

How Mentally Healthy is Your Workplace?

Organizational Self-Assessment and Environmental Scan

TWO BIG QUESTIONS

1. Can people who are suicidal or in mental health crises get support and referrals to appropriate care?
2. Does the workplace promote mental health or reinforce discrimination?

WORKPLACE CULTURE

- Do clearly stated workplace values reflect concern for well-being of employees?
- Are systems in place to monitor employee morale on a regular basis?
- Do communication practices encourage open communication?
- Are 360 degree evaluation feedback processes available at all levels of the organization?
- Does your workplace view mental health promotion in the workplace as an investment in a stable and productive workforce OR does it see mental health promotion as irrelevant (or worse: a detrimental expense).
- How might your workplace culture or even the products and services you create in your workplace impact mental health:
 - How might your workplace reinforce prejudice about mental disorders?
 - How might your workplace encourage behavior that negatively impacts mental health?
 - What does your workplace do to promote mental health and wellness?

POLICIES AND PRACTICES

Mental Health Benefits

- Are there mental health benefits offered?
- Are they covered at the same level as other physical disorders?
- Do they recognize the chronic nature of mental disorders?
- Does your workplace allow for medical leave for a mental health crisis?

Referral Processes

- Is the workplace aware of general local resources (e.g., toll free referral numbers or websites) or employee assistance programs in case a referral for mental health treatment is needed?

- Do these referrals provide the following:
 - Initial assessment of the person's problem
 - Referral to appropriate services matching the person's needs
 - Post-treatment monitoring
 - Return-to-work assistance
- Are these referrals low cost (or free) and without a lot of pre-authorizations or referral requirements?
- How does your workplace re-integrate an employee who has been on mental health leave for a mental health crisis?

Accommodations

- Has your workplace made (or is it equipped to make) "reasonable accommodations" for individuals who would otherwise be fully qualified to overcome the challenges they face as the result of a mental disability? Are these disability management efforts coordinated by a disability manager?
 - Flexible scheduling
 - Reduced work hours
 - Reassignment
 - Written instructions
 - A quiet workspace
 - Time-off to attend therapy sessions
 - NOTE: recent studies suggest that the cost of most workplace accommodations is less than \$500 – far below the cost of hiring and training a new employee¹

Training

- Does your workplace routinely have educational programs on mental health topics (beyond stress and conflict resolution)?
- Is this training for all employees, but especially for supervisors and managers, in order to create a workplace culture that has a full understanding of mental health issues and that values individuals who might struggle with mental disorders?
- Does training exist for suicide prevention specifically?

Social Marketing

- Does your workplace distribute printed material (brochures/posters/fact sheets) promoting mental health or educating employees about mental disorders?
- Are mental health screening days (e.g. depression, anxiety, alcohol abuse) promoted in the workplace, encouraging employees to take a confidential self-assessment?

¹ Citizen's League (2001). Mental Health in the Workplace: An Issue for One in Five Employees. Minnesota Department of Health.