
Employers Want Workers to Help Colleagues in Crisis

In an age where 70 percent of people in the workforce experience depression and 35 million workdays are lost each year due to mental illness, knowing how to identify signs of mental health problems at work is imperative. Mental health challenges don't go away at work and stressful work environments can exacerbate existing problems. There's a growing recognition that mental health and addiction problems are having an impact in many ways, driving up health care costs and absenteeism. More than a quarter of workers reported some level of depression or anxiety in a 2015 survey by the American Psychological Association, but the most common workplace solution—employee assistance programs. Most employees don't want to call an employer-sponsored program for help. Beyond offering good benefits, employers tend to duck more holistic solutions to workers' mental stress.

That challenging piece is really creating a culture where the organization is tuned in to employee well-being. When the employee had showed signs of suffering from some sort of mental health illness, nobody took the time to dive in and figure out what was happening, which will be creating a big issue between the employers and their work. The solution which they first found out in most of the working places is the employee assistance programs, after that another program was found out which is the mental health first aid" the exercise. It is for just a one component of 8 Hours course. And with these methods companies begun to see the value in having employees, those people have the skills to say something. In the future an addition of 6,000 employees will be trained in the program, meaning an additional 6,000 people will be able to recognize and respond to mental health and substance use challenges in their workplaces and among their peers.

As an experiment, Jessica Caskey was working in human resources at a national park in Alaska, an employee placed an explosive device outside his boss's office. In many ways, things turned out as well as possible. The police came, nobody was hurt and after the employee was released from custody, Caskey fired him. Looking back, though, Caskey thinks she could've handled it better. The mental health first aid classes are designed to help people like Caskey do just that. Last year, she was one of 41 managers at Taos ski resort in New Mexico who took the course. This method is a way of teaching as to understand how to be good neighbours.

Employees at the Taos resort face specific kinds of emotional stress. At the end of the ski season, most of the 700 temporary staffers will be out of a job, noted Ashley Ryland, the employee wellness coordinator at the resort. Ski patrollers, most of whom are certified EMTs, act as first responders to accidents and other distressing situations, making them particularly vulnerable to mental illness. In the course the instructors teach Assess risk, listen non-

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judgmentally, give reassurance and information, encourage people to get appropriate professional help and encourage self-help and other support strategies. There's a quiz at the end. Those who pass—generally everyone—get a certificate. The program is mainly about understanding when a problem is developing and how to approach them and connect them to care.

Caskey reports to have already used the skills she learned from Mental Health First Aid in her new role as a manager at Taos ski resort in New Mexico – this time with a housekeeper who left an incoherent voicemail on her phone after atypically missing two days of work. Caskey decided to be direct and called her right back. After talking to her and consoling her she assures her about her value of and made her believe that she is important which resulted in her returning to the work after a week. Outcomes like those are exactly what the Mental Health First Aid at Work program helps to achieve for workplaces and work relationships across the country.

This course covers the symptoms of anxiety, depression and other common mental health disorders that the people might find out among the co-workers. This method is analysed through different exercises, in one exercise, participants role-played what it feels like to hear a constant stream of paranoid thoughts. In another, groups were given art supplies so they could draw what anxiety looks like. All the human resources managers should aspire this method as the Human Resource Manager is meant for understanding the workers and supporting them. Through this they can increase mental health literacy and know how to safely and responsibly address a co-worker's mental health or substance use concerns in the workplace.

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