

A Discussion of Mental Health Wellness and Its Impact in the Workplace

Beverly Morehouse, MBA, Sr Sponsored Programs Specialist, Stephen F. Austin State University

Anita Sharma, Ph.D., Cert. RA, Associate Director Research Services, Thompson Rivers University

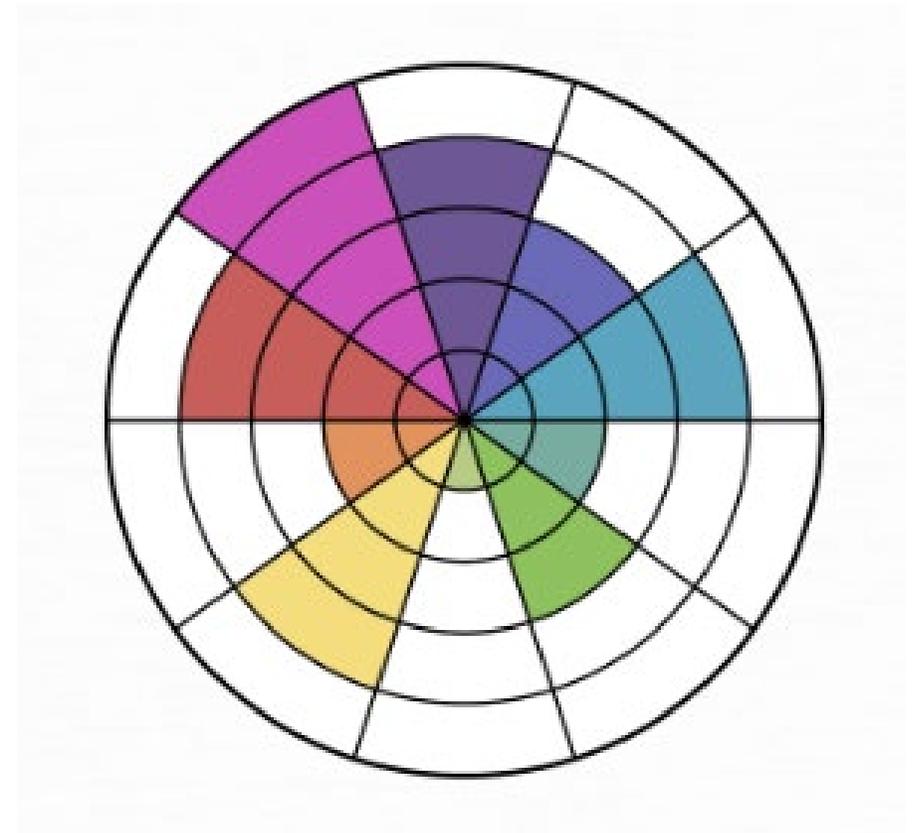
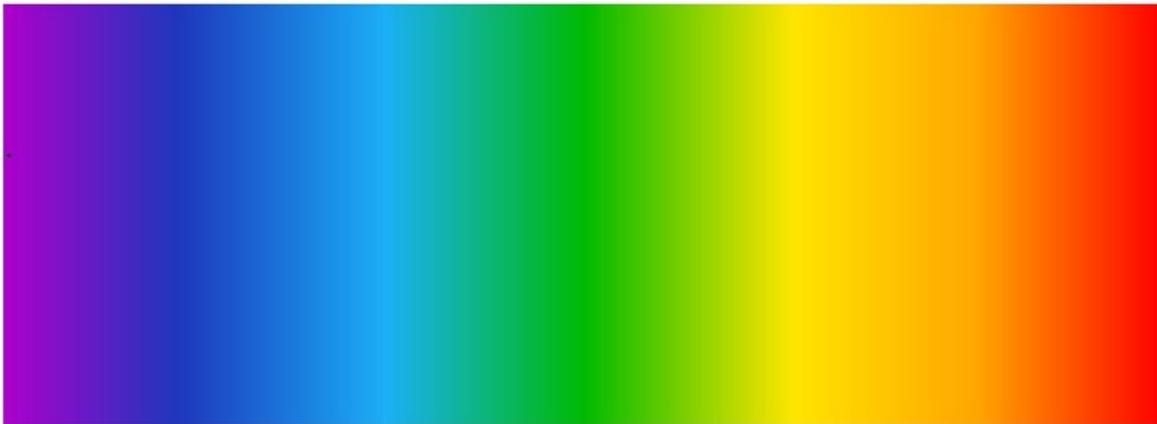
Marcos Garza, Assistant VP of Medical Finance, University of Miami, Miller School of Medicine

