

ADDRESSING MENTAL
HEALTH IN
THE WORKPLACE



Learning Objectives

- What is mental health and why is it important?
- Risk factors in the workplace
- Signs and symptoms
- Strategies and best practices for managing mental health
- Coping strategies
- Available resources

What is Mental Health?

- Mental health includes our emotional, psychological, and social well-being. It affects how we think, feel, and act. It also helps determine how we handle stress, relate to others, and make choices. (Mentalhealth.gov)
- Mental health is defined as a state of well-being in which every individual realizes his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to her or his community. (World Health Organization)

Consequences of mental health problems in the workplace

□ Absenteeism

- increase in overall sickness absence, particularly frequent short periods of absence
- poor health (depression, stress, burnout)
- physical conditions (high blood pressure, heart disease, ulcers, sleeping disorders, skin rashes, headache, neck- and backache, low resistance to infections) (World Health Organization)

Consequences of mental health problems in the workplace

- Work performance
 - reduction in productivity and output
 - increase in error rates
 - increased amount of accidents
 - hindered decision-making
 - deterioration in planning and control of work (World Health Organization)

Consequences of mental health problems in the workplace

- Staff attitude and behavior
 - loss of motivation and commitment
 - burnout
 - labor turnover (particularly expensive for companies at top levels of management) (World Health Organization)

Consequences of mental health problems in the workplace

- Relationships at work
 - tension and conflicts between colleagues
 - poor relationships with clients
 - increase in disciplinary problems (World Health Organization)

Risk Factors

- Organizational Culture
 - Culture "sets the tone" for an organization - a negative culture can undermine the effectiveness of the best programs, policies and services intended to support the workforce.
 - "An unhealthy culture creates more stress, which lowers employee well-being. A culture of "profit at all costs" and constant chaotic urgency can create an environment in which burnout is the norm" (Centre for Occupational Health and Safety)

Risk Factors

- Poor psychological support
 - A workplace where co-workers and supervisors are not supportive of employees' psychological and mental health concerns
 - When mental health is avoided or stigmatized, employees will be less likely to seek help.

Risk Factors

- Poor leadership and expectations
 - High turnover rate
 - Lack of vision from the leader can result in lack of priorities, inspiration and focus. Employees won't have a sense of direction either, which will lead them to exhaustion and a lack of productivity.
 - An employee that does not know what is expected of them can end up feeling frustrated, and this will ultimately affect how well they carry out the tasks assigned to them.

Risk Factors

- Lack of growth and development
 - Employees lack encouragement and support in the development of their interpersonal, emotional and job skills. Restricting employees' abilities to advance their skills within and out of the job.
 - Employees who are not challenged by their work will grow bored, their well-being will suffer, and their performance will drop.

Signs and Symptoms

- Depression and anxiety in the workplace
 - In the workplace these disorders are more likely to manifest in behaviors such as nervousness, restlessness, or irritability and in physical complaints, such as a preoccupation with aches and pains.
 - Employees may exhibit
 - Sudden passiveness
 - Withdrawal from relationships
 - Aimlessness
 - Unproductiveness
 - Fatigue at work, partly as a result of the mood disorder or because they are having trouble sleeping at night
 - Depression may also impair judgment or cloud decision making
- (<https://www.health.harvard.edu>)

Signs and Symptoms

- Burnout
 - cynical or critical at work
 - trouble getting started with work
 - irritable or impatient with co-workers, customers or clients
 - lack the energy to be consistently productive
 - hard to concentrate
 - lack of satisfaction from achievements

(mayoclinic.org)

Strategies and Best Practices

- Get the right people in the right job (including yourself)
- Put strengths to best use
- Encourage and support growth and development
- Include employees in decision making
- Encourage employees to stay home and rest if they are sick

Strategies and Best Practices

- Encourage employees to take scheduled breaks
- Create places to congregate- coffee pot, workroom, mailroom, etc
- Have open discussions about mental well-being in the workplace
- Ensure safety of employees
- Keep and encourage a reasonable work schedule

Coping Strategies

- Deep breathing techniques
- Engage in positive self talk
- Take a break
- Use movement (taking a walk, stretching, etc)
- Clean or organize your environment
- Talk to someone you trust
- Find humor

Available Resources

- Providing resources to employees
 - Referring to EAP (employee assistance programs)

 - Referring to Triage services for quick access
 - Contact Avera Triage via Phone: 605-322-4086

 - Avera Behavioral Health

 - Helpline Center

Sheri Nelson
Helpline Center
Suicide Prevention Director



Helpline Center

*Making lives better by giving support, offering hope
and creating connections all day, every day.*



The **Helpline Center** has been serving people in need since 1974.

