

A Healthy Workplace: Managerial Intervention to Control Mental Health Challenges in the Workplace

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ABSTRACT

Historically, the primary focus on health care has been around protecting the physical well being of employees. Few studies have been done focusing on awareness and prevention of mental health issues at work. The purpose of this paper is to explore and understand the correlation between mental health awareness and managerial intervention to control the occurrences of mental health challenges in the workplace. Study findings were based on the collection of data from other research articles that were peer reviewed using a qualitative approach. The conclusion of this research confirms that successful managerial intervention to control mental health challenges in the workplace is dependent upon effective managerial awareness of mental health symptoms. This positive correlation between mental health awareness and managerial intervention is a key driving force in the creation and sustainability of a healthy workplace environment.

Keywords: Intervention, Awareness, Healthy Workplace, Mental Health Illness, Presenteeism.

INTRODUCTION

Work plays an important role in most people's adult life. On average, we spend 90,000 hours at work during our lifetime. Studies show that happy people are less stressed, get promoted more frequently, and are more creative, productive and healthy (Sebastian, 2017). Mental health issues at work continues to be on the rise. In Canada each day, an estimated 500,000 individuals are unable to work due to a mental health issue (See Figure 1). In the Greater Toronto-Hamilton area, which generates 20 per cent of Canada's GDP, half the work force has experienced a mental health challenge (Howatt & Palvetzian, 2018). Historically, the primary focus on health care has been around protecting employees against physical risks at work, with less emphasis given to mental health issues associated with the work environment (John, 2005). To complicate matters further, Bill 148 the 'Fair Workplaces, Better Jobs Act' became law in Ontario, Canada on January 1st, 2018. One of the key components of this law states; 'All businesses are required to allow all employees up to 10 personal emergency leave (PEL) days per calendar year if the employee has been employed for one week

(Zochodne, 2017). These PEL days can be used for personal illness (including mental health) or emergency medical leave. Numerous studies have been conducted identifying the root causes of mental health issues in the workplace. However, few studies have been done focusing on awareness and prevention of mental health challenges at work.

The purpose of this paper is to explore and understand the correlation between mental health awareness and managerial intervention in order to assess if these factors are viable means to control the occurrences of mental health challenges in the work place to achieve the goal of creating and sustaining a healthy workplace.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Defining Mental Health

Mental health is an integral and essential component of health. The World Health Organization (WHO) constitution states; health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity. An important implication of this definition is that mental health is more than just the absence of mental disorders or disabilities (WHO, Mar-2018).

Workplace Mental Health by the Numbers



At least 20% of Canadians will have a mental health illness in their life. (Although this identifies only those who have sought medical help).⁹
 This is more than those living with heart disease and type 2 diabetes combined.¹⁰

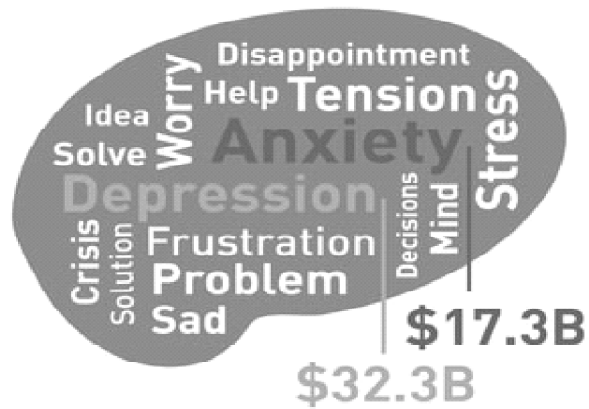


Approximately 1 in 5 members of the working age population in Canada is living with a mental health problem or illness.¹¹

0.5M



Each day, half a million Canadians miss work because of mental health issues.¹²



Depression and anxiety cost the Canadian economy at least \$32.3 billion and \$17.3 billion a year, respectively, in foregone GDP due to lost productivity.¹³

Figure 1

Mental health is a state of well-being in which an individual realizes his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and is able to make a contribution to his or her community (WHO, Mar-2018).

