Supporting Good Work Practices: The SOM’s Return to Work Toolkit

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ABOUT ME

• A Chartered Psychologist, a Chartered Scientist, a Registered Occupational Psychologist, an Associate Fellow of the British Psychological Society

• An independent researcher, practitioner and consultant, and the Director of Practical Psychology Consultancy Ltd

• Expertise in occupational safety and health (OSH)

• Support organisations in managing work-related stress and other work-relevant mental ill health issues

• Provide research design, survey design, psychological assessment, organisational change, organisational development, leadership development, psychometrics, and career development
WHY A TOOLKIT?

• Adds a resource
• Provides information and guidance
• Offers focused and practical solutions
INTERFACE BETWEEN WORK AND HEALTH

Preventing Harm

Positive impact on health, wellbeing and productivity

Work and workplace designed to be suitable and free of risks to health

Work and workplace risks evaluated and controlled

Health assessment to identify vulnerable individuals and work related health effects. Attendance management

Diagnosis and treatment

Rehabilitation

Managing Effect

Education and promotion of health and wellness

Interface of public and occupational health

Negative impact on health, wellbeing and productivity. Cost of welfare and litigation

HOW SHOULD WE PREPARE TO RETURN TO WORK (RTW)?
THE RTW PROCESS

• The RTW process should always be supported, facilitated and focused at three levels:
  • The Primary Level - Organisational
  • The Secondary Level - Group / Team
  • The Tertiary Level - Individual
WHAT DO WE MEAN?

Evidence-informed interventions needed at each level

A three tier approach to managing work related stress

- **Primary**
  - Prevention - within the organisation by changes to job design
- **Secondary**
  - Resilience - building individuals' ability to cope
- **Tertiary**
  - Recovery support for individuals' return to work

Reactive

Proactive

Preventive

Best practice

Health and safety law

Office of Rail Regulation (2014)
Organisational Level

- Job (re)design
- Assess work stressors
- Assess leadership
- Assess the risks
- Provide training
- Worker involvement
- Communication

- Assess work stressors
- Provide training
- ‘Nip it in the bud’
- OHS
- EAPs

- Treat (Tertiary)

- Secondary (Detect)

- Primary (Prevent)
Team Level

- Train supervisors
- Enhance the support between team members
- Foster a ‘we’ve got each other’s back’ climate

- Provide training
- Assess psychological safety
- Assess support systems
- Assess work ability
- Peer support
- Empower supervisors

- Remain in contact
- Workplace adjustments
- Graded return to work

- Primary (Prevent)

- Secondary (Detect)

- Treat (Tertiary)
Individual Level

- Be informed
- Be prepared
- Ask questions
- Involve family

Secondary (Detect)
- Seek help
- Engage with support systems
- Active coping

Primary (Prevent)
- OHS
- Support
- Training
- Work ability
- EAPs
- Counselling
- General Practitioner

Treat (Tertiary)
INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCES

➢ High risk groups:
  ✓ Those with pre-existing health conditions
  ✓ Those who are clinically extremely vulnerable, i.e. those who have a severe disease or require intense treatments
  ✓ Those who are shielding
  ✓ Those workers who are acting as carers for any person who falls into one of the groups above

➢ Groups with increased vulnerability:
  ✓ Having a disability
  ✓ Fearing discrimination
  ✓ Having a long term mental illness
  o Protected against unfair treatment under the 2010 Equality Act
INVEST IN SELF CARE

• Adequate and quality sleep
• Physical activity
• Healthy nutrition
• Relaxation (Ruminating)
• Socialising
• Raise awareness of and practice self-compassion
WELL-BEING AND WORK

- Work is good for us
- It is important in maintaining well-being
- It improves health and coping mechanisms
- Individuals enjoy their work
- Work satisfaction could positively influence life satisfaction
- Well-being contributes to better mental and physical health
- Job satisfaction could lead to improved productivity and performance
- When workers are healthy and maintain their well-being, regardless of age, both individuals and organisations benefit.

Waddell & Burton, 2006; Csikszentmihalyi, 1997; Rice, Near & Hunt, 1980; Diener & Seligman, 2004; Gervais & Millear, 2014
THANK YOU!

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