2-1-1 COMMUNITY RESOURCES
One Little Number. So Many Reasons.



Connecting individuals to resources and support.

SUICIDE AND CRISIS SUPPORT
Where There Is Help, There Is Hope.



Offering hope to individuals with thoughts of suicide and supporting families bereaved by a suicide loss.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES
The More You Give The More You Get.



Linking people with volunteer opportunities in their community.



Suicide Support Services at HLC

- Only accredited crisis line in SD
- Answer **1-800-273-8255/1-800-SUICIDE** for SD 24/7/365 or **211**
- Trained crisis staff
- Crisis texting
- Other community trainings/programs available
- Prevention, Intervention, Postvention





MENTAL HEALTH

IN THE WORKPLACE

The Power of Words...Terminology Matters

“Died by suicide”

“took their own life”

“killed themselves”

“suicided”

all better than “committed” suicide. What does the word “commit” make you think of?

“Completed suicide” rather than “successful suicide”

A “survivor of suicide” is a person who has lost a loved one to suicide

People with “lived experience” are individuals who have experienced a suicide attempt, suicidal thoughts and feelings.

National Suicide Statistics for 2017

- There are 47,173 suicides in the U.S. (under-reporting)
- Average of 1 suicide every 11.1 minutes
- 10th ranking cause of death
- 2nd ranking cause of death for youth
- 3.5 male deaths by suicide for each female death
- 3 female attempts for each male attempt



Source: Suicidology.org

National Stats for 2017



<u>Rank-State</u>	<u>Rate</u>	<u>Number</u>
• 1-Montana	29.6	311
• 2-Wyoming	27.1	157
• 3-Alaska	27.0	200
• 4-New Mexico	23.5	491
• 5-Idaho	22.8	392
• 6-So.Dakota	22.0	192
• United States	14.5	47,173
• 51-DC	6.8	47



South Dakota Statistics

- South Dakota ranks 6th
- 192 people died by suicide in 2017
- South Dakota ranks 38th for the elderly (65+)
- South Dakota ranks 2rd for the youth (15-24)
- Native American rate 1.8x that of Whites
- Firearms leading method used



2017 National Suicide Attempt Data

- 1,179,325 annual attempts in U.S.
- Translates to one attempt every 27 seconds
- 3:1 female to male attempt ratio
- 25 attempts for every death by suicide
 - 100-200:1 for youth**
 - 4:1 for elderly**

(All attempt data are estimates; no official U.S. data are compiled)



Mental Health in the Workplace

- People often spend a large portion of their day at a workplace and, in doing so, get to know other employees over time. As a result, they may be in a good position to notice changes in behavior that could suggest risk for suicide or other mental health problems.
- Ignoring mental health in the workplace causes massive losses in a business' bottom line and creates hardship for employees. Statistics show that 1 in 4 adults has a diagnosable mental health disorder.
- Good mental and physical health can help enhance workforce productivity.

Key Facts

- Work is good for mental health but a negative working environment can lead to physical and mental health problems.
- Depression and anxiety are common and have a significant economic impact; the estimated cost to the global economy in the US is 1 trillion per year in lost productivity.
- Harassment and bullying at work are commonly reported problems, and can have a substantial adverse impact on mental health.
- There are many effective actions that organizations can take to promote mental health in the workplace; such actions may also benefit productivity.
- For every dollar put into treatment for common mental disorders, there is a return of 4 dollars in improved health and productivity.

