

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



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First, Defining Organizational Health

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

- Organizational Structure
- Organizational Health



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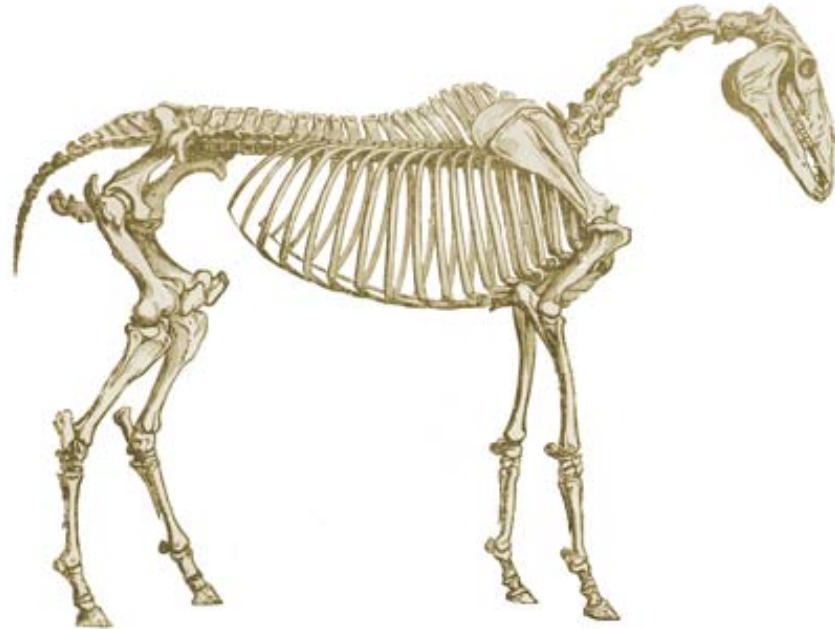


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Organizational Structure



The skeleton or architecture of the organization



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Structure Elements

Components include:

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



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Organizational Health

The complex living systems that animate the skeleton of the organization

The Human Element
(*psychology & physiology*)



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The 4-Tier, 12 Factor Organizational Health Model



Employee Health & Wellness

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



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What are the Consequences of Workplace Stress?

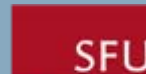
Some of the overall Canadian Statistics:

- 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



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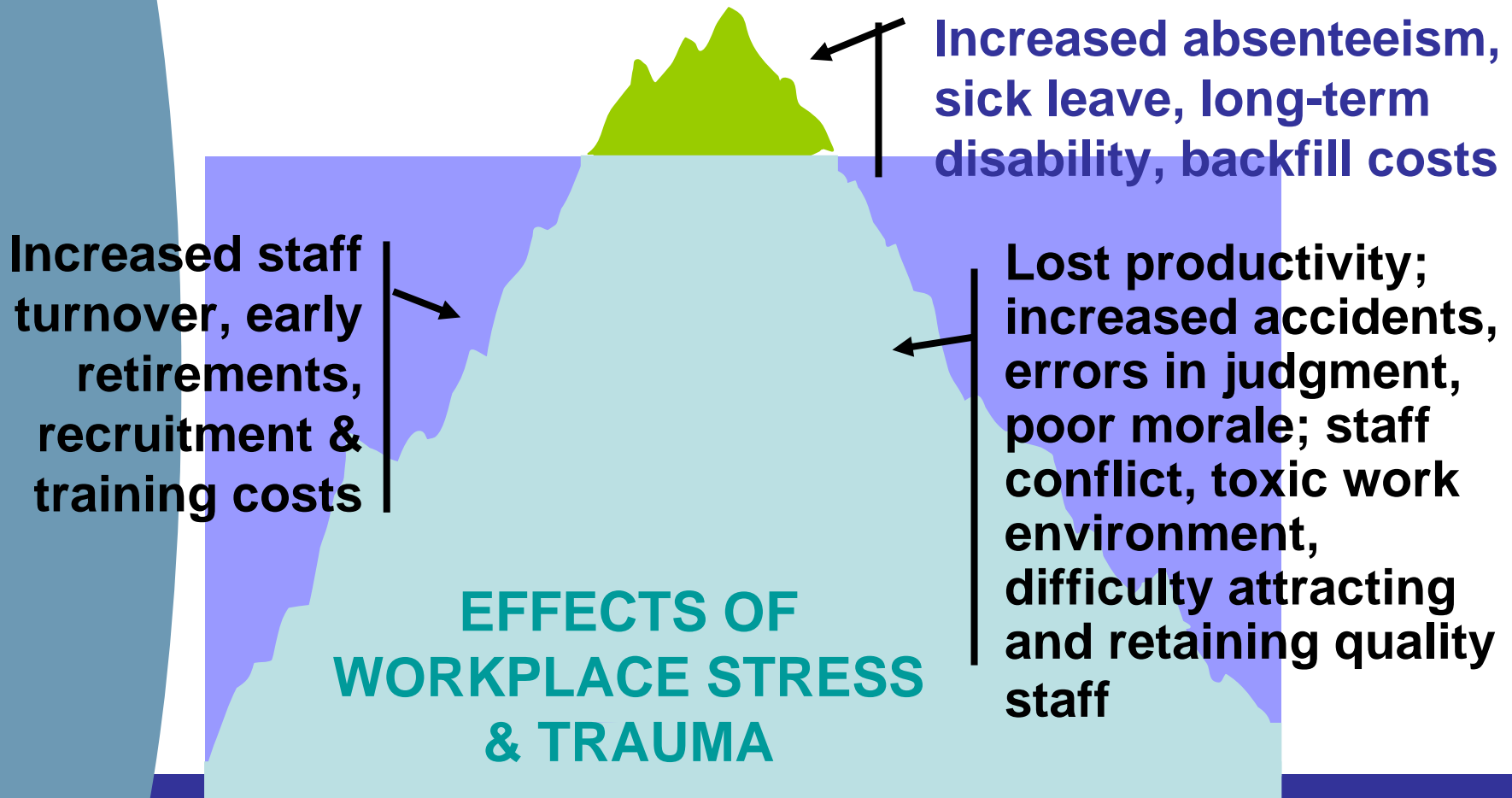


