


Addressing Complex Workplace Stress in High Risk Occupations

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Workshop Goals

- Establishing the importance of Employee Wellness within a 4-Tier Organizational Health Model
- Linking Employee Wellness with the Complex Workplace Stress Model
- Defining the Complex Workplace Stress Model (risk & resiliency factors)
- Discussing Complex Stress symptoms & effects
- Addressing Complex Stress: Program features & efficacy



How Important is it to Address Complex Workplace Stress?

- Employee Health & Wellness is vital to the functioning of any organization
- If we consider it from an **Organizational Health Perspective** we see that it forms a critical foundation element



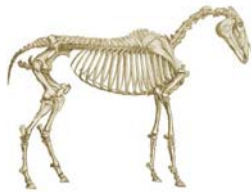
First, Defining Organizational Health

2 elements define an organization's identity and capacity to meet its purpose:

- Organizational Structure
- Organizational Health



Organizational Structure



The skeleton or architecture of the organization



Structure Elements

Components include:



- Framework & infrastructure
- Staffing model and job classifications
- Policies & procedures
- Physical plants
- Resources
- Financial elements

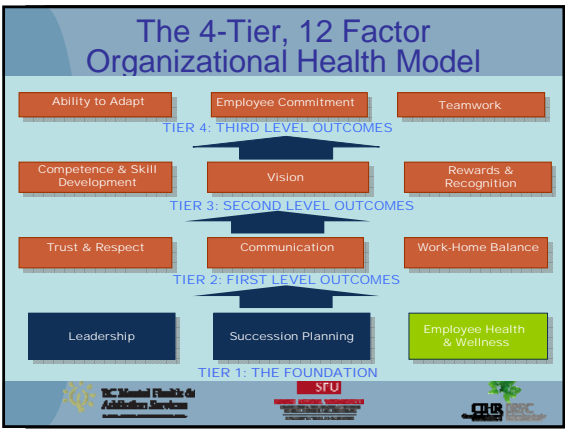


Organizational Health

The complex living systems that animate the skeleton of the organization


The Human Element
(psychology & physiology)



Employee Health & Wellness


- A critical Foundation element that affects all elements of organizational health
- Under particular challenge in high risk occupations



What are the Consequences of Workplace Stress?

Some of the overall Canadian Statistics:

- Stress and mental health problems represent 40% of long term disability claims and are responsible for 35 million lost workdays per year in Canada
- Stress is blamed for 40% of employee turnover and 60% of workplace accidents that lead to time lost from work
- Currently 1 in 10 employees suffer from clinical depression, it is estimated that by 2010 this number will be 1 in 3



The Iceberg: Organizational Costs of Workplace Stress & Trauma



Increased staff turnover, early retirements, recruitment & training costs

Increased absenteeism, sick leave, long-term disability, backfill costs

Lost productivity; increased accidents, errors in judgment, poor morale; staff conflict, toxic work environment, difficulty attracting and retaining quality staff

EFFECTS OF WORKPLACE STRESS & TRAUMA




A Comprehensive Model of Workplace Stress

The Complex Stress Model




2 very different sources of workplace stresses:

- 1. Systemic Stresses** (all workplaces)
 - The conditions of work
- 2. Traumatic Stresses** (specific high risk workplaces)
 - Exposure to personal danger
 - Exposure to harm done to others






The Complex Stress Model (cont)

Systemic Workplace Stress	Traumatic Workplace Stress
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Job Stress • Burnout • Sociocultural Stress (<i>Discrimination & Harassment</i>) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primary Traumatic Stress • Secondary Traumatic Stress (<i>Vicarious Trauma, Compassion Fatigue</i>)

Risk and Resilience Factors




- Research tells us there are many risk and resilience factors associated with both the systemic and traumatic workplace stresses
- Each workplace will have its unique factors
- Each individual will have their own unique factors.
- These factors interact to create a unique profile for each individual.

Systemic Workplace Stress

Incorporates:


- Job Stress
- Burnout
- Socio-cultural Stress

Systemic Stress Risk/Resilience

Workplace Factors


- Social support
- Respite time/time off
- Severity & frequency of job stresses
- Job demands vs resources
- Compensation & advancement
- Role ambiguity & conflict
- Tangible & intrinsic rewards
- Workload
- Recognition from others



Systemic Stress Risk/Resilience (cont.)

