

**APPROACHES TO TACKLING  
MENTAL HEALTH  
IN THE  
WORKPLACE**



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# TODAY'S OBJECTIVES

## THE PROBLEM

Current state of mental illness in the workplace

## APPROACH

Ways employers can approach the problem

## SOLUTIONS

Strategies for keeping employees mentally healthy and well

# MENTAL HEALTH CONTINUUM

(Bill Howatt, 2015)



Optimal MH	Functional MH	Strained MH	MH Issue	Mental Illness
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Calm and steady</li> <li>- Normal mood fluctuations</li> <li>- Socially active</li> <li>- Self regulation</li> <li>- Performing/ functioning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Presents as content</li> <li>- Most days enough energy</li> <li>- Able to cope most days</li> <li>- Occasional loss of emotional control</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Stress is typically hard to recover from</li> <li>- Increased fatigue</li> <li>- Health habits slip and struggle to cope</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Excessive anxiety/ stress</li> <li>- Noticeable fatigue</li> <li>- Symptoms have neg. impact on quality of life</li> <li>- May use meds or self medicate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Chronic symptoms to be managed</li> <li>- Risk of harm</li> <li>- Impaired functioning</li> <li>- Avoidance or withdrawing</li> </ul>

# DEFINITION OF TERMS

## WHAT IS MENTAL HEALTH?

The **capacity to feel, think and act** in ways that **enhance our ability to enjoy** life and **deal with the challenges** we face (Public Health Agency of Canada, 2013)

## WHAT IS MENTAL ILLNESS?

A **medical condition** that **disrupts a person's** thinking, feeling, mood, ability to relate to others, and daily functioning... resulting in a **diminished capacity** for coping with the ordinary demands of life (American Psychiatric Association)

## WHAT IS A PSYCHOLOGICALLY HEALTHY WORKPLACE?

A **respectful and productive environment** that makes every reasonable **effort to promote and protect** the mental health of employees (Employment and Social Development Canada)





# WORKPLACE WELLNESS

**AN ORGANIZED, EMPLOYEE-SPONSORED PROGRAM DESIGNED TO SUPPORT EMPLOYEES AS THEY ADOPT AND SUSTAIN BEHAVIORS THAT REDUCE HEALTH RISKS, IMPROVE QUALITY OF LIFE, ENHANCE PERSONAL EFFECTIVENESS, AND BENEFIT THE ORGANIZATION'S BOTTOM LINE.**

**HBR, 2010**

# EMOTIONAL WELLBEING MOST IMPORTANT PRIORITY

EMOTIONAL  
**83%**



PHYSICAL  
**63%**

FINANCIAL  
**58%**

SOCIAL  
**46%**

Source: 2018 Willis Towers Watson, Best Practices Survey, Canada

# CURRENT STATE OF MENTAL HEALTH



COST

**1 IN 5 EXPERIENCE MENTAL HEALTH OR ADDICTION PROBLEM WITH A COST OF OVER 50 BILLION TO OUR ECONOMY**



SCALE

**MENTAL DISORDERS AMONG THE LEADING CAUSES OF ILL-HEALTH AND DISABILITY WORLDWIDE**



SUICIDE

**APPROXIMATELY 11 DEATHS PER DAY BY SUICIDE, 1 MILLION A YEAR WORLDWIDE**



MISPERCEPTION

**46% OF CANADIANS THOUGHT PEOPLE USE MENTAL ILLNESS AS AN EXCUSE**



STIGMA

**2/3 OF PEOPLE DON'T SEEK HELP DUE TO STIGMA AND DISCRIMINATION**

- MHCC, WHO, STATS CAN

# WORKPLACE MENTAL HEALTH



## DISABILITY

Mental illness is a leading cause of disability claims in Canada.

## DISEASE

Workplace burden of mental illness is 1.5 X greater than all cancers combined and 7 X greater than all infectious disease.

## EAP

2/3 of depressed or anxious individuals have not sought medical care.