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The Iceberg: Organizational Costs of Workplace Stress & Trauma



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A Comprehensive Model of Workplace Stress

The Complex Stress Model

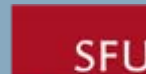
2 very different sources of workplace stresses:

- 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



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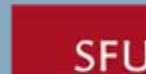
The Complex Stress Model (cont)

Systemic Workplace Stress

- Job Stress
- Burnout
- Sociocultural Stress
(*Discrimination & Harassment*)

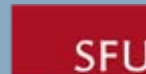
Traumatic Workplace Stress

- Primary Traumatic Stress
- Secondary Traumatic Stress
(*Vicarious Trauma, Compassion Fatigue*)



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



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Systemic Stress Risk/Resilience

Workplace Factors

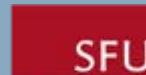
- Social support
- Respite time/time off
- Severity & frequency of job stresses
- Job demands vs resources
- Compensation & advancement
- Role ambiguity & conflict
- Tangible & intrinsic rewards
- Workload
- Recognition from others



Systemic Stress Risk/Resilience (cont.)

Individual Factors

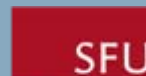
- Belief that the work is valuable
- Work-family conflict
- Physical health problems
- Sense of control
- Perception of fairness
- Personal values fit organization's
- Coping skills and strategies
- Turnover intentions & commitment



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 ?

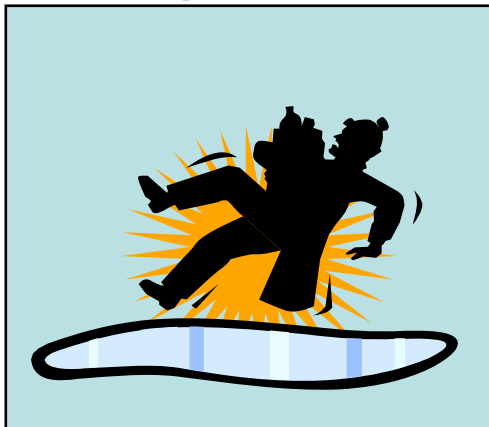
Areas of Risks	Sources of Resiliency



Workplace Traumatic Stress

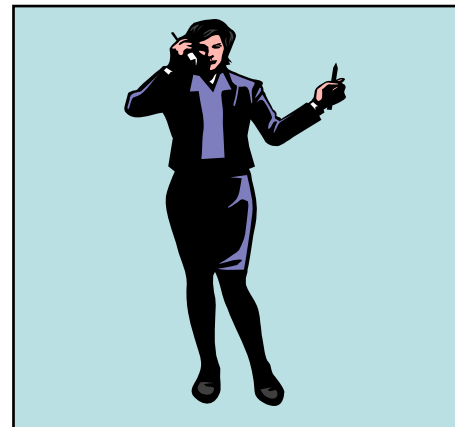
- **Primary Traumatic Stress**
- **Secondary Traumatic Stress**

