Best Practices in Mental Health in the Workplace

2023 Chesapeake AIHA & ASSP Educational Seminar
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Johns Hopkins POE Total Worker Health Center in Mental Health

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Agenda

Introduction

State of Mental Health in the Workplace

Literature Reviews

• Psychosocial, Organizational and Environmental Stressors, Interventions, and Expected Outcomes
  ➢ POE Measurement and Evaluation Framework

• Best Practices Domains in Mental Health in the Workplace
  ➢ Carolyn C. Mattingly Award in Mental Health in the Workplace
  ➢ Award Winning Programs: Case Studies
Institute for Health and Productivity Studies

MISSION: To bridge the gap between academia, the business community, and healthcare policy world by leveraging scientific research to inform day-to-day business decisions.

• Empirical research focused on the relationship between employee health and well-being, healthcare utilization and cost, and work-related productivity.

• Studies examining the impact of workplace health and well-being strategic initiatives on both individual health and organizational outcomes.
Why the Workplace? Rationale and Evidence Base


• Improvements in the health risk profile of workers can lead to reductions in poor health outcomes, healthcare costs, increased productivity, and positive business results (Goetzel et al., 1999, Edington et al., 2001, Carls et al., 2011, Henke et al. 2019)

Mental Health in the Workplace

Peak prevalence for most mental and behavioral conditions is among people between **20-60 years old** – prime working age

- Work-related stress is a leading contributor to people’s overall state of mental health
- Stress and anxiety, along with other mental health problems, are related to higher absenteeism, lower productivity and poorer engagement
- Range of stressors increased during pandemic – and more visible and talked about
The State of Mental Health in the U.S.

Source: Mental Health America 2023 Report [https://mhanational.org/issues/state-mental-health-america](https://mhanational.org/issues/state-mental-health-america)
Mental Health of Workers in Healthcare Systems

• Occupational stress and burnout are high among clinicians, nurses, and allied professionals (rate of 35% to 54%)

• Healthcare system workers disproportionally impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic
  • Survey findings showed that most respondents reported feeling overwhelmed (75%) exhausted and burnt out (76%), frustrated (77%), anxious (86%), and stressed (93%)

• Burnout and poor work-life balance exact a high cost to individuals’ health, but also leads to impacts on:
  • Patient outcomes
  • Health system costs
  • Worker healthcare costs
  • High turnover
  • Lost productivity

Sources:
Literature Review #1: Psychosocial, Organizational and Environmental Stressors, Interventions, and Expected Outcomes
Target Workforce:
- Healthcare workers
- Allied professionals
- Agricultural workers
- Remote workers
- Vulnerable workers
- Other essential workers
Addressing Workplace Stressors Emerging from the Pandemic

Ying Zhang, MsPH¹, Elizabeth H. Woods, MsPH¹, Enid Chung Roemer, PhD², Karen B. Kent, MPH², and Ron Z. Goetz, PhD²

Keywords
workplace, wellbeing, mental health, Corona Virus-2019, stressors

Introduction

Faced with new and exacerbated stressors on workers due to COVID-19, employers are asking what they can do to support employees’ mental health and wellbeing and rebuild a resilient workforce. To serve as a guide, this paper reviews workplace interventions aimed at improving workers’ mental health and wellbeing. The review was developed with support from the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) Total Worker Health® Centers of Excellence as part of a broader program to design, implement, and evaluate large-scale initiatives focused on mental home-life boundaries, especially for women who are often expected to take on a larger share of family and childcare responsibilities in addition to their paying jobs.⁹,¹¹

Fear of COVID-19 exposure and infection was another psychosocial stressor. For months, the novel nature of the virus and limited treatment options fostered intense anxiety among workers who were unable to limit contact to infected individuals. Some workers were faced with the dilemma of protecting the health of members of their household or keeping a job that provided needed income. For workers who were able to limit physical contact with others, social isolation took a heavy toll on their sense of connect-
Measurement & Evaluation Framework

Stressors

- Intervention fidelity and dose delivered
- Dose received (e.g., program satisfaction)
- Reach (i.e., participation rate/completion)

Interventions

- Worker mental health & wellbeing
- Engagement, job satisfaction & productivity
- Infection & injuries

Expected Outcomes
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stressors</th>
<th>Interventions</th>
<th>Expected Outcomes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Work-life conflict</td>
<td>• Self-care</td>
<td>• Decrease in:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Fear of Covid-19 exposure &amp; infection</td>
<td>• Employee empowerment</td>
<td>• Psychological stress, distress, and anxiety</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Social isolation</td>
<td>• Social support &amp; connectedness</td>
<td>• Burnout</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Lack of social support</td>
<td>• Mental health resources, training &amp; services</td>
<td>• Stigma and feelings of isolation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Post-traumatic and other stress disorders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Insomnia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Anger and cynicism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Behavioral deviance</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Psychosocial

• **Sample Program:** Digital Psychological Wellbeing Support Package for Healthcare Workers

• **Intervention:** Healthcare workers used an interactive e-learning package to locate information and resources on COVID-19-related psychological impacts, psychologically supportive teams, communication, social support, self-care, managing emotions, etc.

