

## Health and Well-Being

### Helping you grow healthy teams by improving mental health

When we think of workplaces, our minds automatically go to work productivity, deadlines, and profit. A business is focused on the bottom line and if it does not yield healthy financial margins, then it is often considered to be failing or not viable.

Business analysts study return on investments and analyze market trends. They make decisions on products, department re-organizations, and resource needs.

Although all of the above measures have a role, many businesses are overlooking one very important ingredient to the business case analysis. They are disregarding the health of the work environment and the employees who are their most important asset.

Given the alarming statistics regarding the prevalence of mental health issues in the workplace (see insert below), it would be prudent of businesses to take an introspective look at their workers and their environment and to explore opportunities for improvement in order to enhance productivity and boost the bottom line!

This is where occupational therapists assist employers by addressing the physical and mental health of employees and by

nurturing a healthy workplace. The unique training of occupational therapists, our evidence-based practices, and our client-centred, holistic approach is invaluable to today's employers and employees.

Occupational therapists are solution-focussed. We consider the individual person and his/her needs, goals, and most importantly we address occupational performance issues that might be affecting their productivity. We maximize function and improve productivity regardless of a person's limitations. Our services are geared directly to the workplace while always dealing with the individual needs because a person's personal issues affect his/her work performance.

Some of the ways we enable clients to attain improved mental health and assist employers to achieve better functioning and less toxic workplaces include:

#### Individual services:

- > Personal coping skills
  - Stress management
  - Time management
  - Organizational skills
  - Goal setting/prioritizing

...continued on page 2



Work Information Newsletter is developed by Adeena Wisenthal, registered occupational therapist and owner of ERGO-Wise, a centre in Ottawa that specializes in workplace mental health.

This issue focuses on mental health issues in the workplace. Specific tools that occupational therapists offer are outlined and discussed in terms of their impact on personal growth, business improvement and the bottom line.

## Alarming Statistics: We must stop the bleeding in our workplaces!

Reference: Health Canada and The Global Business Economic Roundtable On Addiction and Mental Health

Lost productivity/year due to mental health problems is \$8 billion.

By 2020, Depression will rank second to heart disease as the leading cause of disability worldwide.

7.5 million Canadians-each year, every year-actually suffer depression, anxiety, substance abuse or mental disorder.

Depression most often affects people in their working years, between the ages of 24 and 44.

*A healthy workplace makes good business sense*

## Health and Well-Being

*continued from page 1*

- Basic rhythms of life
  - ◆ Morning routine
  - ◆ After school homework
  - ◆ Evening routine
  - ◆ Bedtime
- Effective communication skills
  - ◆ Assertiveness
  - ◆ Conflict management
  - ◆ Anger management
- Pain management
  - ◆ Pacing/energy conservation
  - ◆ Activity mobilization
  - ◆ Pain control strategies
- Return to work preparation
  - ◆ Following disability leave
  - ◆ Work hardening
  - ◆ Supportive counselling
  - ◆ Need for accommodations
  - ◆ Graduated return to work plans
- Job match
  - ◆ Vocational exploration
  - ◆ Resume writing, cover letters
  - ◆ Interview preparation
  - ◆ Supportive employment & work placement



### At work services:

- Job coaching
  - ◆ On-the-job
  - ◆ Task specific strategies
  - ◆ Organizational skills
  - ◆ Time management
  - ◆ Goal setting/prioritizing
- Duty to accommodate
  - ◆ Assess need for workplace accommodations through a Job Accommodation Assessment
  - ◆ Determine job demands and assess functional abilities
  - ◆ Assist employer to implement accommodations
  - ◆ Ongoing review of needs, effectiveness of accommodations
  - ◆ Workshops, in-service, lunch 'n learns
- Ergonomics
  - ◆ Conduct workplace ergonomic assessments to identify ergonomic risks and offer recommendations to improve workplace ergonomics
  - ◆ Education on proper body mechanics and positioning to prevent injury and minimize absences
  - ◆ Workshops, in-services, lunch 'n learns
- Workplace facilitation
  - ◆ Interpersonal communication
  - ◆ Conflict management
  - ◆ Coaching

- Education
  - ◆ Workplace mental health
  - ◆ Ergonomics
  - ◆ Job accommodation
  - ◆ Other topics as required

Healthy workplaces improve the quality of life for workers resulting in happier employees who are more productive, less dependent on health benefit plans, are absent less often and have higher job satisfaction.

A healthy workplace translates to lower insurance premiums for employers and more profitable business. By creating emotionally and physically healthy work environments that meet the needs of employees, better business follows.



Employers cannot ignore the mental health of their employees. By consulting with an occupational therapist, employers will have access to a variety of important tools in their toolkit that will enable them to promote workplace health and well-being.

ERGO-Wise specializes in workplace mental health. We assist employers promote healthier work environments by offering consultation services including solution-focused problem solving and direct strategies for workplace problems. We help employers in meeting their duty to accommodate employees with physical and/or emotional needs.

We prepare employees to return to work by developing the cognitive work skills they require to be successful at the job as well as addressing the emotional issues related to return-to-work after a disability leave.

Contact us to find out how our team of professionals can make a difference in your workplace!

- Skill development
- Job coaching
- Supportive counselling
- Job accommodation
- Return-to-work programs
- Ergonomics
- Pain management
- Education

[ergo-wise.com](http://ergo-wise.com)