Mental health is fundamental to our collective and individual ability as humans to think, interact with each other, earn a living and enjoy life. On this basis, the promotion, protection and restoration of

mental health can be regarded as a vital concern of individuals, communities and societies throughout the world (WHO, Mar-2018).

Understanding the Needs of Mental Health Illness

Based on the increase of mental health claims through health care providers, the effect of mental health issues in the workplace is on the rise. One in five people in the United States has a mental health

condition, making mental health disorders some of the most prevalent diagnoses in the nation (Center for Behavioral Health Statistics, 2014). (See Figure 2.) In addition, those with mental health conditions are among the most commonly undertreated, since nearly two-thirds of those who suffer do not seek the help they need (Darley, 2017). By promoting and supporting workers' mental health, employers are more likely to have a happy workforce and benefit from increased productivity and the associated economic gains (Naveen, 2017).

The Impact of Mental Health Illness in the Workplace

Mental illness can vary in severity and take many forms, including depression, anxiety disorders, bipolar disorder and schizophrenia. According to the WHO, mental health problems are significantly impacting billions of people throughout the world (Collins, Patel, March, Insel, & Daar, 2011). In addition, a recently conducted study by the WHO, 2017 estimates that depression and anxiety disorders

cost the global economy US\$ 1 trillion each year in terms of lost productivity. In Canada, approximately 6.7 million people, or the equivalent of one fifth of the country's population are currently living with a mental health issue (Smetanin, Stiff, Briante, Adair, Ahmad, & Khan, 2011). With the ongoing increases in mental health issues, the associated costs continue to rise as well. In 2011, the Canadian economy was estimated to have lost \$51 billion due to mental health problems (See Figure 3.) Over the next 30 years, the projected loss to the Canadian economy is \$2.5 trillion (Smetanin *et al.*, 2011). The opportunity for employers to recapture lost productivity justifies the pursuit of this research study regarding the creation of a healthy workplace and the effect of managerial intervention to control mental health challenges at work.

Historical Research on Mental Health Illness

Much historical research has been conducted to assess the impact of mental health disorders and the effect on employees' performance who are suffering

About Mental Illness

Mental illness is a highly prevalent disease that affects millions of people around the world.

- **One in one hundred** people in the world develop schizophrenia.¹
- Mental illness **does not discriminate**: it strikes people of all ethnic groups, religions and economic brackets.²
- Over **44 million people** in the U.S. – **one in five adults** – suffer from a diagnosable mental disorder in a given year³, and **over 5 million** are disabled by severe mental illness.²
- **Two new cases** of mental illness occur in the U.S. **every second of every day** – **60 million new cases each year**.³



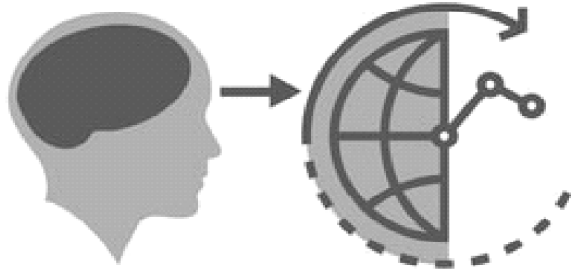
¹Source: World Health Organization.

²Source: National Alliance for Mental Health (NAMI), "About Mental Illness".

³Source: Excerpt from The Numbers Count: National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH).