• **Results:** High participation & satisfaction. Accessed 17,633 times within 7 days of release. High satisfaction. Recruited healthcare workers and students (n = 55) assessed the package and reported high content quality, intervention practicality, and package usability.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organizational Stressors</th>
<th>Interventions</th>
<th>Expected Outcomes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Increased workload</td>
<td>- Assistance programs providing concrete support (e.g., emergency, financial, flextime benefits)</td>
<td>- Decrease in:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Poor human resource management (e.g., staffing shortages, irregular shifts, unclear</td>
<td>- Supportive leadership &amp; management practices</td>
<td>- Employee turnover rates and voluntary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>workplace policies)</td>
<td>- Regular, clear, and coordinated communication</td>
<td>- resignations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Economic/job insecurity (e.g., low wages)</td>
<td></td>
<td>- Inability to fill job vacancies</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Lack of employer-sponsored benefits</td>
<td></td>
<td>- Poor employee performance</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Organizational

• **Sample Program:** Inclusive Leadership Style

• **Intervention:** Managers are visible, accessible, and available to employees; invites and appreciates others' contributions

• **Results:** High Satisfaction. Inclusive leadership negatively correlated to psychological distress and positively correlated to work engagement. Created an open and engaging environment for healthcare workers. Reduced psychological distress significantly and sustainably.
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Stressors</th>
<th>Interventions</th>
<th>Expected Outcomes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Physical environment conducive to virus transmission</td>
<td>• Reinforcing infection control measures</td>
<td>• Decrease in:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Frequent face-to-face interactions</td>
<td>• Providing PPE and clear instructions on use</td>
<td>• Risk of contracting COVID-19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Loosely enforced safety protocols</td>
<td>• Adding safety trainings and workshops</td>
<td>• Risk of sustaining an injury</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Limited access to personal protective equipment (PPE)</td>
<td>• Reaching out directly to employees regarding environmental interventions</td>
<td>• Substance and alcohol use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Unclear regulatory guidance and communication</td>
<td>• Ensuring workspaces are well-ventilated, accommodate social distancing, and</td>
<td>• All-cause mortality</td>
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<td></td>
<td>installing appropriate physical barriers</td>
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**Environmental Stressors**

**Interventions**

**Expected Outcomes**

- Decrease in:
  - Risk of contracting COVID-19
  - Risk of sustaining an injury
  - Substance and alcohol use
  - All-cause mortality
Environmental

• **Sample Program:** Universal Masking Policy

• **Intervention:** Requirement of mask-wearing for all healthcare workers at the workplace

• **Results:** Universal masking was associated with a decreasing COVID-19 incidence trend among healthcare workers, while the infection rate continued to rise in the surrounding community.
Summary

The COVID-19 pandemic has forced organization to quickly adapt to the stressors negatively impacting the health and wellbeing of workers.

Evidence-based interventions are available to employers within POE framework that are effective when applied with best practice strategies.

Lessons learned to be better prepared to address psychosocial, organizational, and environmental stressors to improve worker mental health and wellbeing.
Next Steps

- **Study Population:**
  - Healthcare workers and allied professionals

- **Goal:** Enhance culture of health

- **Objectives:** Support psychosocial needs/concerns through organizational strategies and environmental supports

- **Intervention Study:**
  - Augmented Peer Support/Champion Program with Leadership Training
Literature Review #2: Best Practices Domains
A Call to Action

• 2016 Mental Health in the Workplace Summit
• Consortium Recommendations:
  • Developing a quantitative scorecard for measuring mental health in the workplace
  • Shaping workplace cultures to value mental health and well-being
  • Enhancing the dissemination and accessibility of workplace mental health information
  • Establishing an award to recognize exemplary programs and incentivize employer participation in mental health initiatives

Organizational Best Practices Supporting Mental Health in the Workplace

Ashley Wu, MHS, Enid Chung Roemer, PhD, Karen B. Kent, MPH, David W. Ballard, PsyD, MBA, and Ron Z. Goetzel, PhD

Objective: To provide a narrative review of best and promising practices for achieving exemplary mental health in the workplace as the foundation for the inaugural Camlyn C. Mattingly Award for Mental Health in the Workplace.

