Workplace practices and policies to support workers with depression.

Kim Cullen
Institute for Work & Health

IFDM 2018, Session 5E
October 16 2018, Vancouver, BC Canada
Workplace practices and policies to support workers with depression

Some of the data from this presentation is not currently available for post-conference sharing.

For questions or inquiries regarding this presentation, please contact:
Kim Cullen
kcullen@mun.ca
The Research Team

IWH (Ontario):
Kim Cullen, Dwyane Van Eerd, Emma Irvin, Morgane Le Pouésard, Siobhan Cardoso, Monique Gignac, Quenby Mahood

Centre for Addiction and Mental Health:
Anita Dubey

Ontario Shores Centre for Mental Health Sciences
Judy Geary

Our Stakeholders

BC:
WorkSafeBC, BC Federation of Labour, Construction Labour Relations Association of BC, Mood Disorders Association of BC

Alberta:
Alberta Workers' Health Centre

Ontario:
Several IWH stakeholders representing:
• Preventions System Partners (HSAs),
• Labour
• Employer representatives
• Practitioners (Educationally Influential Clinical Networks)

National:
UNIFOR
One in five Canadians experience a mental health concern every year.
Nearly three million Canadians experience depression annually.

Often in prime working years, ages 24 to 44.
Depression costs the Canadian economy over $32 billion annually.
Depression in the workplace

Workers with depression:

- Lose more health-related productive time
- Have higher rates of absenteeism and disability
- Experience higher rates of job turnover

Adler, 2006; Kessler, 1999; Lerner, 2004
Information gaps

There are systematic reviews on the **effectiveness** of intervention approaches to support return-to-work and stay-at-work.

However, there are information gaps related to **implementation** of practices that may prevent workplaces from making further investments to reduce the impact of depression.
Workplaces are solving problems every day…

"OK, all those in favour of delegating decision-making, shrug your shoulders"
To bridge the research-to practice and research-to-policy gaps that currently exist for depression-related disability management programs.
Our Project

Identify strategies to implement the best current practices in disability management approaches for workers experiencing depression.

Create a practical implementation resource to support the implementation of effective and innovative solutions to manage depression in workplaces.

The implementation resource will provide specific evidence-based (research and practice) details to enable workplaces to successfully implement programs to manage depression in the workplace.
Our methods

Three sources of evidence:

1. Research evidence: 2 recent IWH SRs
2. Quantitative data collection
   • eSurvey: 10 minutes
3. Qualitative data collection:
   • Interviews: 45-60 minutes (semi-structured)
   • Focus groups: 60-90 minutes (semi-structured)

Questions covered:
• Demographics (age, sex, work role, tenure, etc)
• Experience with depression (as worker with or manager of)
• Supports, resources, services and/or accommodations
• What was most helpful
Development of Practical Implementation Resource
Resource development:

- Guide content derived from 3 evidence sources
- Positive, action-oriented content
- Illustrative case studies
- Focus is on implementation
- Icons used for various workplace parties

Implementation tip: Make sure to think through what programs you may already have in place to raise awareness, and whether they resonate in the context of your workplace.
Content organized into 3 main sections

Workplace Culture

Major depression is one of the top three causes of disability burden in high income countries.

Workplace processes

Workplace and non-workplace resources
Each section of the resource has several subsections

E.g.: Workplace Culture
• Mental health awareness and psychological risk factors
• **Genuine and caring communication**
• Mental health training
Content is positively oriented and stakeholder specific

Genuine and caring communication

Genuine and caring communication leads to workers feeling listened to, heard and supported by the workplace. This type of communication includes active and reflective listening, as well as expressing empathy and support, and it happens throughout a worker’s time at the workplace.

- Establish relationships in which genuine and caring communication is the norm. This type of communication can make a positive difference for workers experiencing depression.

- If you have concerns about your ability to communicate effectively, ask your HR department about the resources and training that may be available to help you feel more comfortable in having difficult conversations.

- Implementation tip: Do not wait until a worker is taking time off work or returning to work to express genuine care for their well-being in the workplace.
Case studies are presented

Case Study: A motivating conversation

Ting’s manager, Charlene, had been noticing that Ting was not herself lately. She seemed withdrawn and distracted, and was not taking part in team meetings.

Charlene approached Ting, and told her she had noticed these behaviours. She asked Ting if there was anything she could do to help Ting if she needed it.

Ting had always been a private person, but she appreciated Charlene’s concern. She was surprised to learn that her change in behaviour had been noticed by others. She told Charlene she was going through some personal issues, and that she had not known it was affecting her work until now. She thanked Charlene for her concern.

Although Ting did not wish to receive any further support from her workplace, the conversation motivated her to seek out treatment for her depression.
Guide is now available on IWH website

Acknowledgments

This research was supported with funds by WorkSafeBC.
The Institute for Work & Health operates with the support of the Province of Ontario.
The views expressed in this document are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the Province of Ontario.

Contact me at:

kcullen@mun.ca
@cullen_kl
Keep up on evidence-based practices from IWH

Sign up online for our monthly e-alerts, our quarterly newsletter, event notifications and more: www.iwh.on.ca/e-alerts

Follow @iwhresearch on Twitter: www.twitter.com/iwhresearch

Connect with us on LinkedIn: www.linkedin.com/company/institute-for-work-and-health

Subscribe to our YouTube channel: www.youtube.com/iwhresearch