



JOHNSTONE'S JOURNAL is published monthly, and designed to provide topical information of interest not only to plan administrators, but to all employees who enjoy coverage under the benefit plan. Feel free to make copies, and use as a payroll staffer.

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Workplace Mental Health The Importance of Mental Health Strategies to Your Organization

Mental Health at Work

People spend more waking hours at work than anywhere else and businesses depend on their people to be at work, getting the job done. The work environment has an immense effect on the well-being of its employees.

Successful companies know that improving the health and wellness of its employees has a significant positive affect by reducing absenteeism rates, and decreasing the number and duration of short- and long-term disability claims. With all of the competing demands you face running your business, you might feel like throwing up your hands and asking "why this too?" The answer is: because the long-term benefits will far outweigh any short-term costs.

How This Helps Your Organization

Mental health issues are widely recognized as the number one cause of lost productivity in the workplace. Unresolved issues can also lead to low morale, and absenteeism. Conversely, employees with access to services that help them through difficult situations can result in:

- Increased productivity
- Reduced disability claims
- Retention of staff
- Reduced absenteeism
- Improved morale

Disability Claims

Mental health issues—primarily depression and anxiety—are one of the largest costs of disability claims and are on the rise. Insurers report that 30% of the number of disability claims and 70% of their costs are related to mental health problems. Getting control of this problem before an employee loses work time is the only effective way to manage the problem and decrease the financial burden.

New Standards on Mental Health

As a result of the significant impact mental health is having to employers in lost productivity, new for

2013, the [National Standard of Canada Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace](#) was developed as a voluntary standard intended to help Canadian employers develop and continuously improve safe and healthy work environments for their employees. Learn more by clicking the link above or go to www.CSA.ca, and search "psychological health."

Help for Your Employees

Group benefit providers (insurers) recognize that improving employee wellness reduces claims costs. Most have developed comprehensive web based libraries of information that has been vetted by medical experts. Access to this information is generally free for members covered by that insurer. If you need help communicating this information to your employees, contact Johnstone's Benefits.

Employee Assistance Plans (EAPs)

EAPs have specifically been designed to help employees with emotional and psychological problems. Recent Canadian studies of the effectiveness of EAPs confirm that they are a good value to employers. They are proven to help with overall mental health and improving productivity. The study also confirms that the sooner an employee consults with an expert, such as an EAP, the lower the financial cost the business incurs over time, and the less direct physical and mental damage occurs to employees themselves.

Taking Action

Without a plan, employers can spend much of their time dealing with situations that could have been prevented or better managed. Consult an expert, such as an EAP, to develop an action plan to identify potential and existing issues, and develop wellness strategies. While you may not see immediate results, the overall long-term gains are worth the commitment you make today to a healthier, more productive, and ultimately more successful workplace. Call us for help with this.