Methods: Research was drawn from peer-reviewed articles using the search terms associated with workplace mental health. Results: Eight categories of best practices were identified: (1) culture, (2) robust mental health benefits, (3) mental health resources, (4) workplace policies and practices, (5) healthy work environment, (6) leadership-support, (7) outcomes measurement, and (8) innovation. Conclusion: The review provided the scientific backing to support criteria developed for the Camlyn C. Mattingly Award for Mental Health in the Workplace. By recognizing organizations that apply evidence-based practices in their health and well-being programs, the Mattingly Award may inspire employers to adopt best practices.
Best Practices Domains

1  2  3  4
5  6  7  8
1. Culture

- Positive organizational culture that supports employee mental health
  - Human capital strategy
  - Governance and leadership
  - Social and physical environmental supports
2. Robust Mental Health Benefits

- Affordable access to a broad range of services
- Accessibility considers quality of care, availability of an adequate provider network, and reasonableness of any service limits
3. Employer-sponsored Mental Health Resources

- Strong Employee Assistance Programs
- Stress Management Programs
- Mental Health Training

• Safety/Ergonomics
• Sexual Harassment
• Racism and discrimination
• Workplace Violence
• Bullying / Incivility
• Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

• Written/formal
• Communicated
• Actively supported
5. Healthy Work Environment

OPPORTUNITIES TO MENTALLY RECHARGE

OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOCIAL CONNECTEDNESS AND INCLUSION

SUPPORTING POSITIVE HEALTH BEHAVIORS AND SELF-CARE
6. Leadership Support

- Management-specific training
- Modeling healthy behaviors
- Utilizing effective and supportive management tools and techniques
- Managing work- and job-related factors that can affect mental health
7. Outcomes

- Establishment/enhancement of best-practices for a healthy culture
- Engagement in programs/policies/environmental supports
- Improvements on psychological wellbeing indicators/reduction of incidences of mental health problems
- Engagement/satisfaction with job and work
8. Innovation

- Novel solutions that increase awareness and access to care resources, and enhances mental health outcomes for workers
Best Practices Domains

1. Culture
2. Robust mental health benefits
3. Employer-sponsored mental health resources
4. Workplace policies and practices
5. Healthy work environment
6. Leadership support
7. Outcomes evaluation
8. Innovation
An Employer Recognition Program

The Carolyn C. Mattingly Award for Mental health in the Workplace recognizes and celebrates exemplary organizations that advance the mental health and well-being of their workforce, while also serving as role models for other employers.
2022 Inaugural Recipients

• WINNERS
  • Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld LLP
  • Metro Nashville Public Schools
  • University of Virginia

• HONORABLE MENTIONS
  • Associated Bank
  • Franklin County Cooperative
  • General Electric
UVA’s Approach to Post-COVID Workplace Mental Health

• Expansion of childcare and Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) benefits;

• Increased availability and accessibility to evidence-based mental health resources, programming, and treatment across various platforms;

• Establishment of an Emergency Assistance Fund and Employee Assistance Funds;

• Remote work and flexible hours; and

• Education of managers to help sustain a healthy workplace culture.
Metro Nashville Public Schools –
Removing Barriers to Mental Health Care

MNSP’s comprehensive approach to increasing access and removing barriers

• Healthcare centers placed strategically in regions with high need

• Screening practices standardized to benefit employees who are disproportionately impacted by inaccessible resources

• Mental health benefits include:
  • $0 copay for mental health visits
  • No limits to services nor any spending caps
  • Virtual appointments

• Free apps for employees and families to engage in:
  • On-site and virtual counseling
  • Mental health and wellbeing programming
  • Pharmacy services with same-day responsiveness for emergencies
  • Telehealth appointments where teachers can access care during their breaks, before or after school
Be Smart, Live Well
Akin Gump – “Meet them where they are”

Akin Gump’s holistic approach to addressing mental health in the workplace

• Destigmatizing mental health by creating open space for discussion on mental health with leadership engagement and modeling

• Increasing accessibility for all employees and their families with free, supplementary, 24/7 access to various services, tools, and programs
  • Coaching
  • Mental health awareness training
  • Mental wellbeing and mindfulness webinars
  • Mindfulness apps
  • Mental health advisor program
  • Parental support

• Flexible work schedules, hours, and options for hybrid work
be
Well
2023 Application Cycle now open

The Carolyn C. Mattingly Award for MENTAL HEALTH IN THE WORKPLACE

Learn more & apply at: https://theluvuproject.org/workplaceaward/
Questions?
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• Christin Lewis, Co-Founder, The Luv u Project

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• Ashley Wu, MHS '20, Former Research Assistant, IHPS
• Ying Zhang, MsPH '23, Research Assistant, IHPS

Thank You!

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Johns Hopkins P.O.E. Total Worker Health Center in Mental Health
Carolyn C. Mattingly Award for Mental Health in the Workplace
Protecting Health, Saving Lives—Millions at a Time