

Corporate Wellness Round Table

April 2018

Mental Wellness – How can we remove the stigma of mental health in our wellness programs?

GUEST SPEAKERS

Kevin Sonntag, LPC
Director of Counseling
Sunbeam Family Services

*Kevin is moving to a new role at a new company.
For assistance please contact David Swope, listed below.

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Mental health encompasses everything from stress to psychosis. Many things contribute to a stigma around the topic of mental health. Topping the list is the uncomfortable and very personal nature of the topic. Oklahoma seems to have more of a stigma than that of other parts of the U.S. Possible contributors are that our area tends to think there may be a spiritual aspect to this, or that someone with “mental health issues” is lazy or has some sort of defect. There is a basic lack of understanding around what mental health and wellness truly is.

Mental health is expensive. Many employers are focused on the return on their investment (ROI), and rightfully so. Mental health can be expensive to treat, but it can be extremely costly if not treated. Please see attached document showing the costs to employers for mental health and substance abuse (one way humans tend to deal with stress) vs. smoking.

“My wellness program isn’t equipped to handle clinical mental health issues.”

- Send to EAP – don’t try to be a counselor without proper training
- No EAP? Try National Suicide Prevention Lifeline
 - 1-800-273-8255
 - Online chat available
 - Other resources available on website
 - <https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/>

It’s better to give than to receive.

David told of a study where participants were given a small dollar Starbucks card. They could keep it for themselves or give it away. Those that kept the card reported experiencing a feeling of happiness for an average of 2 hours. Those that gave it away reported experiencing a feeling of happiness for up to a day afterward.

Little things can make a big difference. Smiles are contagious. Giving something away – a gift card, a smile, a compliment, even your time – can be better for YOUR mental health than the person who receives it.

So, how do we incorporate mental health into our wellness programs?

- Screenings
 - Push screenings out to employees – lone emails/programs
 - Incorporate screenings into annual wellness screenings
- Make education readily available
 - Employee Assistance Program (EAP) webinars
 - Resource availability on company wellness portals or websites
- Mini-competitions – whomever completes the task wins or is entered in a drawing to win a prize.
 - Minutes of meditation
 - Minutes of mindfulness
 - Mood logs
- Forced interaction
 - Secret pal week
 - Encouragement stockings at Christmas
 - Encourage small group interaction
- Remind supervisors that they are not counselors and that employees need to be held accountable for their work responsibilities.
 - Give resources
 - Refer to EAP

Some employees are hesitant to reach out to someone at work with mental health issues for fear of employer reaction to knowing something is wrong. How do we combat this?

- Be empathetic when someone does reach out.
- Give resources; send to EAP
- Give personal examples in presentations
- Remind that EAP is confidential
- Hold Lunch & Learns and webinars
- Screening tools in newsletters
- Resources in breakrooms
- Be careful of language in the office – no shame, no judgement
- Cultivate a culture of help and understanding
- Talk about how to help “others”. Sometimes people are hesitant to talk about themselves, but when we put the “issues” on someone else, they become less personal.

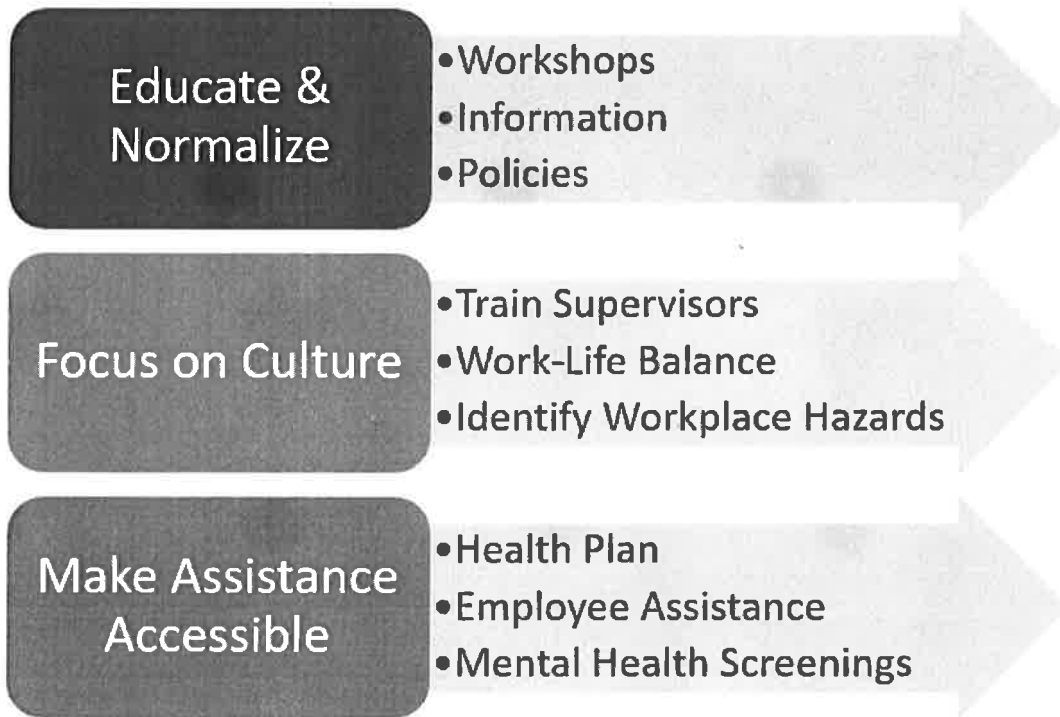
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For any questions, please contact Alicia Rambo.
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Mental Health Wellness