Figure 2

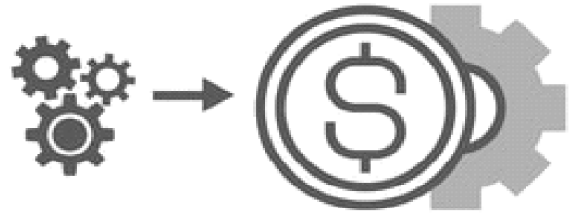
\$51B



The cost of mental illness to the Canadian economy is estimated at approximately \$51 billion per year.¹⁴

By 2021, this is estimated to be \$88.8 billion.¹⁵

\$20B

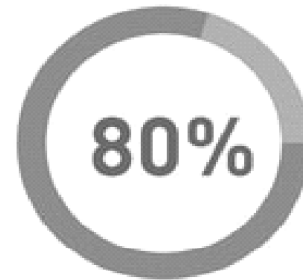


\$20 billion of the cost of mental health problems to the economy is a result of work-related causes.¹⁶

23%



Only 23% of Canadian workers would feel comfortable talking to their employer about a psychological health issue.¹⁷



80% of Ontario businesses agree it is equally as important to invest in mental health as physical health.¹⁸

80% of Ontario businesses agree that their organization's success is dependent on their employees' health and well-being.¹⁹

Figure 3

from mental health issues. However, few studies have been done with a focus on managerial intervention as a means to prevent mental health challenges in the workplace.

Past research has concluded that whether or not the root of mental health issues is caused within or outside the workplace, the increase in mental health claims should make mental health wellness high priority for employers.

Historical research and evidential findings supports the importance of mental health awareness, as well as the growing trend of mental health issues in the workplace. This emphasizes the need for organizations to take a proactive approach to creating and sustaining a healthy workplace.

The following excerpts from past research, summarize key mental health findings that impede the creation of a healthy workplace environment:

- The workplace can be part of the cause of an employee's mental health problems if one is experiencing personal problems that negatively impact their work or their work-life balance (MHCC, 2012).
- Management training is frequently cited by researchers as critical to the success of mental health interventions, however, very few organizational health strategies incorporate management training or support (MHCC, 2012).
- Landau (2014) stated a survey from *Friends Life Organization* found that 40% of 2,000 respondents from a cross-section of industries had experienced mental health problems and had not told their employer. Almost two-thirds of 18-24 year olds said they had experienced stress, anxiety or depression in the last year, with the numbers gradually decreasing among older age groups. As for the causes of stress, the most common answer in the survey was an "excessive workload", followed by "frustration with poor management and working hours" (Landau, 2014).
- Today's current work environment requires workers to do more and work longer which adds to the daily stresses of work. Theresa Nguyen, vice president of policy and programs at Mental Health America stated; "What is expected of the average worker today would have been expected of three people 15 years ago. People feel like getting things done falls on them alone, and that's very stressful" (Levy, 2018).
- CEOs play a key role in the creation of a healthy workplace. However, CEOs are faced with a dilemma of the prospect of potentially investing millions in wellbeing for employees, and the potential long-term benefits in terms of productivity and positioning the company as a good place to work, versus the more immediate short-term profit expectations of company owners or shareholders (Maxwell, 2018).
- Cultural differences also impact working environments. In Sweden, you're expected to go home and finish work around 4pm in order to enjoy maximum daylight remaining. In contrast, the USA has a culture of work of "super-productivity" (Maxwell, 2018).
- It is worthy to note that these mental health triggers in the workplace had the potential to be controlled by management intervention if front line managers are properly trained in the area of mental health awareness.

U.S. Mental Health Illness Statistics

- 1 in 5 (or 43.8 million) adults experience mental illness in a given year.
- 1 in 25 (or 10 million) adults experience a serious mental illness.
- 1 in 100 (or 2.4 million) live with schizophrenia.
- 2.6% (or 6.1 million) of Americans have bipolar disorder.
- 6.9% (or 16 million) suffer from severe depression.
- 18.1% (or 42 million) live with an anxiety disorder (Bach, 2017).

Based on these statistics, the presence of mental health challenges in a work environment should be a top priority for employers. The challenge for organizations is to establish criteria so that managerial intervention is effective in controlling the

occurrence of mental health challenges in the workplace.

