SAFETY, THE WORKPLACE AND MENTAL ILLNESS

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Work is at the very core of contemporary life for most people, providing financial security, personal identity, and an opportunity to make a meaningful contribution to community life.
THE VALUE OF EMPLOYMENT

- Time Structure / Regular Activity
- Social Contact
- Collective Effort and Purpose
- Social Identity
- Increased Financial Independence
- Skill Development
I can’t sleep
I am irritable
I feel depressed
My mind is racing
I can’t do my job
I can’t eat
I cry for no reason
I am scared
Life stinks
Nothing is fun anymore

More physical aches and pains
Exaggerated thinking
I can’t sit still
I don’t care
I can’t do anything right
No one loves me anymore
I feel on top of the world
I eat everything I can
I sleep all day
Nothing will ever be better
I can’t concentrate
- An estimated 49 million adults in the United States have a mental illness. This number represented 18.07% of U.S. adults.

- One out of every 5 families in the United States has a member with serious mental illness

- Nationally, 56.4% of adults with mental illness are not receiving treatment

- 70% of employed individuals are not receiving treatment
COMMON BARRIERS TO RECEIVING TREATMENT

- The individual does not believe they need treatment
- Social stigma / Discrimination
- Challenges maneuvering through the Mental Health System
- Limited Mental Health resources available in the community
- Treatment / Life Balance
- Cost of treatment
  - No insurance coverage
  - High deductibles
  - Co-pays
IMPACT OF UNTREATED MENTAL ILLNESS IN THE WORKPLACE

- Absenteeism
  - Frequent short periods of absence
  - Poor health
    - Mental
    - Physical
  - Burnout

- Presenteeism
  - Decreased productivity
  - Increased errors
  - Increased accidents
  - Poor decision making

- Employee attitude and behavior
  - Loss of motivation
  - Decreased commitment
  - Working longer hours with diminished returns
  - Higher turnover

- Relationships
  - Tension / conflict
  - Poor relationships with clients
  - Increased disciplinary
In U.S. 68 million more work days were missed due to depression alone.

Loss of $23 billion in productivity

$44 billion lost revenue is attributed to depression alone

$35 billion lost in presenteeism

$47 billion loss/yr. is linked to physical health concerns
**MYTHS ABOUT MENTAL ILLNESS AND THE WORKPLACE**

- Recovery from mental illness is not possible.
  - Longitudinal studies have shown genuine improvement
  - Stable, productive lives

- Employees with mental illness are second-rate employees.
  - Higher than average attendance and punctuality
  - High motivation and loyalty to employer

- People with psychiatric disabilities cannot tolerate work stress.
  - Oversimplification of response to stress
  - Individuals have unique responses to stress
  - Good match with employee and work conditions is essential

- Employees with mental illness are unpredictable, violent and dangerous
Withdrawal from team
Indifference
Missed deadlines
Seems scattered
Indecision
Decreased productivity
Poor or inconsistence attendance
Inappropriate reactions
Changes in appearance
The graph illustrates the fluctuation of mood states over time, with the severity of mania and depression plotted against time.

Severity of Mania:
- Mania
- Hypomania
- Mixed state

Severity of Depression:
- Euthymia
- Subthreshold depression
- Major depression
HEALTHY WORK ENVIRONMENT

**Organizational Culture**
- Clear Communication
- Effective problem solving
- Healthy decision-making
- Realistic deadlines
- Resiliency Training

**Work overload / Work underload**
- High work intensity can be tolerated for predictable periods of time
- Feeling accomplished
- Balance with home life
- Predictable work hours
- Flexibility

**Role in Organization**
- Clear instruction
- Isolated working conditions
- Clear direction
- Equitable pay
- Formal recognition of achievements

**Support**
- Healthy relationship with supervisors
- Safe working conditions
- Support at home
- Connection with others
STRATEGIES FOR PROMOTING HEALTH IN BUSINESS SETTING

- Health education
- Raise awareness
- Screening Programs
  - Detect risk factors
  - Identify early signs of disease
- Action Programs
  - Job retention
  - Treatment while remaining at work
  - Re-integration after treatment
    - Gradual
    - Financial support
- On-site treatment options
  - Physical
  - Mental
  - Reducing time away from work
For every $1.00 spent in creating a healthier work environment, $2.30 is generated to benefit the company.

28% decrease in absenteeism

91% improvement in presenteeism

INVESTING IN A SOLUTION

The returns far outweigh the costs.
Employees perceived deficits were more extensive than observed by employer
  ▪ Doubt that they can work effectively

Employers identified accommodations were generally no great than for any other employee

Employees verbalize concern of judgement from colleagues
  ▪ Intimidation
  ▪ Harassment

Ambivalence about disclosing medical information to employer
  ▪ “It’s the honest thing to do.”
  ▪ Possibly feeling supported
  ▪ Most individuals reports a positive effect on employment
    ▪ Decreased stigma in the workplace
    ▪ Reflected confidence
RETURNING TO WORK

- Communication with physician or mental health professional
  - Identify specific job duties
  - Clarify specific concerns that led to leave or absence

- Encourage early return to work, in coordination with providers
  - With longer the LOA
    - The more concern builds about the loss of employment
    - The more detached employee becomes
  - The Leave may depend on current cycle of symptoms
    - Early warning signs

- Consider gradual return to work
  - Clear understanding of expectations
  - Temporary changes in duties
  - Expected length of stay for accommodations
  - Who will supervise the progress
REASONABLE ACCOMMODATIONS

- **Schedule Modifications**
  - Pace of work
  - Structured break time
  - Variation in schedule to attend appointments

- **Physical environment**
  - Noise level
  - Room divider

- **Providing water / ice to combat dry mouth from medication**

- **Interpersonal Communication**
  - Positive Feedback
    - Only when warranted
    - Not obviously excessive
  - Daily Goal or Expectations

- **Avoid over-protection of employee**

- **Promote teamwork within social events, business meetings, or other job related activities**
OPTIONS FOR ACCESSING TREATMENT

- Talk to your Primary Care provider.
- Access Human Resources – Employee Assistance Program
- Contact your insurance company for available, in-network providers

- Stark County Mental Health and Recovery Services Board  (330) 455-6644

- Aultman Behavioral Health and Counseling Center  (330) 493-9607

- Confidential Crisis Hotlines  24 hrs / 7 days a wk / 365 days a yr
  - Stark County Crisis Intervention  (330) 452-6000
  - National Suicide Prevention Lifeline  1-800-273-TALK (8255)
  - Domestic Violence Help Line  (330) 453-SAFE (7233)
  - Crisis Text Line  Text - 4hope to 741741


World Health Organization (2017). Mental Health in the Workplace. [https://www.who.int/mental_health/in_the_workplace](https://www.who.int/mental_health/in_the_workplace)