Individual Factors


- Belief that the work is valuable
- Work-family conflict
- Physical health problems
- Sense of control
- Perception of fairness
- Personal values fit organization's
- Coping skills and strategies
- Turnover intentions & commitment



Identifying Systemic Stress Risk/Resiliency Factors



- Can you see how these risk/resiliency factors for Systemic Stress may play out in your workplace?
- Can you see how these will differ for given individuals, jobs, and demographic groups ?




Areas of Risks	Sources of Resiliency



Workplace Traumatic Stress

- **Primary Traumatic Stress**
- **Secondary Traumatic Stress**

<p>Primary Trauma</p>  <p>Person experiencing the traumatic event</p>	<p>Secondary Trauma</p>  <p>Person witnessing or hearing about the traumatic event</p>
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Traumatic Stress Risk /Resilience Factors

Traumatic Experience Risk Factors

- Severity
- Frequency
- Intensity and duration

Individual Risk Factors




- Psychological-behavioral reactions at time of trauma
- Neurobiological response at the time
- Secure attachment bonds
- Family history
- History of prior trauma
- Background stress level

Traumatic Stress Risk /Resilience Factors (cont.)

Workplace Factors




- Training & preparation
- Ability to access resources
- Workload
- Nature of the work
- Nature of the clientele
- Cumulative exposure to trauma material
- Relationship with coworkers
- Supervision and consultation

Identifying Traumatic Stress Risk/Resiliency Factors




- Can you see how these risk/resiliency factors for Traumatic Stress may play out in your workplace?
- Can you see how these will differ for given individuals, jobs, and demographic groups?

Areas of Risks	Sources of Resiliency

A Complex Stress Approach: Effects

- What kinds of effects would you expect to see?




Common Complex Stress Symptoms & Effects

Clinical Disorders

- Physical health problems (immune system, neuroendocrine, cardiovascular)
- Clinical Depression
- Anxiety Disorders (including PTSD)
- Substance Abuse




Relationship Effects

- Self-esteem difficulties
- Interpersonal problems




Common Complex Stress Symptoms

<p>Physical</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Sleep problems ▪ GI Tract problems ▪ Neck/back aches ▪ Anxiety <p>Emotional</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Irritable/hypersensitive ▪ Emotional numbness ▪ Hopeless/powerless ▪ Overwhelmed ▪ Sadness/depression 	<p>Mental/Psychological</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Poor concentration ▪ Confusion/memory problems ▪ Difficulties making decisions ▪ Decreased self-esteem <p>Spiritual</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Loss of meaning ▪ Sense of disconnection ▪ Interpersonal problems ▪ Relationship conflict ▪ Worry about the future
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And Now for the Good News




There is a lot that we can do to turn things around

Our Workplace Wellness Program:

A 2-day intensive textbook-based workshop

- Provides a common level of understanding about the mechanisms and effects of workplace stress
- Guides participants through the self-assessments that determine:
 - Their current risk & resiliency profile
 - Their current levels of self-care
 - Their current level of symptoms or effects
- Assists participants in developing their own personal wellness plans.
- Promotes team-building and assists in the development of specific strategies that will promote staff wellness and address the effects of workplace stress.

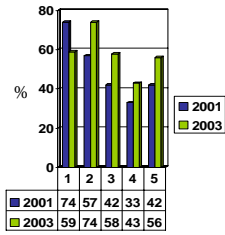
Program Efficacy

- BC Community Corrections (2001- 2003) *Fisher (a)*
- RCMP (2001-2003) *Duxbury (b)*

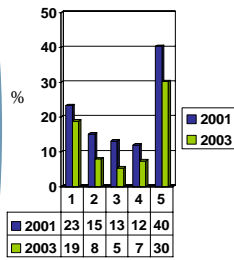


Organizational Benefits

1. Decreased absenteeism^b
2. Higher commitment to employer and reduced turnover intention^b
3. Increased job satisfaction^a
4. Improvements to workplace human relations^a
5. Increased positive view of organization^b

