NAOSH Week 2008

Mental Health in the Workplace

Presented by
Donna Hardaker
Mental Health Works Specialist
Canadian Mental Health Association
York Region Branch

www.ccohs.ca
Today’s Webinar

- Issues of mental health and mental illness in the workplace
- The Mental Health Works Strategy
- My personal experience
Mental Health Works – what we do

- Raise awareness about mental health and mental illness at work
- Train managers and other workplace professionals on effective approaches and strategies
- Educate employers and employees to create and maintain mentally healthy workplaces
Mental illness: a significant workplace issue

- 1 in 4 of us will have a mental illness in our lifetime
- Most will have episode of illness between ages 18 and 65
- 2 out of 3 do not seek help
- Fastest growing category of disability claims

1 in 4 of us will have a mental illness in our lifetime
Most will have episode of illness between ages 18 and 65
2 out of 3 do not seek help
Fastest growing category of disability claims
The changing workplace: employer perspective

- Shrinking workforce
- Aging workforce
- Staff turnover
- Absenteeism, presenteeism
- Emphasis on health and safety
- Awareness of human rights
The changing workplace: employee perspective

- Increased workload
- Decreased resources
- Change is the norm
- Emotional tension is prevalent
Stress and Health

- Stress has a cumulative and additive effect over time
- Different people have different thresholds
- Significantly affects physical and mental health
Risk factors for developing a mental illness

- Genetics
- Trauma
- Personal stress
- Workplace stress
Workplace stress: risk factors

- Work overload
- Unreasonable work pace
- Role conflict
- High demand/low control
- Conflicting tasks
- Perceived unfairness
Workplace stress: protective factors

- Self-efficacy
- Skill discretion
- Decision authority
- Social support
Labels for mental illness

- Clinical Depression
- Bi-Polar Disorder
- Anxiety Disorder
- Panic Disorder
- Eating Disorder
- Schizophrenia
- Addiction
- Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder
- Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)
- And many more
Problems with Labels

- Symptoms change
- Times of illness and times of wellness
- Diagnosis changes
- Same diagnosis, different symptoms
- Take focus away from the individual
Early treatment is key

- Less severe symptoms
- Shorter duration of illness
- Shorter duration of treatment
- Lowered risk of relapse
Working is important

- Sense of identity
- Social contact
- Routine
- Activity
Mental Health Works Strategy

1. I notice...

2. I’m concerned...

3. Let’s focus on solutions at work.
My personal experience with mental illness
Difficult conversations

- Lack of insight
- Blaming and accusations
- Filter of fear
- Emotional issues
- Minimizing and avoiding
Changes were seen

- Physical health
- Sleeping patterns
- Eating patterns
- Energy level
- Ability to focus
Assumptions were made

- Bad attitude
- Not a team player
- Personality defect
- Negative influence
- Difficult person
- Annoying
- Obsessive
Mobbing affected my recovery

- Significant risk to mental and physical health
- Constant, subtle tactics that exclude and isolate
- Leads to feelings of powerlessness and anger
Social support at work

- Protects us from effects of risk factors
- Culture that provides sense of belonging
- Can be influenced by all employees
- Care and concern for people at work
Addiction and mental illness

- Often occur together as a concurrent disorder
- Treatment for both is hard to find
- Denial is a symptom of both
- Addiction involves lying and minimizing
- Addiction is also highly stigmatized
Today

- Continuing to accept and understand recovery and relapse
- Commitment to self-care
- Discussions with my manager
- Raising awareness in my workplace
Thank You

For further information contact:

Donna Hardaker
Mental Health Works Specialist
Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA)
York Region Branch
dhardaker@cmha-yr.on.ca