Send Your People Home Safe – and Sane – Every Day!

Carolinas AGC Convention 2016

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Consultant, Partnership for Workplace Mental Health
• Individual health (and safety)
• Workplace performance
• Brain research on thinking, emotions, social connectedness
Collaborate with employers to advance effective approaches to mental health.

How:

- Share business case for quality mental health care, including early recognition, access to care and effective treatment.
- Provide supportive tools at www.workplacementalhealth.org
  - Mental Health Works
  - Employer Case Examples
  - E-updates
  - Research Works issue briefs
- Promote employer case examples and facilitate peer-to-peer dialogue.
Best qualifications. . . .

I grew up in the culture:
- Hard working
- Hard playing
- Sarcastic
- Tough guys
The Tough Facts:

- Suicide = 2\textsuperscript{nd} leading cause of death in men
- Construction is among top 10 industries for suicide
- Heavy construction equipment operators especially at risk
- People with lower formal education are more at risk for suicide (as well as substance abuse, obesity, and heavy smoking)
Why?

• More education increases insight, social-emotional interaction, problem-solving, and skill development

• Hard and dangerous work, financial and time pressures, lots of room for conflicts

• Seasonal employees at off-site locations
  – Isolation from family and friends
  – Disruption of routines

• Tough guy, stoic culture makes getting help unlikely

• Sleep difficulties and chronic pain
  – Self medication with alcohol, sleeping pills, and pain medications
Mental health concerns are highly prevalent for all:

• 1 in 5 adults in the U.S (18.6%) experiences mental illness in a given year.
  – 18.1% of adults in the U.S. experiences an anxiety disorder, such as posttraumatic stress disorder, obsessive-compulsive disorder and specific phobias.
  – 6.7% of adults aged 18 or older (15.7 million people) had at least one major depressive episode

• Mental illness frequently occurs with other medical conditions, especially diabetes and heart disease, and mental distress worsens the course of both illnesses.

• Work and life stress (such as trauma) can be risk factors for developing depression.
Percentages of Adults with Mental Disorders and/or Medical Conditions

National Comorbidity Survey Replication, 2001-2003
STRESS = “The nonspecific response of the body to any demand made on it.” (Selye, 1956)

- Distress = negative emotional state due to harmful stimuli or excessive demand
- Eustress = euphoric effect of positive adaptation to demands or challenges
Stress Response = multisystem response to a demand, threat, or perceived challenge

Brain’s limbic system and cortex set off the hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal (HPA) axis response to prepare the individual to:

- Fight
- Flight
- Freeze
Distress is costly to workplaces:

• May result in emotional fatigue and poor impulse control
• People may eat, drink, and/or smoke too much
• Distressed workers have difficulty focusing on work or personal goals
• 120,000 deaths and nearly $190 billion in health care costs each year  (Goh, Pfeffer & Zenios, 2015)
Stress isn’t all bad:

- Distress = negative emotional state due to harmful stimuli or excessive demand
- Eustress = euphoric effect of positive adaptation to demands or challenges
Stress Can Stimulate Growth and Resilience:

Stress Adaptation Growth Dynamic
(Kim, Y.J., 2005)
Adaptation = Resilience

• Term with multiple applications
  – Physical (engineering, cellular, ecological systems)
  – Social/psychological (child development, individual, organizational, community disaster recovery)

• “A process linking a set of adaptive capacities to a positive trajectory of functioning and adaptation after a disturbance.”*

• The ability to bounce back, to grow, to bend rather than break.

Resilience

- Optimism/beliefs
- Emotions
- Purpose/meaning
- Self reliance
- Connections
- Help - give/receive
- Replenishment
Stress/rest/recovery cycle:
Power of Beliefs & Mindsets:

- **Effect of stress on health depends on beliefs**
  - People reporting high levels of stress plus belief that stress impacts health had 43% higher risk of death (Keller, Litzelman, Wisk, et al., 2012)

- **Helping others reduces mortality**
  - Stressful life events buffered by giving help to family and friends reduced 5-year mortality risk (Poulin, Brown, Dillard & Smith, 2013)

- **Changing mindsets**
  - “You must be smart.” vs “You worked hard.” (Dweck, 2006)
Smiling reduces mortality:

- Baseball players with full (Duchenne) smiles lived seven years longer (Able & Kruger, 2010)
Skill Practice:

- Smiling
- Gratitude
- Body posture
- Meditation
Employer Practices:

Intensive . . . . . . Get people back to work

Targeted . . . . . . Reduce risks

Universal . . . . . Keep healthy people healthy
Employer Practices:

- Active, outbound intervention

- Screenings, information, resources, & benefits

- Organizational leadership, culture, & management practices

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- Disease management/ Case management

- Disability management (Return-to-work)

- HRAs/Screenings & coaching

- Information, webinars, education

- Medical benefits

- Employee Assistance Program (EAP) & behavioral health benefits

- Values, ethics, & mission/role alignment

- Communication (face-to-face, at multiple levels, conflict resolution, predictable structure)

- Career & life development/balance

- Training (Manager/supervisor & employee)

- Health champions

- Connectedness, meaning, belonging
New Program on Depression: Right Direction

- In partnership with Ohio-based coalition, Employers Health
- Designed to help motivate employees and their families to seek help when needed, and to provide employers with appropriate support, tools and resources.

“Emotional Ergonomics”
Program called ICU:

• **I**dentify the signs
• **C**onnect with the person
• **U**nderstand the way forward together

Built on DuPont’s core values:
  – Safety and Health
  – Environmental Stewardship
  – Highest Ethical Behavior
  – Respect for People

http://www.esibethesda.com/ADSmediafiles/_video/ImprovingEmotionalHealth/player.html
Man Therapy

- Information to help men understand that mental health disorders are not “unmanly signs of weakness”
- Resources and tools for (learning and laughing)
Case Examples and Resources:

- **H-E-B (San Antonio)**: EAP/Behavioral health outreach for ALL disability claims. Disabilities with primary mental/behavioral health diagnosis are treated by specialists or claims not paid.

- **RK (Denver)**:
  - Toolbox talks with construction workers at jobsites
  - Suicide prevention training for managers;
  - Mental health resources through the RK Wellness Program, including an in-house wellness coach and 1:1 counseling

- **Tarlton Corp (St. Louis)**:
  - Trusting, collegial culture
  - Diversity of thought and talent
  - “Project First” win-win mentality – reduces client/subcontractor conflicts
  - Superintendent training on conflict resolution
Systemic Effects:

- Values-based leadership – builds trust
- Culture of health
- Positive individual health and organizational performance outcomes
- Culture of high performance
Questions?

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(Please contact me or leave your business card if you would like to receive our e-mailings – or if you have an employer case example to share)