Work-Related Risk Factors for Mental Health

Many risk factors for mental health may be present in the working environment. Most risks pertain to interactions between type of work, the skills and competencies of employees, or there may be unsupportive managerial or organizational practices in the working environment (WHO, 2018). All of these health risk factors have the potential to be alleviated through managerial awareness and effective intervention at the earliest sign to prevent a mental health issue from developing and escalating.

Risks to Mental Health in the Workplace Include

- inadequate health and safety policies;
- poor communication and management practices;
- limited participation in decision-making or low control over one's area of work;
- low levels of support for employees;
- inflexible working hours; and
- unclear tasks or organizational objectives (WHO, 2018).

Limited understanding and awareness of mental health issues in turn, restricts an employer's ability to intervene and effectively manage mental health issues in the workplace. This limited availability of research on the effect of awareness on managerial intervention to control mental health challenges in the workplace opens up the door for additional research on this topic. Canada's human resource professionals cite alarming trends and challenges in dealing with the mental well-being of their employees (Weiner, 2009).

In Canada, an estimated 35 million workdays are lost annually due to mental illness. The top two barriers reported by the survey respondents addressing workplace mental health were stigma related to mental health, and the lack of frontline manager awareness (Weiner, 2009).

The degree of managerial awareness is a key research finding, as it supports this research study's objective that the level of mental health awareness is directly correlated to management's ability to

intervene and effectively control mental health challenges in the workplace. This forms the justification for the pursuit of further research on the correlation of a healthy work environment and managerial intervention to control mental health challenges for the creation of a healthy workplace.

First, many companies are experiencing the repercussions from poor employee mental health management since 'employees suffering from depression and stress have health expenditures that are 70% and 46% higher, respectively, than their healthier counterparts. With nearly 28 million workers experiencing a mental or substance abuse disorder, employers bear a substantial portion of these direct costs' (Business Insights, 2018). Second, mental health issues in the workplace have been associated with various quantifiable financial burdens such as higher absenteeism, lower productivity, employee turnover, and greater employee health care expenditures. Employees suffering from depression missed an average of 4.8 work days and suffered 11.5 days of reduced productivity over a three-month period. (Business Insights, 2018). This presents a critical opportunity for employers to focus on managerial intervention as a means to create a healthy workplace. Third, for managerial intervention to be effective as a control mechanism for mental health challenges in the workplace, managerial awareness and understanding of mental health *triggers* in the work place are of utmost importance. Fourth, some of the research findings on this subject matter are controversial. A growing body of literature suggests that mental health is a management concern just as much as it is a human resources (HR) concern (MHCC, 2012). However, many organisations continue to delegate workplace health matters to HR, almost always bypassing the role of management.

Issues such as mental ill health and anxiety do not always initiate at work and could be caused by problems outside of the work environment. Some organizations believe it is HR's responsibility to monitor this scenario because they are responsible for employees' wellbeing. (Train, n.d.). Shifting the primary responsibility to HR, impedes the ability of management to intervene and control mental health issues in the workplace.

Research suggests that good employee health management starts with top management and that ‘Organizations need to provide clear, open communication from the top on why mental health matters (Howatt, & Palvetzian, 2018). ‘When senior executives talk more openly on mental health, share their own experiences, and reinforce the benefits of prevention, early detection and treatment, it can help those experiencing mental health issues to ask for help rather than hide what they are going through out of shame and fear of reprisals (Howatt, & Palvetzian, 2018). ‘These actions reinforce the benefit of effective interaction by management regarding mental health challenges.

Despite extensive research into the causes and correlation of occupational stress and mental health problems, many of the interventions and programs being implemented are, at best, weakly supported by empirical data (Dimoff *et al.*, 2014).

This research will help us understand how mental health awareness affects management intervention to control mental health challenges in the workplace. Specifically, Sun Life Financial organization shared mental health illness facts based on the research conducted by Saint Mary’s University in Halifax, Nova Scotia involving a detailed study of Canadian business and employees. One of the objectives of this study was to assess the importance of the relationship between mental health awareness and managerial intervention to control mental health challenges in the workplace.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Participants

Dimoff, Kelloway, & Bernstein (in press) conducted the Mental Health Awareness Training (MHAT) study that involved training 200 managers at two organizations.