## ACCESS

6 months to one year waitlists for counselling or therapy.

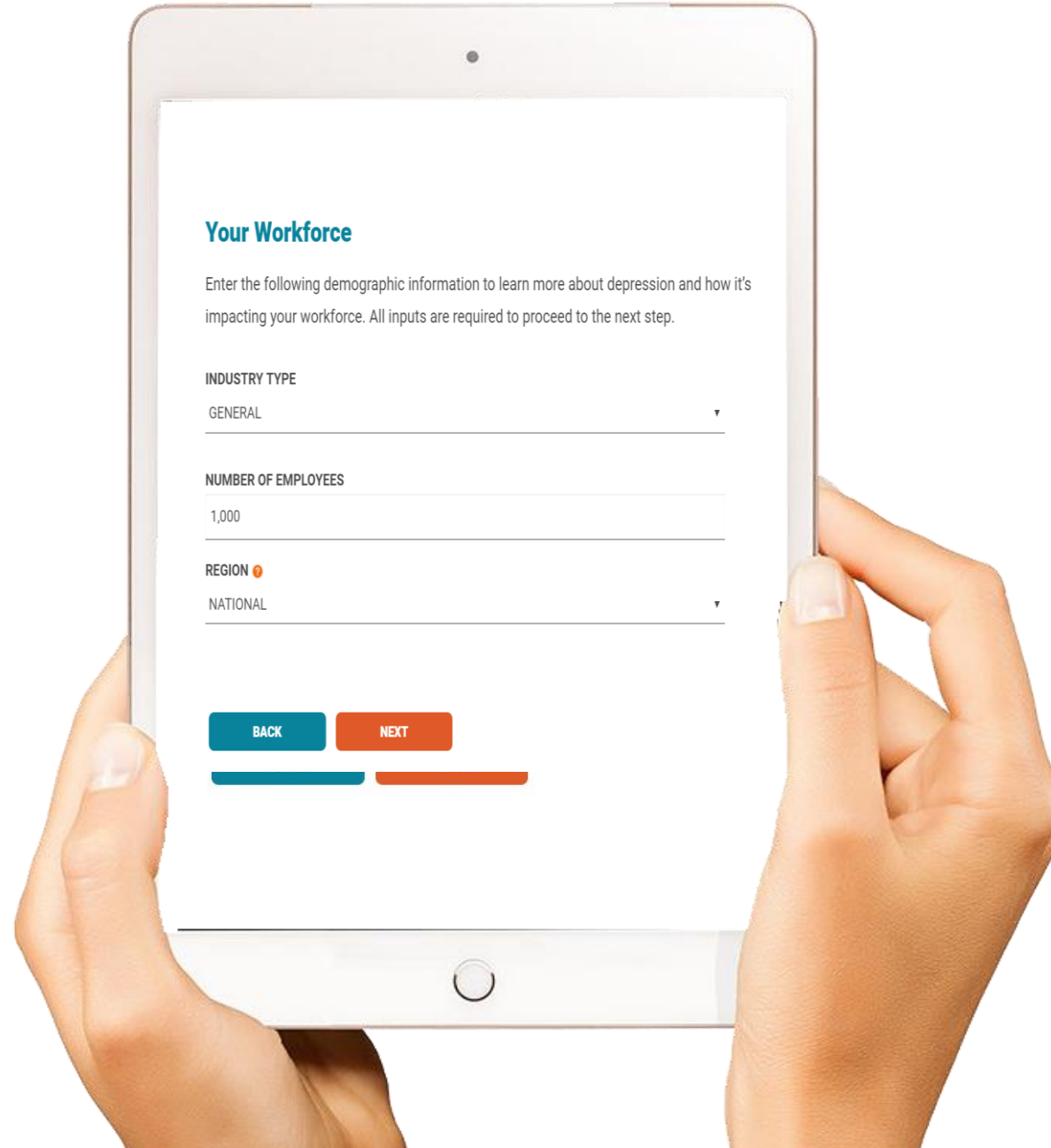


# WORKPLACE STATS:

- In any given week, 500,000 Canadians are unable to work due to mental health problems.
- Approximately one-third of Canadian workers perceive work-related stress to be high.
- In 2011, mental health problems and illnesses among working adults in Canada cost employers more than \$17.5 billion in lost productivity from absenteeism, presenteeism, and turnover.

