
Mental well-being and the workplace

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Introduction

- ◆ In a Confederation of British Industry (CBI) survey of over 800 companies, 98% of respondents said they thought that the mental health of employees should be a company concern. The large majority (81%) considered that mental health of staff should be part of company policy. Yet only one in ten companies has an official policy on mental health.
- ◆ (Working Together For Recovery May 2007
http://www.workingtogetherforrecovery.co.uk/mental_wellbeing.htm)

Introduction

- ◆ **Managing mental health in your organisation**

Part of creating a healthy work environment is the development of a knowledgeable and supportive workplace that values a diverse workforce.

Creating a supportive team environment

The team is the central hub of work productivity and communication and the best place to ensure the wellbeing of an organisation

Tips for managing stress in the workplace

Management can alleviate stress amongst its workforce by informing staff about the personal costs and risks of stress and by dealing with the risks of stress proactively.

Effective management for employees with mental illness

Mental illness should be perceived and accommodated in the workplace like any other illness or disability.

From

http://www.jobaccess.gov.au/JOAC/Employers/Being_a_disability_confident_organisation/Planning_a_better_workplace_and_creating_a_Disability_Action_Plan/Mental_health_and_wellbeing_at_work/

Introduction

Mental Health Europe acknowledges that mental health problems are high and rising amongst the workforce and the general population.

- ◆ We express our concern for the prevalence of low psychological well-being and mental illness in the workplace, as a key factor leading to problems for the individual, the employer and society at large.
- ◆ We support innovative approaches and coordinated actions to improve the quality of employment conditions and to protect the mental health and well-being of people at work and beyond.
- ◆ PROMOTING MENTAL WELL-BEING IN EMPLOYMENT- Policy position of Mental Health Europe
<http://www.mhe-sme.org/assets/files/MHE%20policy%20position%20on%20Mental%20well-being%20in%20employment.pdf>

Introduction

- ◆ Mental well-being is a comprehensive concept that includes satisfaction with your life and work, and an active and positive approach to them, as well as genuine self-esteem. An important foundation for mental well-being is having a job that corresponds your professional goals and skills, and thus offers you an opportunity to interact with other people while providing meaningful employment and financial security. Job satisfaction always entails motivation and commitment.
- ◆ Sometimes, however, a job can be far from ideal and may therefore impair your well-being: you may be overworked, or have too little say in matters concerning yourself, or your work does not meet your own goals and expectations. Few people wish to stay in third-rate jobs. Short-term jobs, too, can be detrimental to commitment to work life. On the other hand, long spells of unemployment involve a serious risk of permanent exclusion from the labour market.
- ◆ There are a number of ways to improve employees' mental well-being that focus on supporting their own resources and improving functioning of the work community, cooperation and procedures at the workplace.
- ◆ Finnish Institute of Occupational Health Thematic pages: Mental well-being 2006
<http://www.ttl.fi/Internet/English/Thematic+pages/Mental+well-being/>

Introduction

- ◆ The nature of the workplace continues to change as Europe adapts to the challenges of competing in a global marketplace. Across the European Union there is a trend of increasing absenteeism and early retirement due to mental health problems, particularly stress and depression. The social and economic costs of lost productivity in Europe are substantial. Moreover, the sustainability of social protection systems may be challenged further by increases in the levels of disability benefits paid to people who have left work on grounds of poor mental health. Yet despite these significant consequences, at both national and pan-European levels, decision-makers have been slow to recognise the importance of promoting mental health within the workplace, although recently there have been some positive developments.
- ◆ (McDaid D. Curran C. Knapp M. Promoting mental well-being in the workplace: a European policy perspective. *International Review of Psychiatry*. 17(5):365-73, 2005)

Introduction

- ◆ Everyone could benefit from investment in improved mental health in the workplace. However, because the benefits associated with improved worker mental health are often distributed among several stakeholders, the incentives for any single stakeholder to pay for additional services for workers may be diluted. As a consequence, no one invests. Nevertheless, there is a role for all stakeholders, just as there are potential benefits for all. Along with government, employers, employees, and the health care system must invest in promoting good workplace health.
- ◆ Dewa CS. McDaid D. Ettner SL. An international perspective on worker mental health problems: who bears the burden and how are costs addressed?. [Review] [107 refs] [Journal Article. Research Support, Non-U.S. Gov't. Review] Canadian Journal of Psychiatry - Revue Canadienne de Psychiatrie. 52(6):346-56, 2007

Psychosocial work-environment

- ◆ In the eye of the beholder
- ◆ Autonomy vs. independence
- ◆ Position vs. sense of control
- ◆ Employee education vs. job demands
- ◆ Demands vs. performance
- ◆ Organizational structure
- ◆ Social support in the workplace

The objective

- ◆ Mental well-being is one of key factors that are necessary for good functioning both at work and in other areas of life. The workplace offers both positive and negative challenges for the mental well-being of the employee and employer alike. Organization and the nature of the tasks or work, and provided and received support are key elements in forming the mental well-being of all at the workplace. These factors are becoming more and more evident as the main health risk factor associated with work is the psycho-social work environment. The objective of this paper is to demonstrate how mental well being is cross-sectionally associated with different psycho-social demands and the position held by the employee.