Mental Health and Stigma

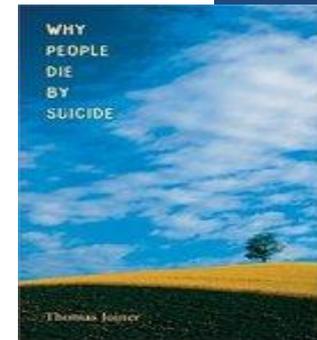
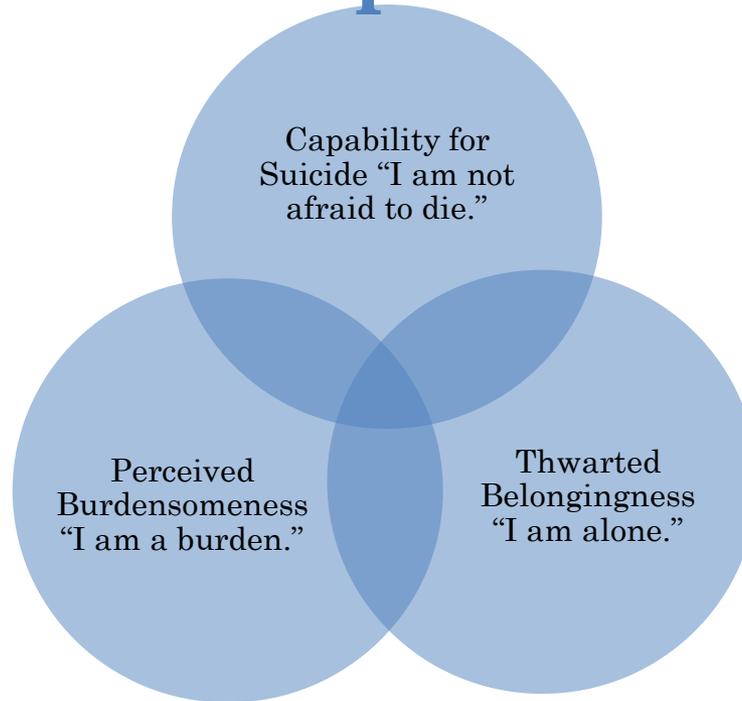
- Despite the increase in mental health awareness there are still many people suffering in silence in the workplace.
- Individuals are often nervous to disclose their mental health issues or seek treatment because of the stigma associated with mental health.
- Dealing with the stigma and developing a culture where employees feel comfortable to talk openly about their mental health should be a top priority for your organization.
- Tailor programs/approaches to your company culture and existing strengths. Do what is right for your culture.
- Mention your commitment to leading a behaviorally healthy workplace every time you mention the company's commitment to its overall culture of health.

High Risk Groups

- White males
- Veterans/Military
- American Indians
- Young adults (15-24)
- Working Males (40-65)
- Rural area residents
- Attorneys, physicians, dentists, law enforcement, EMS personnel