Robert McTear, MS, CRA, Director of Research Admin-RadOnc, New York University School of Medicine

Objectives

- ▶ Explore ways to implement effective strategies for navigating one's own mental health journey in the workplace, paying special attention to the opportunities provided by employers
- ▶ Appreciate the diverse spectrum that is mental health wellness to help reduce the stigma around discussing mental health and to spotlight the fact that we are all dealing with issues that others may never understand

Things to Keep in Mind



Key Terms Defined

- ▶ **Emotional Health** deals with thought and feeling. It's our ability to manage and understand our emotions and attempt to understand the emotions of others.
- ▶ **Mental Health** deals with a person's emotional, psychological, and social well-being. It's our ability to handle stress, relates to others, and make choices.
- ▶ **Mental Health Wellness** is an internal resource that helps a person think, feel, connect, and function on a daily basis. Keeping our personal wellness high is an active process that takes time and effort to manage and allows us to build resilience, grow, and flourish.

What We Know About Mental Health Wellness

- ▶ Maintaining it is an Active Process
- ▶ It can provide stability, resilience, and a sense of purpose
- ▶ Helps to strengthen social connections
- ▶ Helps us be mindful
- ▶ The workplace can be a minefield for mental health wellness

<https://www.nih.gov/health-information/emotional-wellness-toolkit>

Workplace Stressors on Mental Health Wellness

Stressors

- ▶ Long Hours
- ▶ Excessive Workload
- ▶ Job Insecurity
- ▶ Micromanagement
- ▶ Conflict

Responses

- ▶ Exhaustion
- ▶ Burn-out
- ▶ Confusion
- ▶ Depression
- ▶ Anxiety

How do you think these stressors impact one's mental and emotional health?

How do you think these stressors impact institutional effectiveness?

Costs of Ignoring Mental Health Wellness

Direct Costs

- ▶ Mental Health costs exceed \$200 billion annually over heart disease, stroke, obesity, cancer
- ▶ Increased short-term disability costs
- ▶ Increased overtime pay
- ▶ Productivity loss

Indirect Costs

- ▶ Safety incidents
- ▶ Increased team stress
- ▶ Absenteeism & Presenteeism
- ▶ Increased physical ailments
- ▶ High stigma around mental health topics leading to increased issues

75% of symptoms treated by doctors can be traced back to excessive stress which can lead to serious health conditions

How to Strengthen Mental Health Wellness

Personal Actions

- ▶ Exercise - walking, going to the gym, playing a sport
- ▶ Meditation - setting aside quiet time, using an app, yoga, laying in the grass
- ▶ Quality Sleep - quiet/dark/cool room, low lights before bed, read, etc.
- ▶ Hobbies/Play - drawing, sewing, lawn care, hide & seek
- ▶ Self-help & Therapy - apps, books, talking with a licensed therapist
- ▶ Self-awareness and Self-Acceptance

How to Strengthen Mental Health Wellness

Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs)

- ▶ Online courses/seminars - trainings and videos discussing wellness
- ▶ Child and Elder care support - flexible work hours
- ▶ Financial counseling - assistance in budgeting, retirement, etc.
- ▶ Legal counseling - availability of legal advice
- ▶ Mentoring - matching of senior with newer staff
- ▶ Coaching - providing coaching to help with workplace goals
- ▶ Group activities - 5ks, cooking classes, book clubs, community outreach
- ▶ Remote/Hybrid work options

Audience Question

- ▶ Does your institution offer any of these resources?
- ▶ Do you take advantage of any of your institutions resources?

Do Employee Assistance Programs Really Work?

For the most part, yes, if **everyone** subscribes to a culture of open communication, teamwork, and trust. This leads to:

- ▶ Positive Work/Life Balance
- ▶ Stress Management
- ▶ Increased Mental Health Awareness

Do Employee Assistance Programs Really Work?