(MHCC)

# COST OF MENTAL



**Your Workforce**

Enter the following demographic information to learn more about depression and how it's impacting your workforce. All inputs are required to proceed to the next step.

**INDUSTRY TYPE**

GENERAL ▼

**NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES**

1,000

**REGION** ⓘ

NATIONAL ▼

**BACK** **NEXT**

Progress bar: 1 of 2 steps completed (blue bar for 'Your Workforce', orange bar for the next step).





# PRESENTEEISM

IS THE REAL EFFECT.

Mental illness

Overload

PRESENTTEEISM







**3X**

**PRESENTEEISM OVER  
ABSENTEEISM**

**3 of 8**

**HOURS PRODUCTIVE  
IN AVG WORKDAY**

**\$150b**

**PRESENTEEISM  
COSTS PER YR IN US**



# THE PROBLEM

**Mental health listed as the top disabling condition for both STD & LTD**

- Willis Towers Watson, 2018

**Only 1/3 of employers have a mental health strategy, with 2/3 of employees suffering with depression and anxiety not getting the help they need**

- Benefits Canada, 2018



# APPROACH



# EMERGENCE OF HEALTH CULTURE

**86% of employers think it is important to enhance employees' total wellbeing, with emotional wellbeing as top priority compared to 29% over last three years**

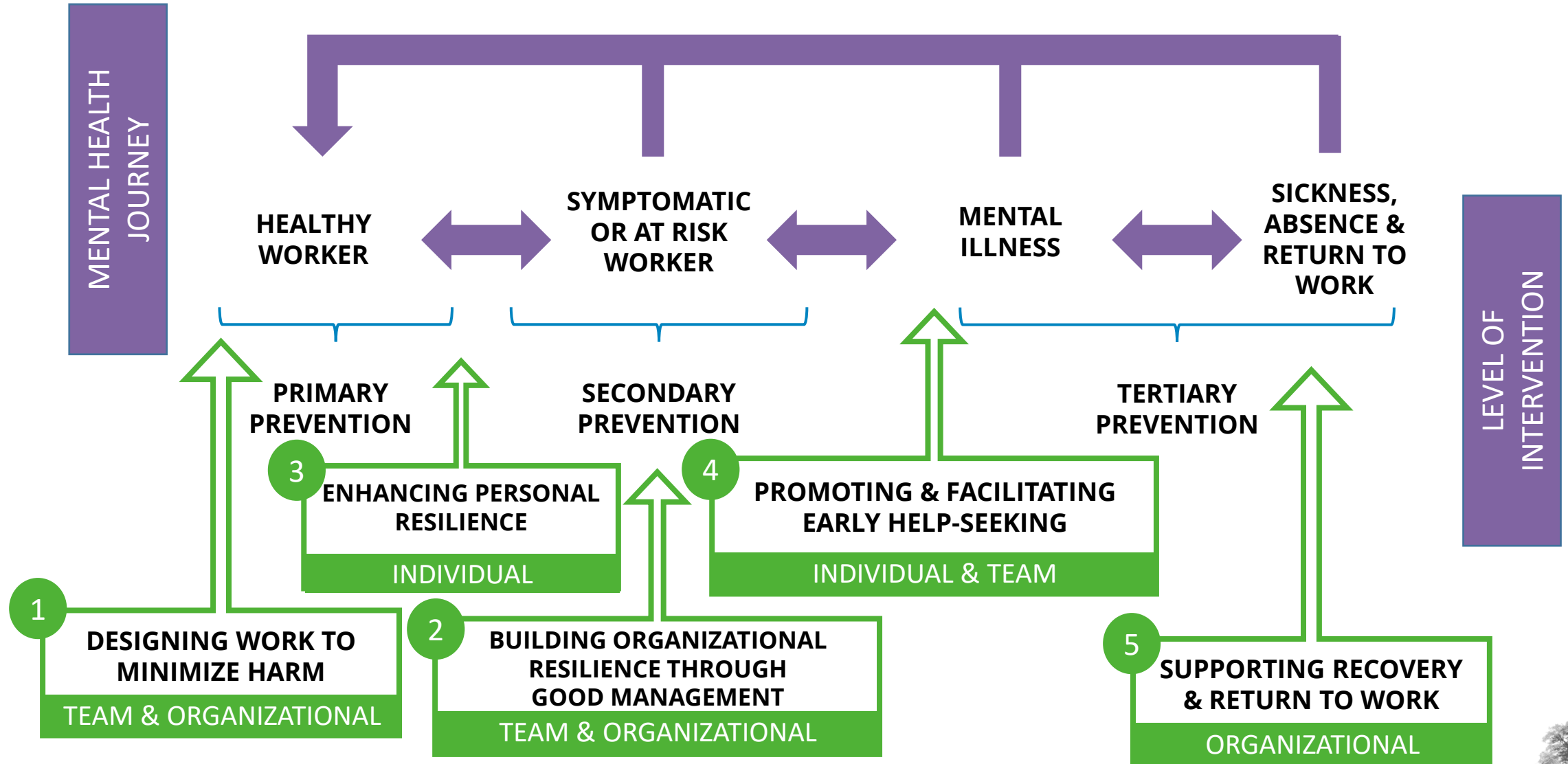
- (Willis Towers Watson, 2018)