Joiner's Interpersonal Theory



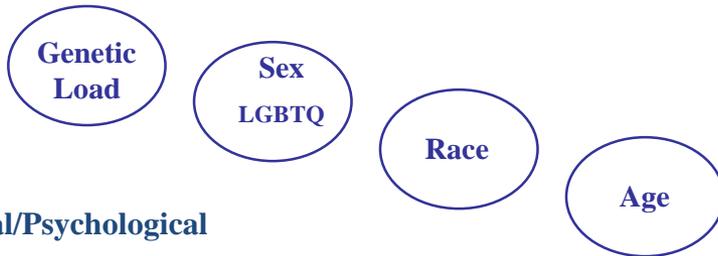
The Many Paths to Suicide

Fundamental (distal) Risk Factors

Acute (proximal) Risk Factors: triggers/last straw

Cause of Death

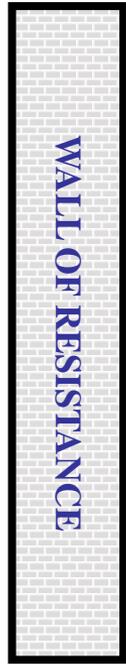
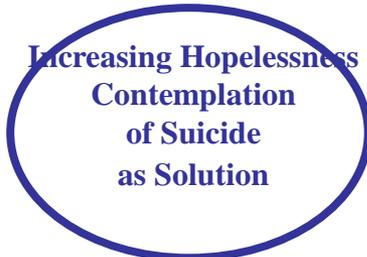
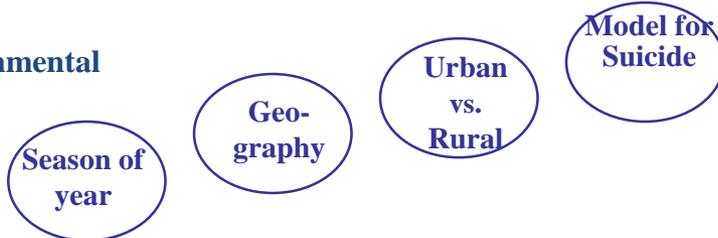
Biological



Personal/Psychological



Environmental



- All "Causes" are real.
- Hopelessness is the common pathway.
- Break the chain anywhere = prevention.

Wall of Resistance to Suicide

Counselor or therapist	Duty to others	Others?	
Good health	Medication Compliance	Fear	
Job Security or Job Skills	Responsibility for children	Support of significant other(s)	
Difficult Access to means	A sense of HOPE	Positive Self-esteem	
Pet(s)	Religious Prohibition	Calm Environment	AA or NA Sponsor
Best Friend(s)	Safety Agreement	Treatment Availability	
-- Sobriety --			

Protective Factors

Protective Factors

- Social supports
- Access to treatment
- Community connectedness
- Problem-solving and coping skills
- Cultural/religious beliefs
- Restricted access to means



Counseling on Access to Lethal Means (CALM)

- 25% of teens/young adults stated it was <5 mins. between the time they decided on suicide and their attempt
- 13% said 24 hrs. or more went by
- 1 in 3 youth suicides followed within 24 hrs. of a crisis
- 85-90% of gunshot wounds result in death
- 1-2% overdoses & cutting/stabbing result in death

CALM (continued)

Restrict access to Lethal Means

- 1/3 of households in U.S. have guns (60% in SD)
- 85% of guns used in youth suicide come from home
- 9 of 10 people who attempt suicide and survive will not die by suicide later
- How to make access to guns difficult:
 - Gun lock AND gun cabinet lock
 - Unload ammo, hide ammo in separate location (also locked)
 - Take other parts of gun out so it is not working
 - **BEST OPTION:** find outside of home temporary storage



Would access to care save lives?

- Over **50%** of all people who die by suicide are suffering from a major psychiatric illness or substance abuse disorder, or both.
- More teenagers and young adults die from suicide than from **cancer**, **heart disease**, **AIDS**, **birth defects**, **stroke**, **pneumonia/influenza**, and **chronic lung disease**, **COMBINED**.
- **Effective, accessible, competent care could save thousands of lives.**



Supporting Mental Health in the Workplace

- A healthy workplace is one where individuals feel valued and supported, provides a positive workspace, and shows respect for other aspects of a person's life.
- Create a work environment that fosters communication, a sense of belonging and connectedness.
- Identify and assist employees who may be struggling with mental health issues.
- Model work/life balance. Have leaders embody concepts and model behavior, paying attention to workload.
- Be welcoming of the need for accommodations. Train managers to respond appropriately and understand their role in supporting employees.
- Ensure that senior leaders routinely include language about emotional well-being when they talk about business issues.

Supporting Mental Health

- Education on Mental Health
- Raise workers' awareness of mental health issues and the importance of caring for their own mental well-being, possibly by hosting expert-led talks or trainings.
- Encourage conversations around mental health, thus weakening stigmas that keep workers from addressing potential issues.
- Partner with workers to mitigate job-related stressors that may contribute to mental health concerns. “That would mean attention to things like better, healthier supervision; more realistic work demands; providing resources to workers; adequate attention to hours; rest breaks.
- Foster a company culture that values mental health by providing information to senior leadership.
- Connect workers with resources within or outside the company (such as an employee assistance program EAP).

Thank you!

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 - www.helplinecenter.org