Methods

- ◆ The Public Health Institute of Iceland conducted in 2007 in cooperation with number of others, including the Administration of Occupational Health and Safety a general health survey of 10.000 Icelanders aged from 18 to 79 years. A total of 5906 responses were returned.
- ◆ The present paper will focus on several questions regarding the psycho-social work environment based on the QPS- Nordic and general questions pertaining to mental well-being among employed responders and number of hours spent at work

Results

All you ever wanted to see!

Mental wellbeing is heavily dependent on position

Percentage rating their mental health as excellent

	Men	Women
Executive, elected officials	54	52
Academic	45	44
Expert – non-academic	43	34
Clergy	41	35
Service	35	31
Skilled worker	36	47
Unskilled worker	29	30
Students	49	37

Mental well-being

- ◆ The 13.8% of men and 20% of women participating in the study who were not on the job market rated their mental health as excellent in only 24% of cases

Percent rating their mental health as excellent and irregular workload

	Never or nearly never	Rather seldom	Occasion-ally	Rather often	Very often or always
Men	42	40	38	39	31
Women	37	36	39	36	27

Percentage rating their mental health as excellent and having to work overtime

	Never or nearly never	Rather seldom	Occasionally	Rather often	Very often or always
Men	43	36	40	39	37
Women	35	36	36	39	46

Percentages rating their mental health as excellent and having to work at a high pace

	Never or nearly never	Rather seldom	Occasionally	Rather often	Very often or always
Men	44	34	40	41	36
Women	33	36	38	36	35

Percentage rating their mental health as excellent and having too much to do

	Never or nearly never	Rather seldom	Occasionally	Rather often	Very often or always
Men	45	38	39	41	40
Women	34	36	38	36	34

Percentage rating their mental health as excellent and having too something that you think should be done differently

	Never or nearly never	Rather seldom	Occasionally	Rather often	Very often or always
Men*	47	41	37	27	33
Women*	45	41	30	22	23

Percentage rating their mental health as excellent and being assigned tasks without having the means to complete them

	Never or nearly never	Rather seldom	Occasionally	Rather often	Very often or always
Men*	47	38	35	27	29
Women*	40	34	35	26	42

Percentage rating their mental health as excellent and conflicting demands

	Never or nearly never	Rather seldom	Occasionally	Rather often	Very often or always
Men*	44	39	32	26	20
Women *	41	34	28	18	57

Percentage rating their mental health as excellent and getting support from co-workers when needed

	Never or nearly never	Rather seldom	Occasionally	Rather often	Very often or always
Men*	35	31	35	37	51
Women *	32	30	32	33	45

Percentage rating their mental health as excellent and the next superior is willing to listen to your problems if needed

	Never or nearly never	Rather seldom	Occasionally	Rather often	Very often or always
Men*	36	28	29	36	49
Women *	27	18	29	35	43

Percentage rating their mental health as excellent and the boss appreciates your work

	Never or nearly never	Rather seldom	Occasionally	Rather often	Very often or always
Men*	34	28	35	37	51
Women *	27	27	33	32	46

Percentage rating their mental health as excellent and the tasks assigned in an objective and just manner

	Never or nearly never	Rather seldom	Occasionally	Rather often	Very often or always
Men*	33	28	32	39	48
Women *	29	20	26	36	46

Percentage rating their mental health as excellent and being treated fairly by the boss

	Never or nearly never	Rather seldom	Occasionally	Rather often	Very often or always
Men	31	26	33	36	49
Women	25	22	27	35	43

Conclusion

- ◆ Good mental health is one of leading priorities that needs to be placed high on the agenda of all involved in occupational health.
- ◆ The need for this is most clearly seen from data showing mental disorders as the leading cause for long-term sick leave and disability.
- ◆ Both the current data and data from other countries show how closely mental well – being is linked
 - to the occupational position and secondly
 - how closely mental well-being is linked to psycho-social work environment.

Conclusion

- ◆ Given this information setting priorities in providing service counselling for different occupational groups is needed with increased focus on better service for the unskilled and semi-skilled worker. Furthermore, managers need to organize their firms in a manner that is clearly linked to better mental well-being of the worker.