**Mental health strategy will be essential:**

- **Plan**
- **Do**
- **Check**
- **Act**

# MULTIPLE LEVELS OF INTERVENTION

Glozier (2017)





# PRIMARY INTERVENTION

GENERALLY WELL

# SECONDARY INTERVENTION

STRUGGLING

# TERTIARY INTERVENTION

INCAPACITATED

## SOLUTIONS

- Resilience building
- Mindfulness
- Awareness
- Mental health education & prevention
- Mental health stigma reduction
- eMental health

## SOLUTIONS

- Employee screening and guidance
- Peer support programming
- Leadership awareness training
- CBT coaching and training
- Mindfulness

## SOLUTIONS

- Employee assistance programming
- In-house psychological support
- Short and long term disability
- Return to work programming





# WHAT THE SCIENCE SAYS:

Secondary level interventions  
Strongest effect sizes  
Tertiary level targeted interventions  
Individualised and continuous  
Adapted to the individual  
Effective in reducing work-related stress effects  
phenomena (Tertilt and Winslow, 2015; Tertilt and Winslow et al., 2018)  
other type of intervention. (Richardson and Rothstein, 2008)



# SOLUTIONS



## **TOP 3 ACTIONS THAT EMPLOYERS ARE ARE PLANNING OR CONSIDERING IN THE NEXT 3 YEARS:**

**1. HAVE A COMPANY-WIDE EMOTIONAL HEALTH  
STRATEGY/ACTION PLAN.**

**2. OFFER TRAINING & COACHING TO MANAGERS  
SPECIFICALLY TO IDENTIFY EMOTIONAL HEALTH  
ISSUES.**

**3. MEASURE STRESS AND LEADING CAUSES.**

Willis Towers Watson, 2018



# SOLUTIONS

**EAP  
PROGRAMS**



**AWARENESS &  
EARLY SCREENING**



**RESILIENCE TRAINING  
PROGRAMS**



• **MINDFULNESS**

**DIGITAL  
MENTAL HEALTH**



• **CBT**



# EAP PROGRAMS

49% OF DEPRESSED OR ANXIOUS INDIVIDUALS HAVE NOT SOUGHT MEDICAL CARE

EVEN THOUGH 77% OF EMPLOYERS PROVIDE EAPs TO THEIR EMPLOYEES IN 2017, PARTICIPATION IS VERY LOW  
- **BIGGEST BARRIERS: STIGMA AND TIME**

(heart and stroke foundation)

Research suggests that each dollar invested in wellness-based EAP generates a \$7 savings in healthcare-related costs

(University of Louisville, 2017)





# AWARENESS & SCREENING

“Best outcomes for depression lie in early diagnosis followed by rapid implementations of optimal, individualized treatment.”

