and build in support, such as prep time for report cards, lesson plans, marking exams
- Regular discussions and review of organization goals and the impact individuals have on the overall group objectives
- Offer opportunities to contribute and offer suggestions, allow workers to feel heard
- Good change management
- Lead by example
- Wellness as a meeting agenda item at all meetings

Psychological Demands



Psychological demands are documented and assessed in conjunction with the physical demands of the job.

Assessments consider time stressors, breaks, incentive systems, job monotony and repetition and type of work

Employees possess:

- Technical skills and knowledge for their position and
- Psychological skills and emotional intelligence to do the job

Psychological Demands



- Ensure that workers are training for the specific tasks they are assigned
- Adequate staffing and support
- Ensure workers understand the specific challenges associated with the tasks at hand
- Ex. Special needs, violence, unpredictable behaviors, abuse in the home

Balance

Balance at work is the acceptance of the need for harmony between the demands of work, family, and personal life

- Everyone has multiple roles: e.g., worker, parent, partner, soccer coach
- Allows fulfillment of individual strengths and responsibilities
- Risk of conflicting responsibilities leading to conflict or overload

Balance

- Build flexibility into the workload
 - Buddy system
 - Flexible hours
 - Sick and lieu time
 - Learning and development opportunities
- Create a culture of supporting through positive and frequent communication
- Provide opportunities to debrief and discuss how to balance and manage the demands of life
- Lunch n' learns with guest speakers from various organizations

Psychological Protection



Work environment ensures that worker psychological safety is ensured and actively promotes emotional well being as well as minimizing threats to worker mental health

Workers feel able to:

- Ask questions
- Seek feedback
- Report mistakes and problems
- Propose a new idea
- Without fearing negative consequences to themselves, their job or their career

Psychological Protection



- Ensure mechanisms for support are in place and working together- school board, union, JHSC
- Create internal support networks- wellness committee
- Wellness as a standing meeting agenda item
- Employee surveys to determine what workers need and want as support

What Else Can You Do?

- Education and information actively available
- Consider the language you use
- Peer support
- Debriefing
- Diagnostic tools
- Internal resources and access to external resources
- Change the stigma/ change the culture
- **Open and honest communication**

Final Thoughts...

*Health is a shared responsibility.
The organization is not always part of the problem,
but it can always be part of the solution*

What about time spent at work?
2/3 of Canadians are at work 60 % of their time ...

Why wait to take action ?



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Thank you!

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