Primary Trauma



Person experiencing
the traumatic event

Secondary Trauma



Person witnessing or hearing
about the traumatic event



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Traumatic Stress Risk /Resilience Factors

Traumatic Experience Risk Factors

- Severity
- Frequency
- Intensity and duration

Individual Risk Factors

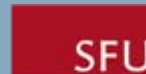
- Psychological-behavioral reactions at time of trauma
- Neurobiological response at the time
- Secure attachment bonds
- Family history
- History of prior trauma
- Background stress level



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



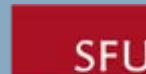
A Complex Stress Approach: Effects

- What kinds of effects would you expect to see?



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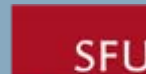
Common Complex Stress Symptoms & Effects

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

Physical

- Sleep problems
- GI Tract problems
- Neck/back aches
- Anxiety

Emotional

- Irritable/hypersensitive
- Emotional numbness
- Hopeless/powerless
- Overwhelmed
- Sadness/depression

Mental/Psychological

- Poor concentration
- Confusion/memory problems
- Difficulties making decisions
- Decreased self-esteem

Spiritual

- Loss of meaning
- Sense of disconnection
- Interpersonal problems
- Relationship conflict
- Worry about the future



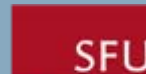
And Now for the Good News

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



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Our Workplace Wellness Program:

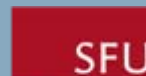
A 2-day intensive textbook-based workshop

- 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.



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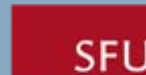
Program Efficacy

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



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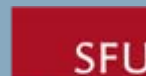
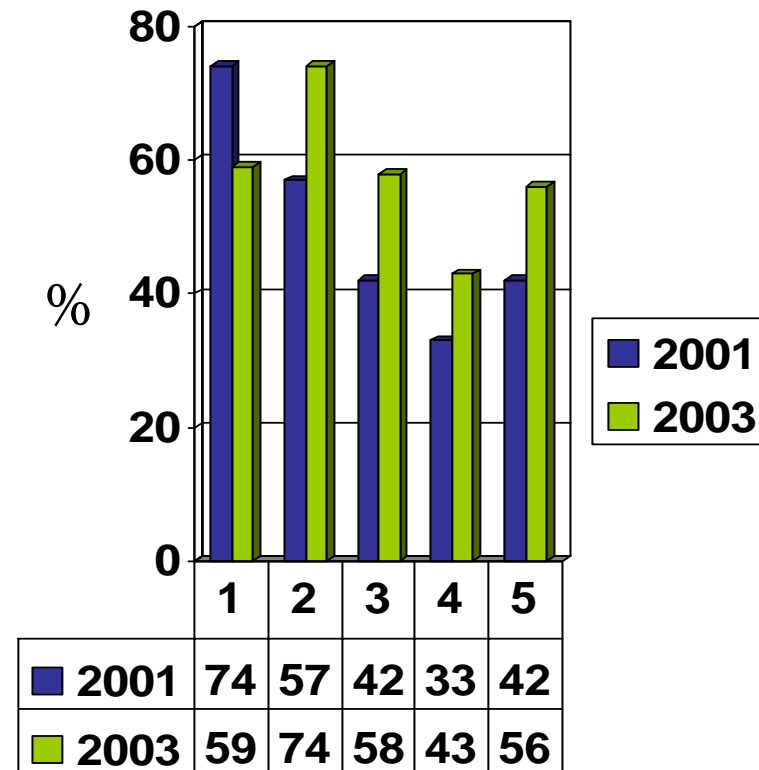
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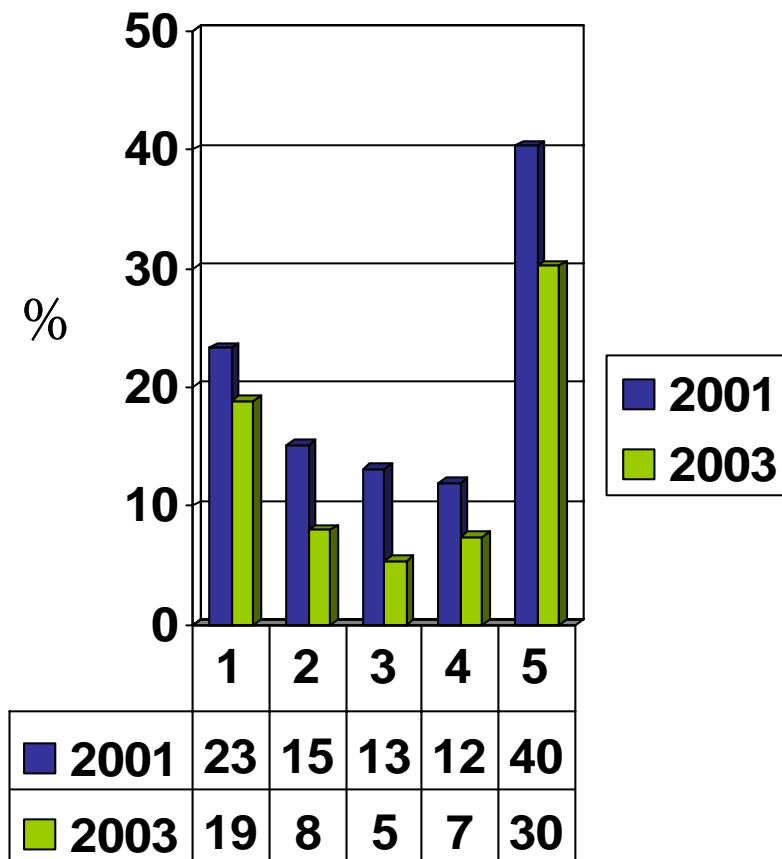
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Organizational Benefits