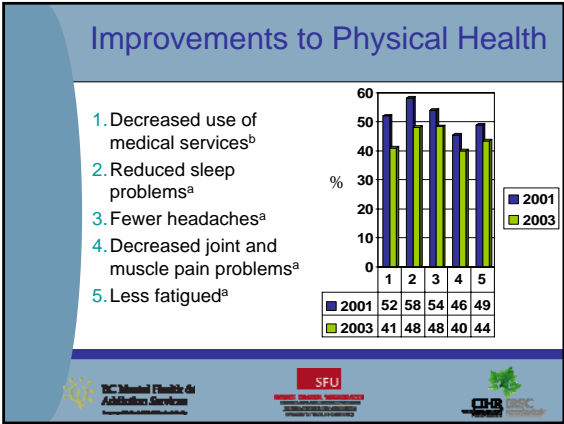


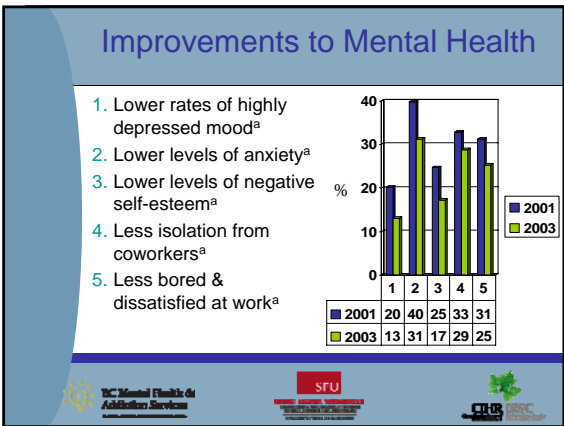
Improved Work Performance and Decreased Job Stress

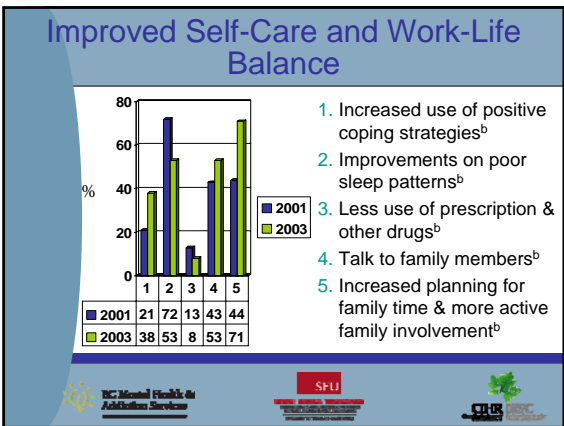


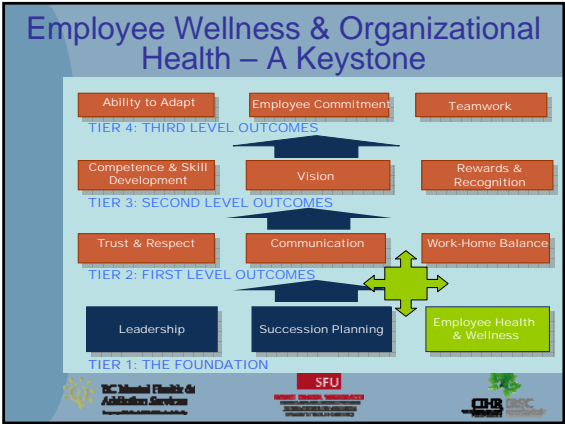
1. Less overwhelmed by workload^a
2. Less sense of lack of control^a
3. Reduced role ambiguity^a
4. Decreased perception of institutional unfairness^a
5. Less problem with concentration and attention^a











- ### Approaching Employee Wellness from an Organizational Health Perspective
- The importance of an evidence-based approach
1. Clearly define the situation with attention to important demographic differences
 2. Design a staged set of interventions that most effectively address the challenges -while building on the strengths
 3. Implement within a long-term strategic plan
 4. Maintain a commitment to Organizational Health (and be seen to be maintaining it)
 5. Continue to evaluate, re-assess and make course corrections as circumstances change
- Logos at the bottom: BC Mental Health & Addictions Services, SFU, CHB, and BCRC.
