

# Workplace Wellness

## How Do You Know You Have a Toxic Workplace?

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# SOME STATS

- ◆ Watson Wyatt reports- the cost of overworked, stressed employees is 5-7% of payroll
- ◆ AC Nielsen says in 2007- 58% of New Year's resolutions were work life balance related
- ◆ In 2005 20% of the workforce was > age 55

# STATS CON'T

- ◆ MetLife study: the 3 most important factors for workers to start or continue in a job:
  - ◆ - quality of co-worker/client relationships  
58%
  - ◆ - opportunity for work life balance  
56%
  - ◆ - opportunity for financial growth and advancement  
52%

# Queens University Survey

## Says:

- ◆ 91% report increased workload
- ◆ 72% report changes in duties
- ◆ 68% report increased absences
- ◆ 64% say tension is prevalent
- ◆ 61% report loss of productivity

## ...and we know

- ◆ Workplace stress is one of 4 risk factors for mental illness
- ◆ Stress is one of 9 risk factors for heart disease

# MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES

- ◆ One of the leading causes of disability claims
- ◆ Will be the leading cause by the year 2020 – predicted by the World Health Organization

# Other Resources:

[www.thinktransition.com](http://www.thinktransition.com)

[www.hrcouncil.ca/about/publications.cfm](http://www.hrcouncil.ca/about/publications.cfm)

## Unhealthy/toxic Characteristics

## Healthy Characteristics

Leaders feel alone and left alone to do their work and make decisions on their own; they feel unsupported

### SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

*Leaders become more isolated*

*Paralysed on decision making*

*Kick the cat effect*

*Defer decisions*

*Loss of confidence*

*Workers compete when they need to collaborate. Seeking or accepting help is seen as a sign of weakness.*

*Distrust and mean-spiritedness reigns*

### SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

*Keep making same mistakes*

*Decreased productivity*

*Project failures*

*No resources*

*Absenteeism*

*Blame game*

*Anger, anxiety, frustration*

*Low morale, low self esteem*

*Higher turnover*

There is a noticeable sense of team play in planning and in performance - responsibilities are shared

### SOLUTIONS OR STEPS

*Clarity of roles and responsibilities*

*Educate whole team*

*Deliver clear expectations*

*Solicit feedback*

*Scheduled meetings*

*Leadership coaching*

*Team building exercises*

*Collaboration is the model;*

*workers readily ask for and offer assistance*

### SOLUTIONS OR STEPS

*Mentors*

*Provide training*

*Okay to make mistakes/learn from mistakes/ not punitive*

*Team building exercises*

*Share successes and mistakes*

*Make a more inclusive decision-making process*

## Unhealthy/toxic Characteristics

Poor performance is glossed over or handled arbitrarily

### SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

*"Rock star" analogy*

*Co-workers notice and get upset*

*Co-workers pick up the slack*

*Gossip- disengagement for the team*

*Morale is low*

*No recognition for work being done*

*Resentment toward non-performer*

The thoughts and opinions of the general work population are not respected by the leadership

### SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

*High absenteeism*

*Chronic illness*

*Low morale, discussions among employees*

*Employees feeling defeated, decreasing leave requests*

*High turnover*

*Staying late, taking no breaks*

*Lack of personal interaction*

*Lack of staff appreciation*

*Employees not engaged*

## Healthy Characteristics

Poor performance is confronted appropriately through a feedback process with participation of all parties

### SOLUTIONS OR STEPS

*Employees/co-workers to advise supervisor*

*Everyone is respectful of the rules*

*Being treated equally*

*Performance appraisals with deliverables and learning opportunities*

*Frank conversation*

The thoughts and opinions of the general work population are sought and valued by leadership

### SOLUTIONS OR STEPS

*Communication*

*Survey*

*Learn expectations of a potential new new job*

*Mgmt getting to know employee's personal needs-find out what matters*

*Modeling*

*Mgmt interested in feedback*

*Validate and value work*

*Empowerment*

*Training (eg. Time mgmt)*

## Unhealthy/toxic Characteristics

Employees are bored and tired but stay with the organization for a sense of security; they feel locked in their roles

### SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

*Unenthused, isolated, quiet, unengaged*  
*Long breaks, late for work*  
*Gossip/troublemaking*  
*Wandering around*  
*Loss of productivity*  
*Status quo*  
*"work to rule"*  
*PC off at 4:29*  
*Inactive at meetings*  
*Increase in workplace injuries*  
*absenteeism*

Personal needs and feelings are secondary to organizational concerns

### SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

*Absenteeism*  
*Lack of feedback*  
*Decreased productivity*  
*Deadlines not met*  
*No teamwork*  
*No respect*  
*Increased grievances*  
*Increased gossip*  
*Conflict*

## Healthy Characteristics

Employees are excited about the organization and are there by choice; they are optimistic; meetings and events are productive and enjoyable

*termination or retirement(help go early)*  
*fun meetings (food, icebreakers)*  
*talk about the "elephant in the room"*  
*staff satisfaction survey - feedback*  
*challenging assignments*  
*EAP*  
*incentives*  
*train a successor*  
*offer a mentor or refer to one*  
*move to less critical position*  
*give a second chance*  
*reward/recognize good behavior*

Personal needs and relationships are valued by and matter to leadership

### SOLUTIONS OR STEPS

*communication*  
*recognition for good work*  
*suggestion box – follow through ideas*  
*engage employees*  
*address negative behaviors during perf.*  
*review or earlier*  
*utilize resources (union, EAP, HR)*  
*third party involvement (consultant)*  
*staff survey*

## Unhealthy/toxic Characteristics

Leadership tightly controls expenditures and processes, demands excessive justification, and allows little freedom to make mistakes

### SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

*Everything decision through one person*

*Questioned about*

*No initiative/creativity*

*No voice*

*No self confidence*

*Increase in time off*

*Disengagement*

*Decrease morale*

*Anger/frustration*

*Staff turnover*

Minimizing risk has a very high value- "one mistake and you're out"

### SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

*No innovation*

*Status quo*

*Looking back at past mistakes*

*No one speaks out*

*No input*

*"we've always done it that way"*

*Feedback ideas not implemented*

*Employees not willing to advance  
(fear of responsibility)*

## Healthy Characteristics

High degree of trust exists among work-group, sense of freedom and mutual responsibility and accountability

### SOLUTIONS OR STEPS

*get rid of the boss*

*change in mgmt philosophy*

*increase responsibility – delegate more*

*leave organization*

*acceptance (control what can control)*

*team support/solutions and why*

*communication*

Risk is accepted as a condition of growth and change- "what can we learn from each mistake?"

### SOLUTIONS OR STEPS

*reward new ideas regardless of success*

*mistakes- coaching moments/opportunities*

*hire/develop top leadership willing to*

*take risks*

## Unhealthy/toxic Characteristics

## Healthy Characteristics

Tradition...“We’ve always done it that way”, “always had that event”

### SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

*Static behavior*

*Change is initiated but not sustained*

*Resistance*

*Limited resources*

*Different teams and opinions*

*Reduced performance*

*Lack of interest*

*No participation*

*Stagnant*

*Lack of mgmt commitment*

*Complacency*

There is a sense of order, yet a high rate of innovation; practices are evaluated and revised

### SOLUTIONS OR STEPS

*employee engagement-accept suggestions*

*regular feedback and involvement*

*explain benefits to everyone*

*prioritize*

*town hall meetings/communication*

*role model by leadership*

*implement and accept suggestions*