Procedure

In one organization they randomly assign leaders to either an experimental (training) or a wait-list control group. In the second organization, (there were some geographic constraints but) they were able to use block random assignment to either treatment or wait-list control groups. Their design included pretest,

immediate posttest, and delayed (8 weeks) posttests, to assess the effectiveness of the training.

Study Structure

Based on the researcher’s initial discussions with participating organizations, they designed a 3-hr training session designed to teach organizational leaders;

- (a) about the most common mental health problems and issues and
- (b) what resources (i.e., policies, programs, benefits, contacts) were available through their organizations.

Study Objectives

The goals of the study were to conduct pre-assessment of participants in both the training and study groups, and post assessment of participants in the study group in the following areas:

1. Knowledge of mental health problems
2. Self-confidence in their ability to recognize, support and provide appropriate resources to an employee experiencing a mental health problem
3. Participants’ attitudes toward employees with mental health problems
4. Participants’ abilities to promote mental health in the workplace

The training study objectives were to assess managers of the training group in their ability to answer pertinent mental health questions upon completion of the study such as:

“Do you know when someone is having a bad day? Do you notice their facial expressions, body language, even tone of voice and words? Would you know how to determine if they may be experiencing more than stress, perhaps a mental health crisis?” (Howatt & Palvetzian, 2018).

RESULTS

In both organizations, a similar pattern of results emerged. In comparison to the control group, managers who received the MHAT training demonstrated increased knowledge about mental health issues, improved attitudes toward individuals with mental health problems, increased self-efficacy

around dealing with mental health issues, and increased intent to promote mental health (Mullen & Kelloway, 2009). All of these changes were sustained at the 8-week posttest.

In the second organization the researchers examined the frequency and duration of disability claims for “psychiatric” diagnoses. Although they were not able to tie these claims directly to the training, the post-training claims were, on average, 18 days shorter with no change in frequency. In addition, the researchers were able to demonstrate that the decreased length of claims occurred in the Atlantic region where the training was implemented, and corresponding changes did not occur in regions where the training was not implemented.

Upon completion of the study, the training group showed improvement in the following study objectives:

1. Greater knowledge of mental health problems
2. Greater self-confidence in training group participants in their ability to recognize, support and provide appropriate resources to an employee experiencing a mental health problem
3. More positive attitudes toward employees with mental health problems
4. Greater intention to promote mental health in the workplace

In addition, Sun Life Financial organization was able to confirm the study’s findings that the study was associated with a substantial impact on mental health related disability claims. One-year post training, disability costs related to mental health were 20% lower in the organizations studied, with the duration of mental health related disability claims decreased by 27%, or up to 19 days per claim.

A key take-away from the training study was that early intervention on mental health issues in the work place can reduce disability costs, increase productivity, and improve the lives of your employees (Pelletier, 2014). As with many health issues, early detection and treatment is key to minimizing the impact on a person’s life and returning them to health.

Overall, the research study findings confirmed positive correlation between mental health awareness

understanding, and early managerial intervention in order to effectively manage mental health challenges in the workplace. The study reinforced the fact that both awareness and intervention are key contributors to the creation and sustainability of a healthy workplace environment.

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to assess the effectiveness of managerial intervention to control mental health challenges in the workplace. Research concluded that successful managerial intervention to control mental health challenges in the workplace is dependent upon effective awareness of mental health symptoms. Training managers to be attentive of employees’ health and wellbeing, has shown to have a positive effect on an organization’s overall culture, leading to improved employee relations, lower stress levels among both managers and employees, and improved workforce engagement (DeLange, *et al.*, 2004; Israel *et al.*, 1996).

