Mental Health in the Workplace
Creating Mentally Safe Workplaces

Module 3

Making Healthy Workplaces a Priority

▶ A psychologically safe workplace is one in which every reasonable effort is made to protect the mental health of employees.

▶ A psychologically healthy workplace is one in which every reasonable effort is made to promote the mental health of employees.

Making Healthy Workplaces a Priority

▶ Think of your Managers. Are they adequately trained? If not, what steps will you take to have this initiated?

▶ What specific things can employers do to help a person with a mental health issue succeed in the workplace or return to work after an absence?

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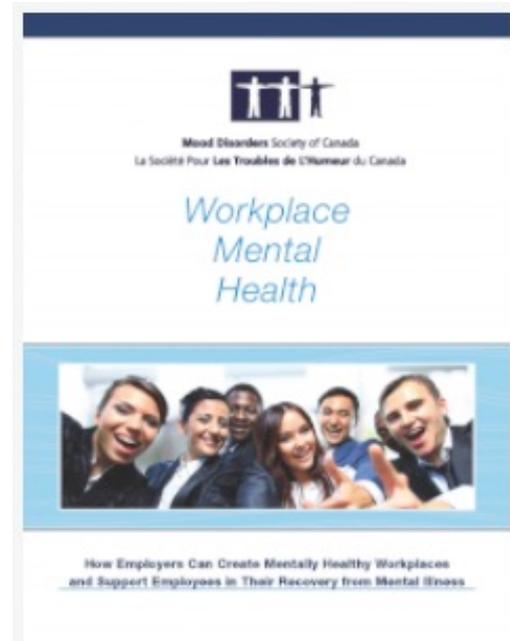La Société Pour **Les Troubles de L'Humeur** du Canada

Making Healthy Workplaces a Priority

▶ This workplace resource booklet aims to provide both employees and employers with the information and guidance they need to promote and support positive Mental Health in the Workplace.

www.mdsc.ca/workplace

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Workplace Mental Health

How Employers Can Create Mentally Healthy Workplaces and Support Employees in Their Recovery from Mental Illness

Making Healthy Workplaces a Priority

▶ 1. Ensure Managers are trained to **'manage' .** To identify and communicate effectively with employees who may be showing signs of wear and tear, or distress but to do so, without judgment and with empathy

Making Healthy Workplaces a Priority

▶ 2. When an employee is off work:

  ▶ Stay in touch with them casually

  ▶ Ensure they are engaged and know they are still a part of the organization

▶ 3. When an employee is ready to return to work:

  ▶ Their re-entry should include modified work schedules and tasks which are worked out with the employee, not unilaterally.

  ▶ Make sure that when the employee has been cleared medically to return, there is not a big delay, in making that happen.

  ▶ Recovery and a timely, gradual return to work go hand in hand

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Resolving Workplace Conflicts

▶ Unresolved workplace conflicts can be an ongoing source of stress and lead to anxiety within the workforce. It is essential to identify the core of the problem and correct the situation without delay

▶ How serious is the problem, is it isolated or does it occur often?

▶ Determine the severity of the problem

▶ Identify the easiest way to resolve the problem

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Eliminating the Stress

▶ In most situations, discussing a problem with the two parties can usually resolve most conflicts. Perhaps there was a misunderstanding, an oversight, or a lack of legal knowledge. If not move to the next step:

▶ Review company policies, employee contracts, and employee handbooks

▶ Write a brief summary. Very simply...

    1. State the concern or problem.
    2. List the facts (only the facts) related to the problem.
    3. State your recommendation for resolving the problem.

▶ Meet with the parties to find a suitable solution

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What Can Employees Do?

▶ Bring any and all workplace stress to the attention of your employer or manager. If there are workplace factors such as unrelenting or unreasonable deadlines and workloads, lack of resources, or physical factors such as lighting, noise or workstation placement that is causing stress, ask to work together to address and solve these issues

▶ A major stressor can be a lack of adequate training, if you feel that you need better training to do your job, ask what options are available

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Supports in the Workplace

▶ A knowledgeable and committed Wellness and Safety Committee, with company-wide representation, will ensure the policies are informed by all stakeholders

▶ Creating workplace mental health and wellness supports is centered on the development and active promotion of clear policies. These policies will serve as the central anchor point from which all activities will be generated

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Mental Health Policy Statement

▶ The Mental Health Policy Statement is your company position on providing a healthy workplace. It is the statement of your organizational commitment to protecting the health, safety and wellbeing of its employees

▶ Does your company have a mental health policy?