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

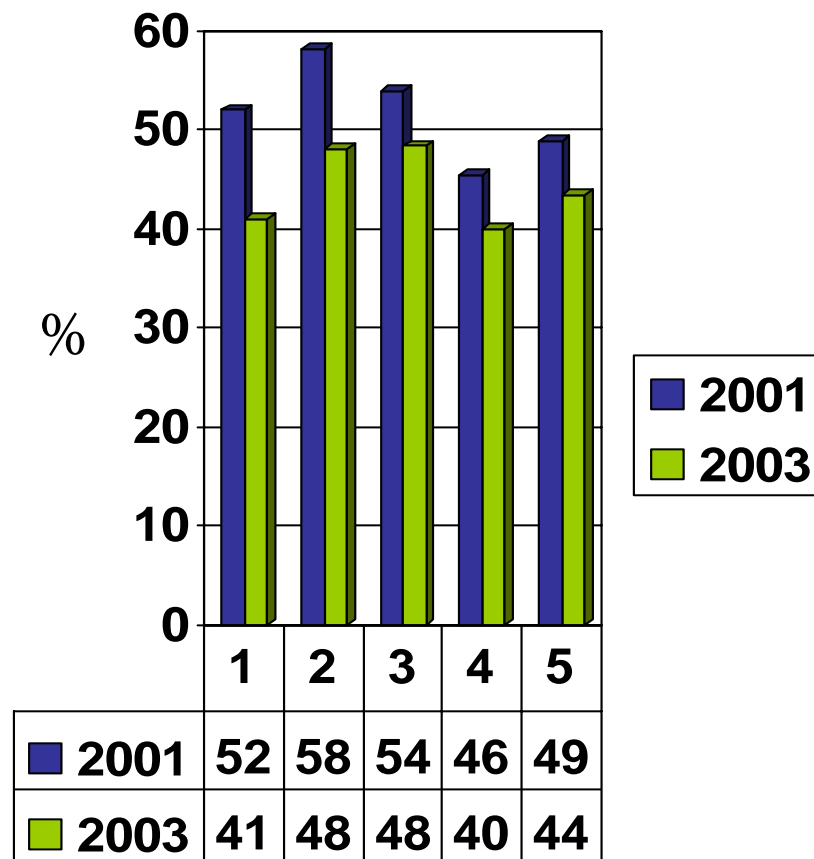


1. Less overwhelmed by workload^a
2. Less sense of lack of control^a
3. Reduced role ambiguity^a
4. Decreased perception of institutional unfairness^a
5. Less problem with concentration and attention^a