Therefore, the most important significance from the results regarding successful managerial intervention when it comes to mental health issues in the workplace is effective awareness training. The issue today is that many managers lack the ability to recognize a mental health issue and to guide struggling employees to potential solutions (Pelletier, 2014).

The findings of this study reinforce the fact that properly trained managers are ideally situated to be the first responders to help employees who are experiencing mental health issues. They interact with employees on a regular basis, are familiar with employees’ job duties and personality, and understand the workplace and the culture of the organization (Pelletier, 2014).

Limitation of the Study

Sun Life Financial organization acknowledged a key study limitation; that managerial training is not intended for managers to treat or solve employee’s mental health problems. It does however, allow them to recognize a potential mental health issue early on, which can help reduce the chances of the issue developing into something more serious (Pelletier, 2014).

Presenteeism at Work

Managerial mental health awareness is an important first step in dealing with an increasing trend in the workplace called ‘Presenteeism’. The cost of presenteeism to businesses is 10 times higher than that of absenteeism and amounts to as much as 57.5 days lost per employee each year (Lombardo, 2017).

Unlike absenteeism, presenteeism isn’t always apparent; ‘You know when someone doesn’t show up for work, but you often can’t tell when, or how much, illness or a medical condition hinders someone’s performance. We’re talking about people hanging in there when they get sick and trying to figure out ways to carry on despite their symptoms,’ says Debra Lerner, a professor at Tufts University School of Medicine in Boston (Adler, Lerner, & Azocar, 2015).

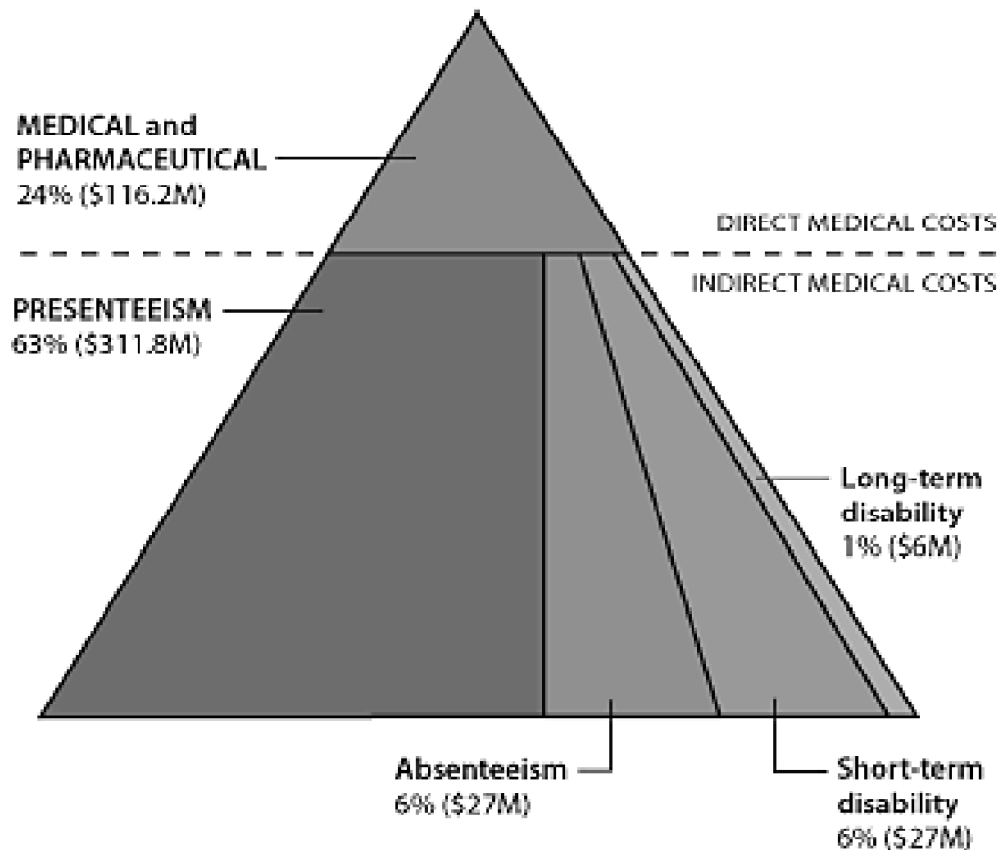
This increasing trend reinforces the importance of mental health awareness and communication, in conjunction with early managerial intervention.