	Mental Health & Substance Use	Smoking
Employer Cost	\$5,300 annual per EE	\$5,800 annual per EE
Prevalence	20%	15%
Return on Investment	5-15x	6x
Intervention Effectiveness	Moderately Effective	Minimally Effective

Strategies



Resources

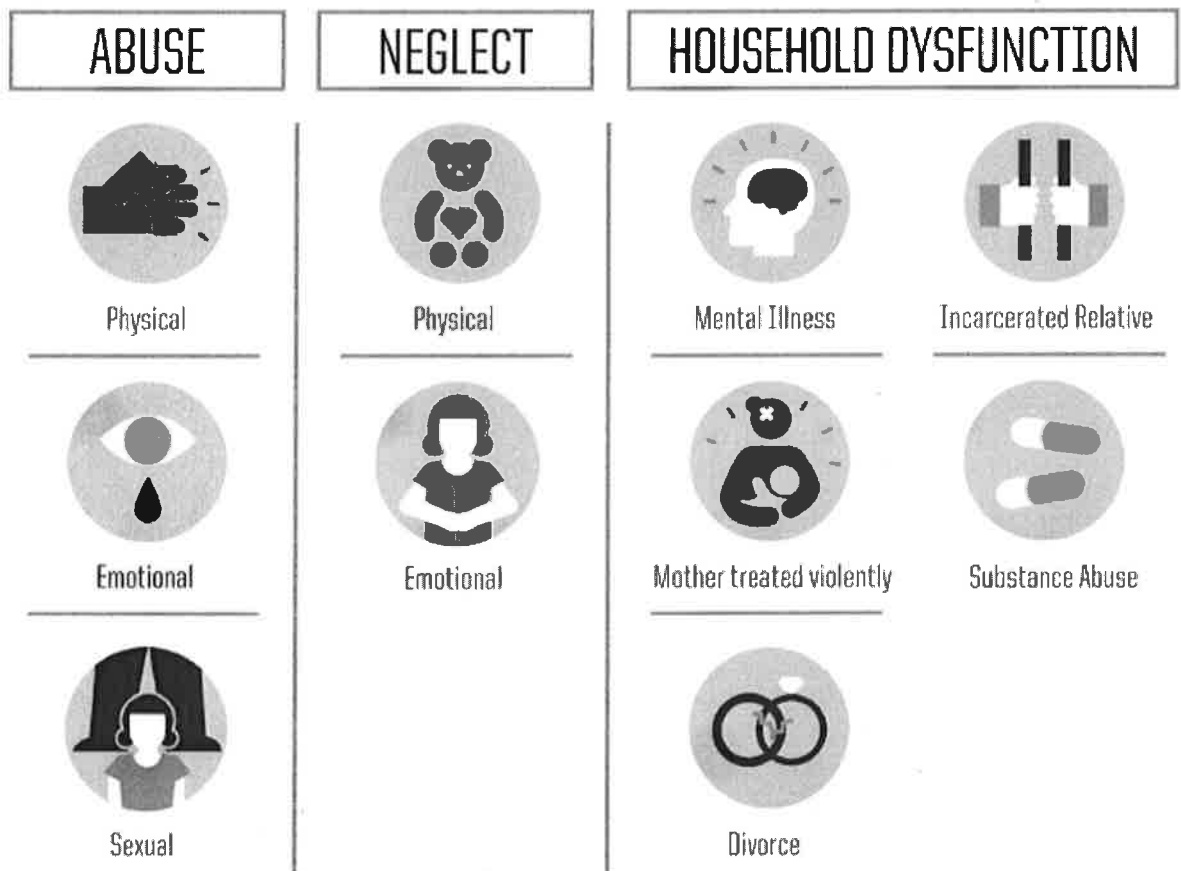
Screenings

- <https://screening.mentalhealthamerica.net/screening-tools>
- PHQ-9, GAD-7, CAGE-AID, ACEs Questionnaire (Trauma)

Information

- ACEs Study

<https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/acestudy/resources.html>



Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

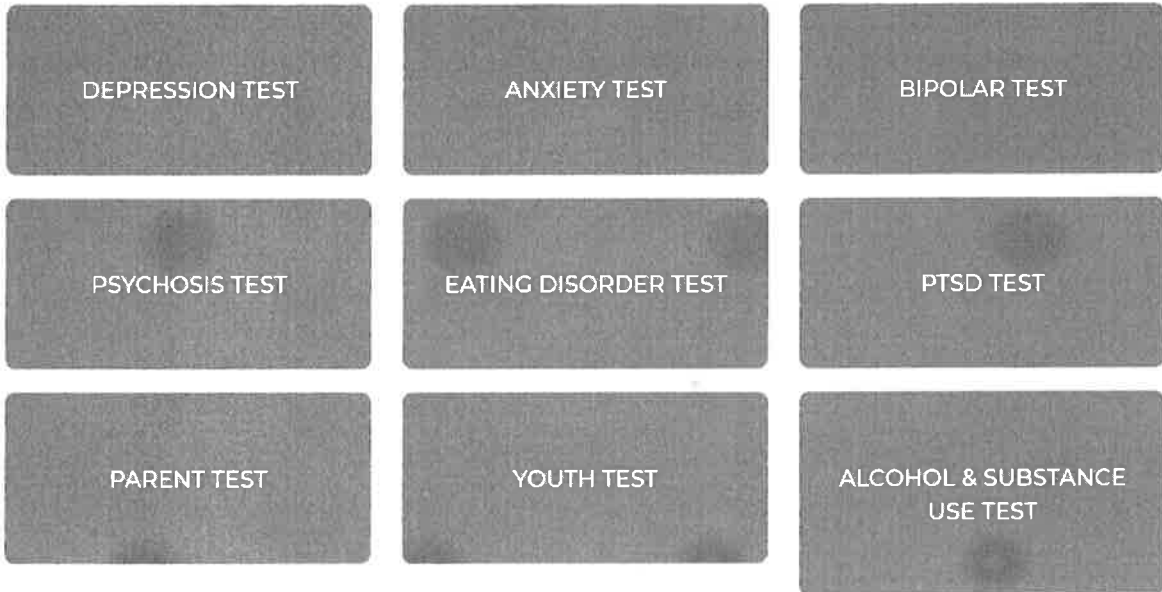
Credit: Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

Compared with people with zero ACEs, those with four categories of ACEs had a 240 percent greater risk of hepatitis, were 390 percent more likely to have chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (emphysema or chronic bronchitis), and a 240 percent higher risk of a sexually-transmitted disease. They were twice as likely to be smokers, 12 times more likely to have attempted suicide, seven times more likely to be alcoholic, and 10 times more likely to have injected street drugs.

- EAP Newsletter

MENTAL HEALTH SCREENING TOOLS

Taking a mental health screening is one of the quickest and easiest ways to determine whether you are experiencing symptoms of a mental health condition. **Mental health conditions, such as depression or anxiety, are real, common and treatable. And recovery is possible.**



ANXIETY SCREENING

Over the last two weeks, how often have you been bothered by the following problems?

Please note, all fields are required for this screen.

1. Feeling nervous, anxious, or on edge*

2. Not being able to sleep or control worrying*

3. Worrying too much about different things*

4. Trouble relaxing*

5. Being so restless that it is hard to sit still*