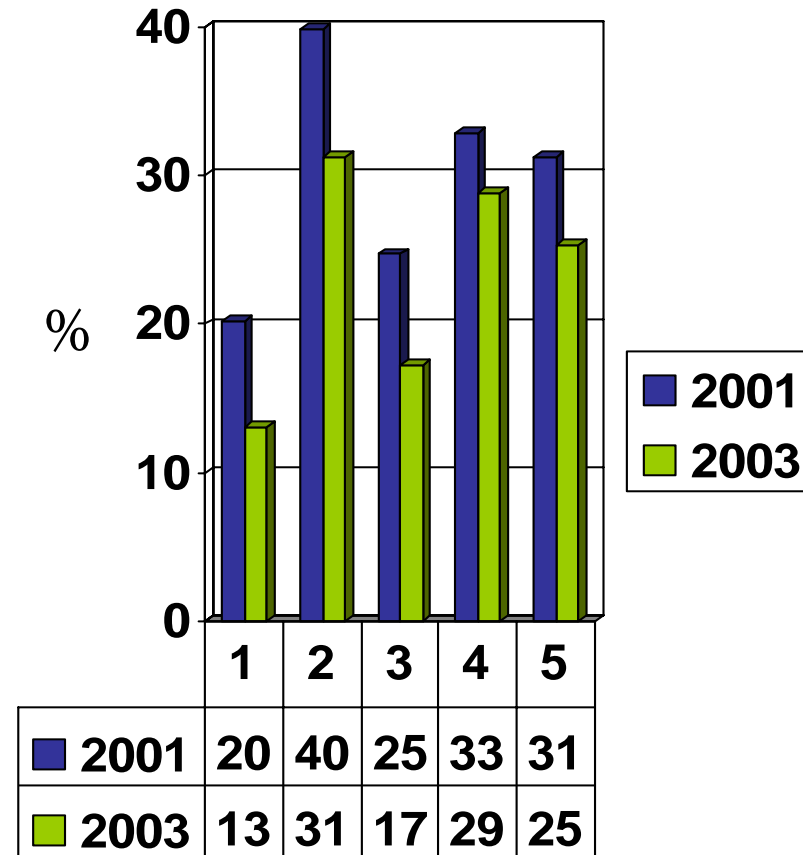
Improvements to Physical Health

1. Decreased use of medical services^b
2. Reduced sleep problems^a
3. Fewer headaches^a
4. Decreased joint and muscle pain problems^a
5. Less fatigued^a

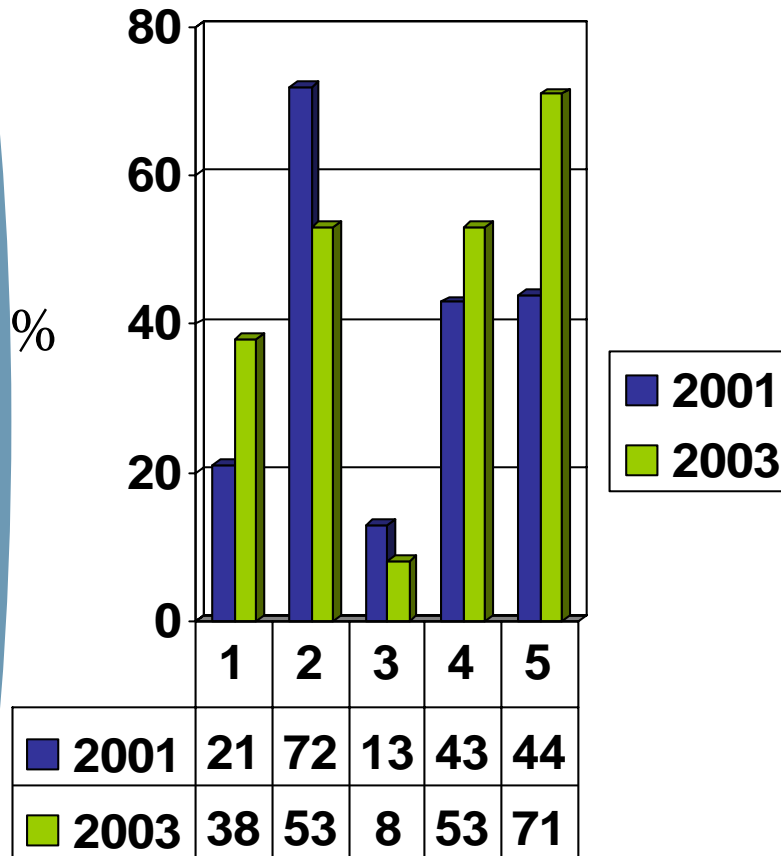


Improvements to Mental Health

1. Lower rates of highly depressed mood^a
2. Lower levels of anxiety^a
3. Lower levels of negative self-esteem^a
4. Less isolation from coworkers^a
5. Less bored & dissatisfied at work^a