When combined together, they are effective managerial tools in the creation of a healthy workplace environment.

What may be more significant as well as controversial, is that presenteeism appears to cost companies substantially more than they spend directly on medical treatment and drugs. Typically, studies have shown that presenteeism costs employers two to three times more than direct medical care, which is paid for by companies in the form of insurance premiums or employee claims (See Figure 4). Therefore, this study validates the financial urgency for organizations to address the issue of mental health challenges in the workplace.

A Healthy Workplace

Louise Aston, Wellbeing Director at Business in the Community, says mental wellbeing is not translating into the right workplace cultures or adequate support



Source: Bank One

Figures are based on annual data for 2000. Workers’ compensation accounted for less than 1% of indirect medical costs.

for employees experiencing poor mental health. 'Employers must accept the scale of mental ill health in the workplace and start taking a preventative approach now. This means getting the work culture right in the first place so that they promote good work and work life-balance (Isokariari, 2016).' Aston's view point supports this study's findings that the use of managerial intervention is an effective means to support employees who are experiencing mental health issues. Also, applying Aston's advice will greatly assist towards the creation of a healthy and supportive work environment.

This study also confirmed that progression of a healthy workplace will only happen when managers are knowledgeable and versed in the area of mental health and when management prioritizes mental ill health as they would physical ill health, doing what they can to prevent ill health from occurring or escalating, and ensuring proper support for employees when it does. 'Employees must feel that the workplace is supportive of, rather than, detrimental to their mental health. We know the role of line managers is absolutely crucial, imbedding mental health into the organisation culture employee wellbeing through a line manager (Isokariari, 2016).' Without this feeling of support, the creation and sustainability of a healthy workplace is difficult to achieve.

According to WHO (2017), the following guidelines can assist organizations to create and sustain of a healthy workplace:

- Awareness of the workplace environment and how it can be adapted to promote better mental health for different employees.
- Learning from the motivations of organizational leaders and employees who have taken action.
- Not reinventing the wheel by being aware of what other companies who have taken action, have done.
- Understanding the opportunities and needs of individual employees, in helping to develop better policies for workplace mental health.
- Awareness of sources of support and where people can find help (WHO, 2017).

Early Awareness is Key

One of the key outcomes from this study reinforced the correlation between early awareness and successful managerial intervention. Mulhausen (2018), stated the symptoms of a behavioral health problem can manifest themselves in many ways. The presence of mental health illness can impact a person's thinking, feeling, or mood at work. Some of these mental health issues may affect an employee's ability to interact with employees and to be fully functional in the workplace. Therein lies the opportunity for employers to create a healthy workplace by training their managers to recognize early on, some of the common health issue symptoms associated with depression and anxiety, so managers can properly and effectively engage their employees when concerns arise. (Mulhausen, 2018).

Kelloway (2017), one of the key leads in this healthy workplace study, concluded that the creation of a healthy workplace must ultimately address three key pillars; (1) Prevention, (2) Intervention, and (3) Accommodation.

The significance of this statement is these three pillars support this study's key purpose that being; to explore and understand the correlation between mental health awareness and managerial intervention in order to create and sustain a healthy workplace.

Prevention

The key to the prevention of mental health illness starts with awareness. Kelloway (2017), states; not just awareness of mental health issues, but also awareness on how leadership effects the physical and psychological well-being of employees. Specifically, that leaders have an indirect effect on employee well-being and that leaders may be a "root cause" of other forms of organizational stress (Canadian Journal of Behavioural Science, 2005). For example, leaders who assign excess work or tight deadlines to individuals may exacerbate feelings of excessive workload or work-family balance conflict (Kelloway, 2017).

