

Getting Beyond the Barriers to Solutions: Delegates' ideas



Barriers

- **Stigma and fear**
- Fear of “the conversation”
- **Low resources, high workloads**
- Lack of skills and training
- Poor accountability/leadership
- Practice doesn’t fit policy
- Over-concern for privacy
- **Poor communication**
- **Disconnection**
- Limited access to resources

Solutions

- Offering support for all
- Compassion and understanding
- **Understanding cultures**
- Incentives for leaders
- Early intervention
- De-medicalize
- **Normalizing, talking openly**
- **Regular helpful check-ins**
- “Walking the talk”/modelling
- Mental health audit
- **Welcoming people back to work**
- Education—systemic and sustained
- Disclosure, communication
- Hire good “people leaders”
- **Focusing on strengths**
- Management training and follow-up
- Building resources into organization

Filling the Toolbox: What delegates decided to take back to their workplaces

Support Internal Champions

- Support health and safety committees (“The internal problem-solvers”)
- **Include mental health in your Occupational Health & Safety meetings**
- Add another box under Safety/Audits for Psychological Safety
- **Make leadership on mental health part of ongoing professional development, part of performance review for managers**
- Have someone who knows how to intervene on staff: a mental health first aid responder
- Lead by example, from the very top
- Talk to one other person about what we have learned here

Include mental health in your Occupational Health & Safety meetings

Make leadership on mental health part of ongoing professional development

Be aware of the signs of people isolating themselves

Train and Educate

- Training/education for leaders (e.g., Mental Health Works) to recognize and address mental health issues while protecting privacy
- Remember that only 20% benefit directly from training; give support following training and set expectations prior to training
- Include mental health awareness/issues in leadership training
- **Be aware of the signs of people isolating themselves – don’t cause secondary injury**
- Get practical and make it a priority; put in the required cost – time and money. Lunch and learns are not enough
- Normalize mental illnesses
- Look through a different lens (e.g., occupational stress injury)
- Develop resources for employers when developing return-to-work programs
- Recognize that mental health is a continuum
- Remember that mental illnesses are not invisible; people cry out all the time but we often do not have the lens to see it

Filling the Toolbox: What delegates decided to take back to their workplaces

Engage Workers

- **Ask staff: do you feel respected? Do you trust leadership?**
- Form Employee Advisory Groups to discuss issues in the workplace
- Health and Safety walkabout; connect with staff
- Check with staff how increased workloads are affecting their mental health
- Encourage employee appreciation
- Diversity—ask members of various groups what works best for them
- Get to know your staff as people, not just staff
- Engage families/partners in the dialogue
- Commit to trust and honesty
- **Encourage peer support—highlight the values of a peer support program**

Encourage peer support, highlight the values of a peer support program

Define and Live the Values

- Walk the talk on the organization's values
- Be explicit about the values, like respect (e.g., respect for employee's doctor's recommendations)
- Ensure workers understand and see the values being supported
- Incorporate all levels
- Foster an emotionally supportive culture
- Remind leaders of their commitment to creating a safe, respectful workplace
- Remember that mental wellness is a right, not a privilege
- Encourage employee self-care
- Think about the Importance of moral injuries
- Strive for psychologically safe workplace first then mentally healthy workplace

**Ask staff:
"Do you feel respected?"**

Build Communication Skills

- Building trust through communication
- Take information about Employee Assistance Programs and services back to employees
- Top to bottom communication; reduce layers
- Don't make assumptions
- Remember confidentiality
- **Communicate—Ask why instead of saying no**
- Coach up
- More open communication between management and employees
- Early communication with employee from manager, union, HR

Ask "Why?" instead of saying no