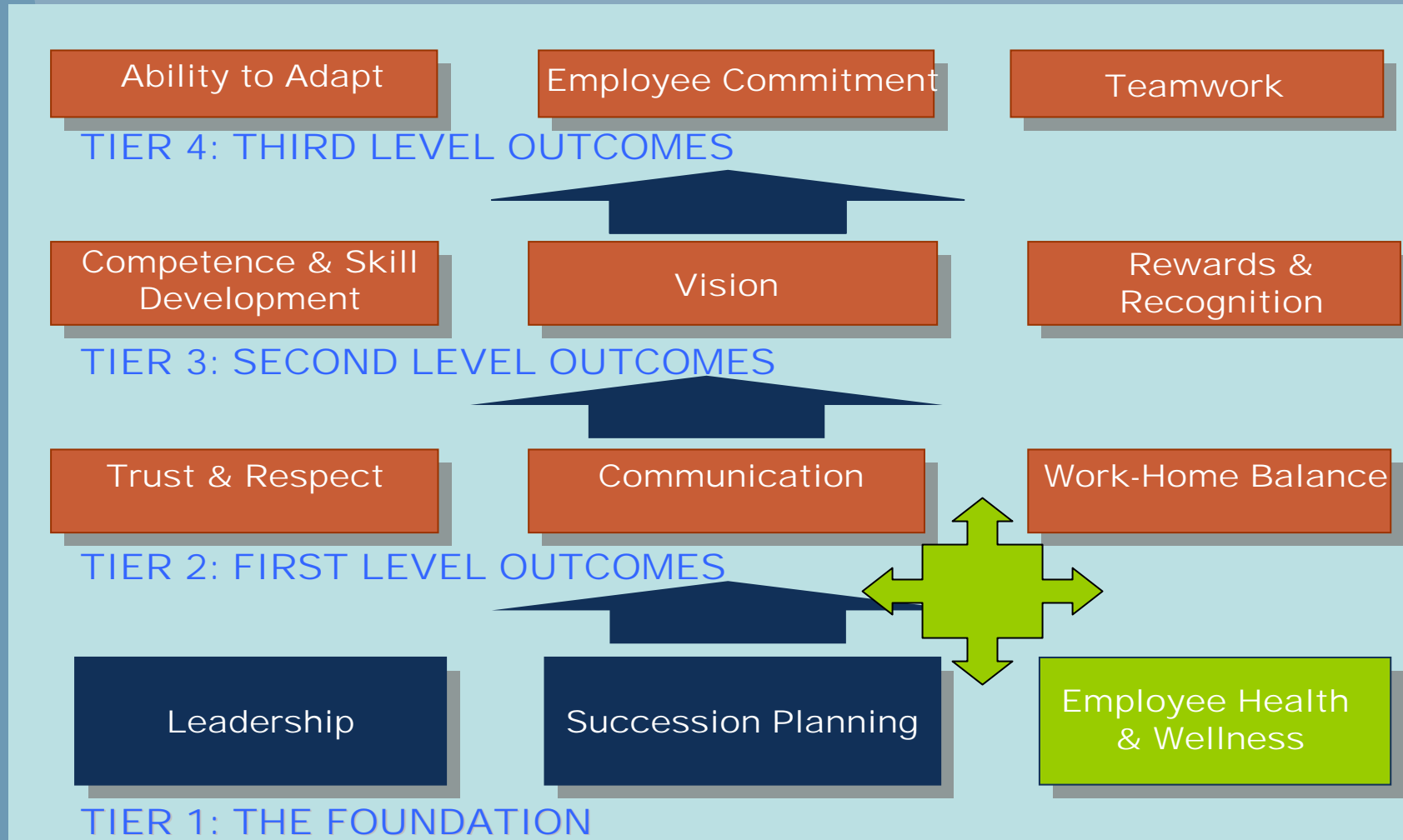


Improved Self-Care and Work-Life Balance



1. Increased use of positive coping strategies^b
2. Improvements on poor sleep patterns^b
3. Less use of prescription & other drugs^b
4. Talk to family members^b
5. Increased planning for family time & more active family involvement^b

Employee Wellness & Organizational Health – A Keystone



Approaching Employee Wellness from an Organizational Health Perspective

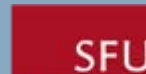
The importance of an evidence-based approach

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



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