



# Building Mental Health into Operations During COVID-19

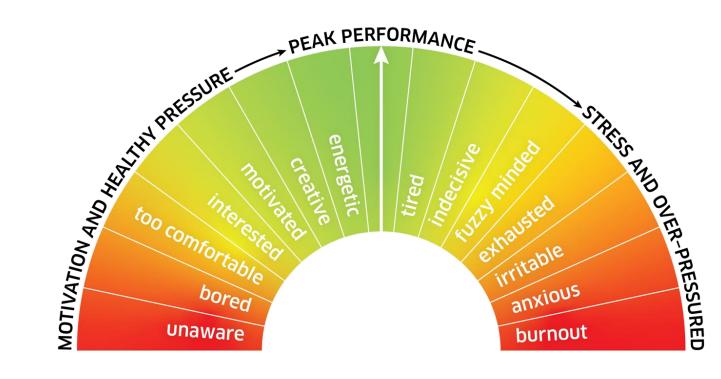
**RCC Retail Community Video Conference – Sep 16, 2020** 

Liz Horvath, B.A.Sc., CRSP
Manager, Workplace Mental Health
Opening Minds
Mental Health Commission of Canada

# Pandemic Impact on Retail Workers



- A lot of extra work
- Pressure to stay healthy
- Customer satisfaction
- Harassment and violence
- Balance
- Access to resources



2

# **Dealing with Distressed Customers**



- Early detection system
- Train everybody
- Intervene in pairs
- Personalize every issue
- Work with others

"The behaviours, not the disease, are what we can manage."

Katie Robinette, Executive Director, Healthy Minds Canada

3

### **Preventive Actions**

- Reduce stigma
- Recognition of signs and symptoms of mental illness
- Guidance on where to go for support
- Education about trauma and its effects
- Education about the effects of cumulative stress
- Training for managers and supervisors on interpersonal skills and empathy



**BMC Psychology** 

### Protecting the psychological wellbeing of staff exposed to disaster or emergency at work: a qualitative study



Samantha K, Brooks<sup>11</sup> Rebecca Dunn<sup>1</sup>, Richard Amibt<sup>2</sup>, G, James Rubin<sup>11</sup> and Neil Greenberg<sup>11</sup>

who have experienced a trauma such as a disaster. The purpose of this study was to explore employees seceptions of workplace support and help-sæiking in the context of a disaster.

Methods: Forty employees in England took part in semi-structured intensives. Thematic analysis was used to

eigency at work. Most had little training in how to prepaie for, and cope with, the psychological impact. They eceived stigms around mental health and treatment for osuchological issues which often made them reluctant se much eraffer than proactive. Interpersonal relationships at work were viewed as being important sources of nd developing listering skills and empaths.

Conclusions: Organisations can take steps to reduce the psychological impact of disasters on employees. This ould be done through provision of training workshops incorporating mental health education to reduce stigms, nd team-building exercises to encourage supportive workplace relationships

Keywords: Disetters, Employees, Mental health, Qualitative rewards, Psychological impac

Trauma-exposed populations are frequently a topic of natural disasters. With catastrophic events becoming individuals experience trauma together. Commonly respond to such themats is impensitive, as the safety and people are exposed to disasters as part of an occupad rescue workers, but also groups such as healthcare

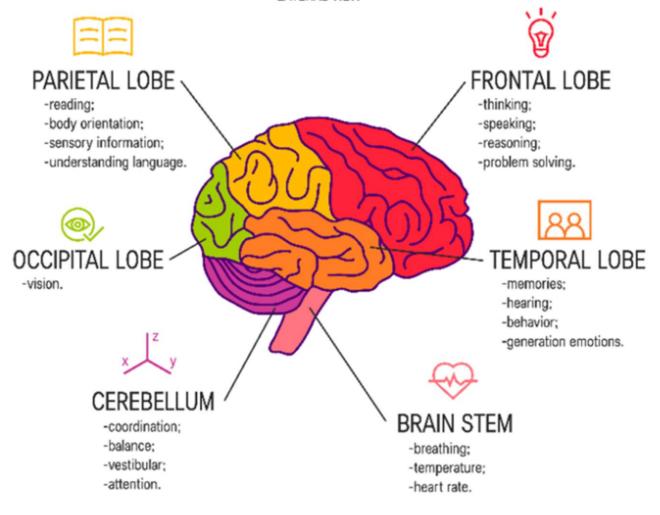
scholarly discussion, particularly in recent years follow-more prevalent worldwide, it has been suggested that all ing the rise of transnational terrorism [1]. With much organizations should ensure they are prepared for disasresearch focused at an individual level [2], less attention ten as they may impact on staff wellbeing [3]. Under

wellbeing of those affected is dependent upon it [4]. and for information, whilst dealing with their own