In addition, leaders have a direct impact on the creation and sustainability of a healthy workplace both directly and indirectly. For example, 'negative interactions with leaders are associated with

increased blood pressure during, and following, the work shift (Wong & Kelloway, 2016)'.

Further to historical research findings confirming negative effects associated with poor leadership, there is newer research that concludes positive forms of leadership are associated with enhanced employee well-being in the workplace.

Results showed that when leaders were trained in transformational leadership, their employees reported enhanced psychological well-being (McKee, Driscoll, Kelloway, & Kelley, 2011). The significance of this finding reinforces this study's results that leadership training and development should be recognized as a form of mental health intervention for managerial roles.

Intervention

This pillar - Intervention, lies at the heart of this study's core focus; *Managerial Intervention to Control Mental Health Challenges in the Workplace*. Intervention by leaders and managers of the organization can have positive effects on employees who are struggling with mental health illness (Dimoff, Kelloway, & Bernstein, in press).

When it comes to mental health investment in the workplace, historically, employers have invested in employee health in order to comply with regulatory standards, control costs, improve productivity, and enhance their reputation. More recently though, investment decisions regarding health and safety have transitioned to how such programs contribute to the mission, priorities, and goals of a business and align with senior leadership interests. (McLellan, 2017). There is evidence to suggest correlation between leaders who are proactive in managerial awareness and intervention, and a positive mental health environment and work force.

According to WHO (2017), interventions and good practices that protect and promote mental health in the workplace include the following parameters:

- implementation and enforcement of health and safety policies and practices, including identification of distress, harmful use of psychoactive substances and illness and providing resources to manage them;
- informing staff that support is available;

- involving employees in decision-making, conveying a feeling of control and participation; organizational practices that support a healthy work-life balance;
- programmes for career development of employees; and
- recognizing and rewarding the contribution of employees (WHO, 2017).

Accommodation

Kelloway, (2017) states that there are two major issues related to accommodation: (a) How do we bring people back to work after a period of disability leave resulting from a mental health disorder? (b) How do we keep people in the workplace rather than having them go off on disability leave?

The findings of this study suggests that managerial awareness accompanied by effective intervention can play a key role to diminish the impact of these two major issues associated with accommodating mental health challenges in the workplace. With the creation of a healthy environment, for businesses in Ontario, Canada, the potential use of ten personal emergency leave days per employee for mental health purposes for example, may be minimized.

FUTURE RESEARCH

Today, organizations are prioritizing solutions, interventions, and programs to deal with the rise in mental health issues. As a result, consultants and business experts have rushed in to fill this void and there is a danger that "doing something" is being confused with "doing what is effective" (Kelloway, 2017).

Despite extensive research into the cause and correlation of occupational stress and mental health problems, many of the interventions and programs being implemented are, at best, weakly supported by empirical data (Dimoff *et al.*, 2014). In short, there are lots of practice, and lots of evidence, but very little evidence based practice focused on mental health issues in the workplace (Kelloway, 2017). Therefore, more journal article references are needed for further research in the area of mental health practices for the creation of a healthy workplace.

CONCLUSIONS

The results of the study yielded some interesting insights regarding managerial intervention to control mental health challenges in the workplace. One key finding pertains to the importance of managerial awareness as the first effective step in the creation and sustainability of a healthy workplace. With proper understanding and awareness, front line managers can intervene at the first signs of mental health issues. There is evidence to suggest that early detection of mental health issues in the workplace is key in managing and sustaining a healthy workplace.

The following factors summarize the three key findings of this study;

1. Recognize the potential signs of employee mental health problems (**Awareness**)
2. Address mental health issues within the workplace environment (**Communication**)
3. Provide employees with support and referral to workplace resources (**Intervention**).

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