

Mental Health At Work

According to Mental Health Works, a Canadian Mental Health Association initiative, one in five people will experience a mental health issue directly. Those who do not have mental health problems themselves will have a friend, colleague or family member impacted.

With most of us spending a great deal of the day at work, it's crucial that businesses and organizations train managers and other leaders to recognize signs of mental health issues. Education and awareness can help create a caring culture that acknowledges and supports those in distress.

While you should never attempt to diagnose a co-worker, signs of mental health issues can include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Consistently late or absent
- Inability to work with colleagues and displays of anger
- Decreased productivity and interest in one's work
- Drastic change in mood
- Frequently complaining of fatigue
- Difficulty concentrating and making decisions

While it is not unusual to have a bad week, a pattern that includes the above symptoms and continues for an extended period of time may indicate a more serious issue. If you suspect someone in your workplace is suffering the following are strategies for supporting co-workers in need:

- Continue to include the employee in workplace activities.
- Let them know that you as a colleague, manager or employer are available to talk confidentially and help.
- If available, encourage them to access the company EFAP.
- Avoid negative talk and gossip about the individual and discourage it in others.
- Depending on your relationship with the individual, maintain contact with them if they take time off work.
- Ensure the individual feels welcomed and appreciated upon returning to work.
- Call 911 if you suspect a co-worker is in immediate danger
- Advocate for health and wellness practices in the workplace



For additional resources visit the [Mental Health Works](http://www.mentalhealthworks.ca/) website. Share your healthy workplace strategies at #HealthyWorkplaceMonth

Source: <http://www.mentalhealthworks.ca/>, <http://www.cmha.ca/>

Tri Fit Green Tips

Did you know the simple act of going outdoors can improve your mental health? Next time you are feeling down or need a pick-me-up, get outside and enjoying the 'greenery'.

Research has shown that access to parks, walking paths and presence of greenery leads to improved mental, social and physical health. As well, many studies have shown that physical activity can reduce symptoms associated with anxiety and depression.

The key is no matter what time of day or what the weather is like, get outside, be active and enjoy the mood-enhancing benefits of the natural environment. Here are some tips to get you outside more:

- Enjoy an after-dinner or weekend walk with your family.
- Walk, bike or rollerblade on designated paths.
- Use your lunch break to go for a walk or enjoy your lunch al fresco!
- Try a new outdoor sport such as baseball, ultimate Frisbee or tennis.
- Be adventurous and go camping, backpacking, canoeing or hiking.
- Join an outdoor fitness bootcamp.

Whatever you decide to do, being active outdoors will have many positive impacts on your mental and physical health.

Share your green habits on social media #TriFitGoGreen

Source: http://www.participaction.com/pdf/june_lifestyletips_en_a.pdf

OTIP - Best Healthy Workplace Practices

The Ontario Teachers Insurance Plan (OTIP) is very serious about the health and wellness of its employees. The OTIP Healthy Workplace Committee, which includes a part-time Tri Fit Wellness Consultant, offers a number of innovative wellness programs.

While October's Healthy Workplace Month is celebrated with a health fair, a healthy cook-off and weekly wellness Lunch n Learns featuring a number of guest speakers, OTIP offers year-round wellness opportunities for their employees.

They make the most of the summer months by providing employees with a weekly shuttle to a nearby market in support of local farmers. And a healthy commuter challenge encourages employees to walk, bike or car-pool to work.

Ongoing support includes a "Zen" room, providing a quiet place for reflection and meditation, and massage chairs to help employees recharge. The Relax and Renew Wellness sub-committee organizes a series of informal Lunch n Learns on targeted health topics. Not only do employees learn about wellness services within the community, they also connect with co-workers in a relaxed setting.

OTIP strongly believes in community engagement in the Kitchener-Waterloo area and supports local charity sporting events such as the Canadian Cancer Society's Great Ride and Stride and the Heart & Stroke Big Bike. As well, OTIP employees pitch in and clean up a portion of a local highway in the Adopt A Road program and provide backpacks full of school supplies to economically-disadvantaged children. This year OTIP provided the "Send'em off Smiling" program with 170 backpacks to ensure children have everything they need to succeed at school. (<http://sendemoff.ca/>)



Every month is Healthy Workplace Month at OTIP!

Share your organization's Healthy Workplace Strategies at #HealthyWorkplaceMonth

October News

October is Healthy Workplace Month

The theme for 2015 is Healthy Workplace Essentials: Educate, Engage, Empower and Evaluate.

Visit www.HealthyWorkplaceMonth.ca and find out how you can enhance the health of your organization. Contact your Tri Fit consultant for healthy workplace month programs.

Healthy Halloween Treats

Do you know the average trick-or-treat bag contains 3 cups of sugar? Now that's scary! Allow your child a few collected sweet treats and then offer these healthier versions with names like Boo-nana Ghosts, Eye-ball Crackers and Bat Chips. Fun to make too!

<https://www.parentmap.com/article/10-healthy-halloween-treats>

Pumpkin – Autumn's Apple!

Local pumpkins are available in September and October – just in time for Thanksgiving and Halloween. Buying local pumpkins supports farmers and reduces the fuel used in the transportation from field to table. Not just another pretty face, the versatile pumpkin can be baked, boiled and steamed to make delicious dishes rich in Vitamin A, iron and protein. And don't forget the seeds! Visit EatRight Ontario for recipe ideas for your Jack O' Lantern. <http://bit.ly/1UoPRlv>