### FUNCTIONAL AREAS OF THE BRAIN

LATERAL VIEW





### The Working Mind - Mental Health Continuum Model

HEALTHY	REACTING	INJURED	ILL
Normal fluctuations in mood	Nervousness, irritability, sadness	Anxiety, anger, pervasive sadness, hopelessness	Excessive anxiety, easily enraged, depressed
Normal sleep patterns	Trouble sleeping	Restless or disturbed sleep	Unable to fall or stay asleep or sleeping too much
Physically well, full of energy	Tired/low energy, muscle tension, headaches	Fatigue, aches and pains	Exhaustion, physical illness
Consistent performance	Procrastination	Decreased performance	Unable to perform duties
Socially active	Decreased social activity	Social avoidance or withdrawal	Isolation, avoiding social events
No trouble/impact due to substance use	Limited to some trouble/impact due to substance use	Increased trouble/impact due to substance use	Dependence
			Suicidal thoughts and/or intentions

### MH Continuum Self-Check Tool



The Mental Health Continuum

Self-Check tool is a useful way to monitor the mental well-being of your workers (and your organization) and help you identify the impact of your efforts to manage workplace mental health.

### Mental Health First Aid

MHFA is the help provided to a person developing a mental health problem, experiencing a mental health crisis, or a worsening of their mental health.

More than 400,000 Canadians have been trained since 2007.

### The Working Mind

The Working Mind (TWM) is an education-based program designed to address and promote mental health and reduce the stigma of mental illness in a workplace setting.

This training is aimed to:

- · Improve short-term performance and long-term mental health outcomes
- · Reduce barriers to care and encourage early access to care
- Provide the tools and resources required to manage and support employees who may be experiencing a mental illness
- Assist supervisors in maintaining their own mental health as well as promoting positive



# Workplace Factors







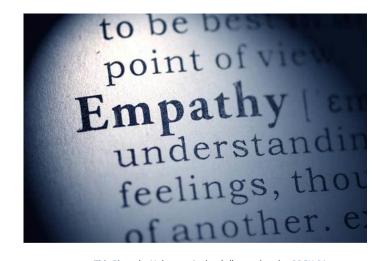
Download free:

https://theworkingmind.ca/workplace-resources

### Clear Leadership & Expectations



- Communication plan
- Acknowledge feelings, fears and concerns
- Celebrate successes, reward and recognize
- Communicate about:
  - Signs and symptoms of Covid-19 infection
  - Health and safety measures
  - Chain of command
  - Accommodation of high risk workers
  - Expectations to comply with law and guidelines
  - Available resources
  - Sources of information



<u>This Photo</u> by Unknown Author is licensed under <u>CC BY-SA</u>

# **Protection of Physical Safety**



Present when a worker's psychological, as well as physical safety, is protected from hazards and risks related to the worker's physical environment



# **Protection of Physical Safety**

- ✓ Monitor and manage workload
- ✓ New of equipment, workstations and processes
- ✓ Preventive maintenance for protective systems
- ✓ Work pace and duration
- ✓ Task variability
- ✓ Right to refuse unsafe work



# Protection for High-Risk Workers



- Consider accommodation for workers who live with anxiety or mood disorders
  - Adjustment to workload or schedules
  - Expedited or increased benefits for mental health support and treatment
  - Systematic check-in, buddy system
  - Additional supports to help with management of symptoms

### Protection for High-Risk Workers



- Contamination obsession and cleaning and washing compulsions during pandemic can result in:
  - More intense sensory experiences
  - Over-estimate threat, excessive worry
  - Dry, chapped skin, dermatitis
  - Increased risk of super-imposed skin infection and chemical exposure injuries



This Photo by Unknown Author is licensed under CC BY-SA-NC

# **Supporting Your Workers**



Workload Management Psychological Demands

Balance

# Psychological and Social Support



- Self-care coordinator
- Access to wellbeing and mental health services
- Spiritual care counsellor
- Peer support team
- Mental Health First Aider
- Managers and supervisors trained in interpersonal communication and empathetic listening

# Psychological and Social Support



Talking to Someone in Crisis during COVID-19

How can I help my team poster

How am I doing poster

How can I help someone in mental distress poster

The Working Mind COVID-19 Self-care & Resilience Guide

Coping With Stress, Anxiety, And Substance Use During Covid-19

Coping with Stress, Anxiety, and Substance Use During Covid-19: How Animals Can Help

Virtual Care for Mental Health and Substance Use During COVID-19

Managing COVID-19 financial stress

How to manage return anxiety as the lockdown lifts

Caring for Others: Virtual crisis response training

# Psychological and Social Support



### Wellness Together Canada: Mental Health and Substance Use Support

### Introduction

We recognize the significant strain that COVID-19 has placed on individuals and families across the country. Many people are concerned about their physical and mental well being. Canadians are being challenged in a number of ways because of isolation, financial and employment uncertainty and disruptions to daily life. Wellness Together Canada provides tools and resources to help Canadians get back on track. These include modules for addressing low mood, worry, substance use, social isolation and relationship issues.