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Objectives of the Policy

Decide upon the objectives needed to reach your goals. These will form your operating principals. As an example

▶ To develop strategies that will immediately ensure that mental health is equally valued as physical health

▶ To create an environment where staff communicate workplace issues and identify opportunities to increase employee wellbeing

▶ To increase awareness and understanding of mental health among all management and employees

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Goals of the Policy

Decide upon five or six straightforward goals of the Policy. What is it that the company wants to achieve? List these goals clearly and concisely. As an example:

- ▶ To create a stigma free environment
- ▶ To promote healthy work/ life balance
- ▶ To create a culturally safe environment
- ▶ To accommodate employees returning to work
- ▶ To reduce workplace stress

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Create an Environment that Promotes Wellness

▶ Change the workplace culture

▶ Provide managers with training on mental health and Illness

▶ Provide mental health resources

▶ Encourage open discussions

▶ Use Awareness Posters

▶ Post community resources and contact info

▶ Host mental health info meetings

▶ Prioritize work/life balance

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Create a Culture/Environment that Promotes Wellness

▶ Change the workplace culture on mental wellness through implementing workplace policies, lead by example and promote increased discussion on mental health

▶ Provide managers with training on mental health and mental Illness;

▶ Safeguard confidentiality

▶ Provide mental health resources; EAP, community resources, peer support, etc.

▶ Prioritize work/life balance *(i.e. phone and email policies)*

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Maintaining a Healthy Workplace

▶ Contact based education - that directly involves people with mental health issues - is key. Reach out to local mental health organizations for guest speakers

▶ Establish organizational and employee health as "twin priorities" among managers and employees

▶ Create return to work processes that are tailored to the individual. When illness occurs, barrier free re-entry to employment, (with support as needed)

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Stigma & Discrimination in the Workplace

▶ People with mental illness say that stigma can be worse than the illness itself

▶ Mental Illness is a part of our lives

▶ Create an environment free from stigma and discrimination. No exceptions

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Elephant in the Room Campaign

▶ Elephant In The Room is a national anti-stigma campaign designed to eliminate the stigma associated with mental Illness.

▶ When you display your blue elephant, you show that you care about the wellness of others and demonstrate that this is a safe place to talk about mental illness, without fear of being viewed differently.
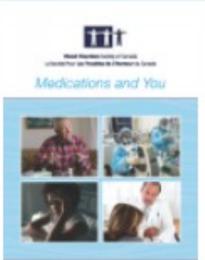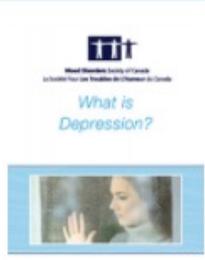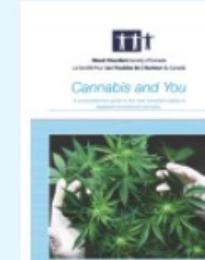
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https://mdsc.ca/stigma/elephant-in-the-room-campaign/

In Conclusion

▶ Managers and employees must have access to the supports they need when staff are working through mental health issues

▶ Employers must have an open door policy for employees to come in and discuss mental health issues without fear of negative repercussions

▶ Employers and Managers need to reach out and obtain the knowledge and tools to improve workplace environments and supports

▶ Remove the word *should*. Replace it with *will*

▶ Stigma and Discrimination are unacceptable

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Educational Resources

Medication and You

What is Depression?

Workplace Mental Health

What is Bi-Polar Disorder?

Quick Facts

Cannabis and You

Operational Stress Injuries & Other Traumatic Stress

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Contact Info

The Mood Disorders Society of Canada offers a vast amount of support, resources and information to help.

Please visit or contact us for further information on mental illness and mental health.

www.mdsc.ca
info@mdsc.ca

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