- ▶ Research has shown that positive work cultures, characterized by supportive leadership, open communication, teamwork, and trust, have a significant positive impact on employee well-being, job satisfaction, motivation, and productivity
- ▶ Practicing Equity and Inclusion helps us feel we belong and gives us ways of connecting with others

EAP Successes - Public Health Summit Highlights

Experts from companies with successful EAPS joined to discuss action steps to improve worker health and well-being. There were 4 main take-aways to successful employee assistance programs:

- ▶ Demystify mental health treatment & remove the stigma associated with seeking help
- ▶ Communication and Awareness
- ▶ Incentivize healthy lifestyles and program participation
- ▶ Senior leadership and C-Suites need to buy-in and participate

USAA - wellness programs that include mental well-being lower medical and productivity-related expenses

Audience Questions

- ▶ Have EAPs at your institution been successful?
- ▶ What could your institution do or add to make it a better fit for you?

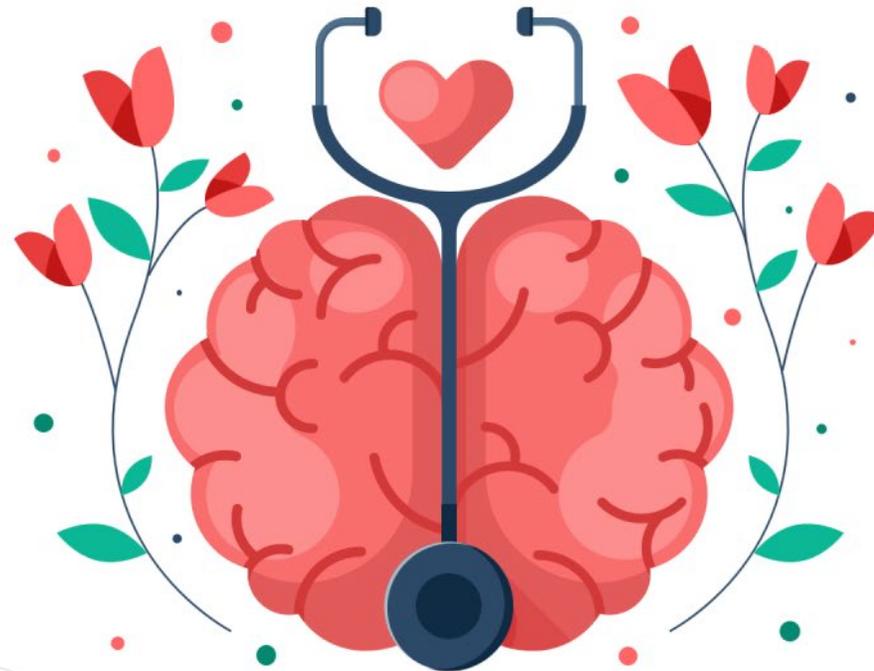
Conclusions

- ▶ Increased awareness reduces the stigma around mental health wellness and makes it easier for individuals to seek help
- ▶ Institutions have a responsibility to assist their employees on their wellness journey if only to help their own bottom line
- ▶ Individuals need to actively work on their own wellness in order to sustain their physical and mental/emotion well-being

Resources

- ▶ **Mental Health in the Workplace: A Call-to-Action Proceedings from the Mental Health in the Workplace: Public Health Summit** Ron Z. Goetzel, PhD^{1,2,3}, Enid Chung Roemer, PhD¹, et.al., J Occup Environ Med. 2018 April; 60(4): 322-330.
doi:10.1097/JOM.0000000000001271.
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5891372/>
- ▶ **Richard Wynne, Work Research Centre Veronique De Broeck, Karla Vandebroek et.al., Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion Promoting mental health in the workplace: Guidance to implementing a comprehensive approach - European Commission**
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/277476748_Promoting_mental_health_in_the_workplace_guidance_to_implementing_a_comprehensive_approach
- ▶ <https://www.priorygroup.com/blog/emotional-health-and-wellbeing>
- ▶ <https://www.nih.gov/health-information/emotional-wellness-toolkit>
- ▶ [How to Deal with Anxiety and Start Living a Happy Life | Jesse GIUNTA RAFEH | TEDxSouthLakeTahoe \(youtube.com\)](#) [Chronic Stress, Anxiety? - You Are Your Best Doctor! | Dr. Bal Pawa | TEDxSFU \(youtube.com\)](#)

Questions?



Mental Health & Wellness