### What is Included

Wellness Together Canada offers the following at no cost to Canadians:

- 1. Wellness self-assessment and tracking.
- 2. Self guided courses, apps, and other resources.
- 3. Group coaching and community of support.
- 4. Counselling by text or phone.

### Where to Start

Click the 'Get Started' button below to create an account. You have the option of completing a wellness self-assessment, and then choosing from the full range of no cost options for support. Without an account you can access immediate support by text and other helpful resources below.

For COVID information and a physical self-assessment of COVID symptoms click here.



Get Started

Sign In

### **Crisis Text Line:**

Adults Text WELLNESS to 741741 Youth Text WELLNESS to 686868

# Emergency: Call 911

# Transitions Between Stressful Events



- Disassociation
- Deep breathing
- The Pause
   <a href="https://thepause.me/">https://thepause.me/</a>



Access to professional debriefing

# **Psychological Protection**



- Social stigma and xenophobia
  - Education about discrimination and xenophobia
  - Communication of policies and procedures for preventing, reporting, and addressing acts of discrimination, harassment and violence

**Video Resource:** 

**Social Stigma and COVID-19: Protecting Your Workers. Interview with Dr. Keith Dobson** 

### Resource Hub: Mental health and wellness during the COVID-19 pandemic

### Tips on talking to someone in crisis during COVID-19



The current CDVID-19 pandemic is a source of anxiety for people across the country and your colleagues, friends or family may reach out to you for support. How should you respond? Use our active listening tips to navigate these sensitive conversations with more confidence.

1. Tell them you're there to listen and help them find the next step.

### EXAMPLE

Tim flere by listen and ill nepty wastif to herp you. I'm not a trusted counterfor or doctor, but i'll do my best to put you on the myst poth:

- 2. Practice engathy by considering the needs of people different than yourself, especially those in
- 3. Pause to reflect on what the caller has told you and share back your understanding, showing the caller they've been heard.
- 4. Mirror back what you're hearing in your lows worth rather that parroting what they've fold you.

### EXAMPLE

T put test my job and i dun't know what to do i have small kids and i don't know if I'll be able to get food on the tuble: I have no idea if I even qualify the \$1."

Helpful answer (mirroring). The hydring you say that south liming very outradicined sathof the uncertainty, and not knowing how to apply for \$7 is even

Unheight answer (parrolling): "The hearing you say that you he worked about going hongry".

5. Validitis the caller's feelings and concerns.

### EXAMPLE

Tim worther about my son, who lives with a mental libress and absort have secure housing. What of the specifies this series?

Helpful answers 7 con let that you care obtail your son very much. If can be hard not be nonthrough the usest-color scenorios.

Unheight asswers: "Everyone feels stressed right now, I have two etherly parents, and they have trouble even using a sniphone.

### Are you creating balance during a pandemic?

As stated in the CAMH's Workplace Mental Health Playbook for Business Leaders, an imbalance between work and family life is a strong risk factor for mental illness - it's been shown to be more detrimental to mental health than work-related stress.

This checklist will help employers focus on balancing their employees energy for optimal psychological and physical functioning in their professional and personal lives.

YES	IN PROGRESS	NO	Do y
			Define f
			Encoura
			Empowe
			Provide prepa
			Supp
			Unde
			Defin
			Re-di
			Focu:
			Enco
			Provi stigm MHF/
			Rotat
			Enco
			Prom healt
			Estat
			Conn their
			Offer
			Provi

### ′ΟU...

lexible work, limits on connectivity and work hours

ge workers to take breaks and to use time off for wellbeing er workers to adjust and to take time for themselves access to virtual stretching, exercising and meal



### The Working Mind COVID-19

Self-care & Resilience Guide

### Mental Health First Aid

MHFA is the help provided to a person developing a mental health problem, experiencing a mental health crisis, or a worsening of their mental health.

More than 400,000 Canadians have been trained since 2007.

### The Working Mind

The Working Mind (TWM) is an education-based program designed to address and promote mental health and reduce the stigma of mental illness in a workplace setting.

This training is aimed to:

- · Improve short-term performance and long-term mental health outcomes
- · Reduce barriers to care and encourage early access to care
- · Provide the tools and resources required to manage and support employees who may be experiencing a mental illness.
- · Assist supervisors in maintaining their own mental health as well as promoting positive



# Thank you/Merci





For more information or to inquire about training or implementing a workplace mental health strategy, please contact:

Liz Horvath
613-325-3818
<a href="mailto:lhealthcommission.ca">lhorvath@mentalhealthcommission.ca</a>

To sign up for email notifications about workplace resources, visit <a href="https://theworkingmind.ca/workplace-resources">https://theworkingmind.ca/workplace-resources</a>

www.mhfa.ca | www.theworkingmind.ca