(Conference Board of Canada)

• MANAGERIAL  
• SCREENING TOOLS  
• LEADER TRAINING

# THE MENTAL HEALTH CONTINUUM MODEL



**CATEGORIZES MENTAL HEALTH ON A CONTINUUM WITH INDICATORS OF DECLINING MENTAL HEALTH, BUT LACKS DIAGNOSTIC LABELS**





# RESILIENCE TRAINING

Resilience training approaches seek to enhance employee resilience by developing **personal assets** improving their ability to cope with, and recover from, work demands and stressors.

- A REVIEW OF WORKPLACE RESILIENCE TRAINING PROGRAMS FROM 2003 TO 2014 FOUND THAT 10% OF INDIVIDUALS WITH RESILIENCE TRAINING HAD IMPROVED WELLBEING AND MENTAL HEALTH IN THE WORKPLACE, AS HAVING VALUE IN EMPLOYEES, AND IMPROVED PERFORMANCE OVERALL

(ROBERTSON ET AL., 2015)





# RESILIENCE TRAINING TOPICS

**Resilience training in the workplace may focus on content areas such as:**



**Overcoming  
Interpersonal  
Challenges**



**Managing  
Emotions**



**Coping With  
Work-Related  
Stress**



**Dealing With  
Difficult  
People**



**Improving  
Communication  
Skills**



**Taking On  
New Challenges  
Successfully**



**Guarding  
Against Burnout  
and Overload**



**Remaining  
Calm Under  
Pressure**



**Improving  
Sleep  
Habits**



**Improving  
Physical  
Health**

# MINDFULNESS TRAINING

**MINDFULNESS:** Intention to have deep awareness of the present moment in an open and curious way.

- Research shows that mindfulness has a number of physical and psychological benefits.
- Mindfulness acts as a stress buffer as more interoceptive awareness and emotion regulation results in less distress/ anxiety and improved mental health. (Chu, 2012; Adele et al., 2016)



# MINDFULNESS AT WORK



**REDUCE STRESS  
& ANXIETY**

(Fennell, 2016; Kim, 2013)



**IMPROVED  
SLEEP**

(Carlson, 2005; Ong, 2014)



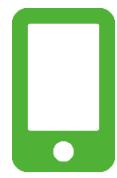
**IMPROVED FOCUS  
& ATTENTION**

(Hyland 2015; Zeiden, 2010)



**PERFORMANCE &  
RELATIONSHIPS**

(Hyland, 2015 Glomb, 2012; )



# DIGITAL MENTAL HEALTH

A close-up photograph of a person's hands holding a black smartphone, with the screen lit up. The image is partially obscured by a diagonal black bar and several colorful triangles (blue, green, purple, grey) that point towards the right.

## HIGH TECH HIGH TOUCH

Meta analysis of all peer reviewed, RCT studies showed a significant positive effect on measures of depression, anxiety or stress **post-intervention** compared to control and at follow up. (Stratton et al, 2017)

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# THE DOWNLOAD FOR YOUR WORKPLACE

- EMPLOYERS NEED A MENTAL HEALTH STRATEGY



- MENTAL HEALTH SOLUTIONS MUST BE EVIDENCE-BASED & ENGAGING

- APPROACHES NEED TO ADDRESS DIFFERENT LEVELS OF INTERVENTION





COPEMAN  
HEALTHCARE CENTRE

*Thank you*

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