Wellness Works

- statewide pilot project, now offered nationally
- funded by California’s Mental Health Services Act (Proposition 63), administered by the California Mental Health Services Authority
- demonstrated through rigorous evaluation as highly effective in significant reduction of stigma
Wellness Works curriculum

• multiple award-winning

• our strategies are evidence and research-based, and practical

• program evaluation has demonstrated significant stigma reduction with all course offerings and among participants across all workplace roles

Wellness Works assists organizations to be more effective in addressing workplace mental health issues.

• intervention
• prevention
• promotion
Wellness Works offers

• corporate training, instructor-led and online
• custom solutions and product development
• free resources, employer and employee
• conference speakers and keynote addresses
• open attendance workshops

Legal disclaimer

The information contained in this training and in all related materials is not intended to serve as legal advice.

Do not rely on the information presented as legal advice.

For legal matters please consult a qualified attorney specializing in employment law.
Today we will

• look at mental health and mental illness in a workplace context
• look at why organizations are redefining and reframing the issues
• look at how Wellness Works defines and approaches the issues
• invite you to consider new viewpoints

Business cost

• as a primary cause of disability, mental illness is second only to heart disease
• when we combine primary and secondary causes of disability, mental illness leads all other illnesses
• current estimated economic cost to the American economy: $100 billion per year
Disability and accommodation issues

- mental illness is a recognized disability under the Americans With Disabilities Act and the California Fair Employment and Housing Act
- the duty for employers to accommodate employees with disabilities is explicit in all codes
- accommodation is more than individual job modifications
- includes removal of barriers, inclusive design

Organizational challenges

- changing and increasing workplace demands with fewer resources
- lack of training for managers to address complex issues
- ineffective management approaches to interpersonal problems
- hiring people managers without considering emotional intelligence
Organizational challenges, cont’d

- high workplace mental health risk factors, low protective factors
- systemic stigma and discrimination
- disability management processes that contribute to illness

Wellness Works Strategy

1. I notice...
2. I’m wondering...
3. Let’s focus on solutions at work.
When we focus on solutions at work, we use the Wellness Works Themed Approach

Exploring employee needs

Exploring prevention

Exploring employee’s contribution

What’s in it for me?

• greater effectiveness, confidence, your own wellbeing
• contributing to employee productivity, engagement, employee wellbeing
• avoiding performance problems, discipline, legal problems
• contributing to organizational effectiveness and integrity
• contributing to a healthy work environment
Why is this a workplace issue?

- 1 in 4 Americans will experience a mental illness in any given year, and in their lifetime
- Most will have a significant episode between the ages of 18 and 65
- 2 out of 3 will not seek help
- Early identification and treatment = reduced disability time, reduced treatment time, reduction in severity of symptoms and shorter illness duration

Challenges with treatment
Labels for mental illness

- clinical depression
- anxiety disorder
- addiction
- bipolar disorder
- obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD)
- eating disorder
- post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)
- schizophrenia
  … and many more

Problems with labels

- incorrect, incomplete
- extended period of disruption before diagnosis
- illness experience is unique to the individual
- illness is episodic
- person is more than the diagnosis
- doesn't offer us valuable information about what to do
Balance of mental health

Significant impairment of functioning

Low energy
Fear
Worry

Euphoria
Euphoria
Euphoria

Risk factors for mental illness

• family history, personal history
• trauma
• personal stress
• workplace stress
• social isolation
Difficult conversations – employee perspective

- lack of insight
- defending behaviors
- emotional issues
- minimizing and avoiding
- accommodation seen as a weakness
- boundary issues

Difficult conversations – employee perspective

- fear of
  - discrimination
  - passed over for promotion, training
  - loss of respect, authority, “losing face”
  - being regarded and treated differently
  - discipline, termination
Difficult conversations – management, HR, co-workers

• negative experience in past
• unintended, entrenched assumptions
• boundaries, confidentiality
• policies, protocols, legal issues
• history of passing the problem along
• can’t we just get the job done?
• time pressures

Working is part of ongoing health and recovery

• routine
• activity
• purpose, contribution
• social interaction
• identity
Organizational contribution

A supportive work environment can reduce the onset, severity, impact and duration of a mental health disorder.

~Guarding Minds @ Work

Workplace psychological health and safety

Risk factors
How many are part of this employee’s situation?
How can they be mitigated, buffered, reduced?

Protective factors
Do any of these exist?
How can they be increased?
How can they be supported?
What does inclusion look like at your workplace?

- when someone is off work due to physical illness or injury
- when someone is off work due to mental health issues
- when someone with mental health issues returns to work
- when someone is at work and obviously unwell

At your workplace is accommodation equated with

- weakness
- being difficult
- making a fuss
- favoritism
- not being a team player

OR

- fairness
- inclusion
- balance
- health
Strategically addressing the issues

**Changing and increasing workplace demands with fewer resources**
- Increase flexibility
- Continuously prepare for modifications
- Use practices that encourage wellbeing

**Lack of training for managers to address complex issues**
- Create a learning organization
- Use a manager as coach approach
- Offer Wellness Works training for managers

**Ineffective management approaches to interpersonal problems**
- Apply programs so civility and respect is the norm
- Use the Wellness Works Themed Approach with all employees on a regular basis

**Hiring and promoting people managers without considering emotional intelligence (EI)**
- Place EI as a competency in ongoing performance assessment and in hiring for managers
- Ensure all training for managers has an EI approach

Strategically addressing the issues, cont’d

**High workplace mental health risk factors, low protective factors**
- Educate about impact on individual employees
- Plan to address strategically

**Systemic stigma and discrimination**
- Provide contact learning opportunities for stigma reduction, e.g., Wellness Works
- Use an anti-discrimination lens to audit of policies and processes

**Disability management processes that contribute to illness**
- Implement a quantitative and qualitative audit of disability management systems
- Make adjustments to increase return to work and stay at work success