

# Mental Health in the Workplace



**Canadian Mental  
Health Association**  
Saskatoon  
*Mental health for all*

# Mental Health & Mental Illness

“ the capacity of each and all of us to feel, think, and act in ways that enhance our ability to enjoy life and deal with the challenges we face.”

– Public Health Agency of Canada

- ❖ 1 in 5 Canadians will experience some mental health problem within one year.
- ❖ 1 in 3 will experience a mental health problem in their lifetime.
- ❖ 2 out of 3 suffer in silence fearing judgement and rejection.

## Mental Health in the Workplace

*This week: Half a million Canadians will miss work due to their mental health.*

**30%** of disability claims are related to mental health

**70%** of Canadian Employees are concerned about psychological health and safety of their workplace

**14%** don't think their workplace is safe at all

Approximately **\$50 billion** each year are lost to the Canadian economy because of mental illness.

- Mental Health Commission of Canada

# Why Should Employers Support Mental Health in the Workplace?

Working adults spend the majority of their waking hours on the job. For many, work is a source of wellbeing, an opportunity to be productive and contribute to society.

When business leaders and other employers fail to acknowledge or address the negative impacts that workplaces can have on employees' mental health, the results can be costly.

-CAMH

# Common Mental Health Problems



# Anxiety: Fight, Freeze, Flight

## Average Vs. Disorder

1. severity & intensity
2. length of time
3. interference with daily functioning
4. occurrence when danger is not present

- ❖ fear or excessive worry
- ❖ difficulties with attention or concentration
- ❖ feelings of detachment
- ❖ racing thoughts irritability or insomnia
- ❖ increased heart rate, chest pain, rapid breath
- ❖ dizziness, headache, numbness
- ❖ nausea or vomiting
- ❖ muscle tension, restlessness, soreness

# Depression

A mood disorder that impacts how a person thinks about themselves, relates to others and interacts with the world around them.

## Signs & Symptoms

- ❖ fatigue, inconsistent sleeping patterns, weight gain or loss, lack of personal hygiene, pacing, slow or detached speech
- ❖ hopelessness, helplessness, sense of worthlessness, guilt, feelings of burdening, negative thinking
- ❖ crying, withdrawal, neglect of responsibilities, loss of interests, isolation, anger outbursts, irritability

# Substance Use & Psychosis

**Substance Misuse:** harmful use of substances for non-medical purposes (ie. Binge drinking)

**Substance Use Problem:** compulsive engagement despite negative consequences (ie. Opioids, alcohol, gambling, etc)

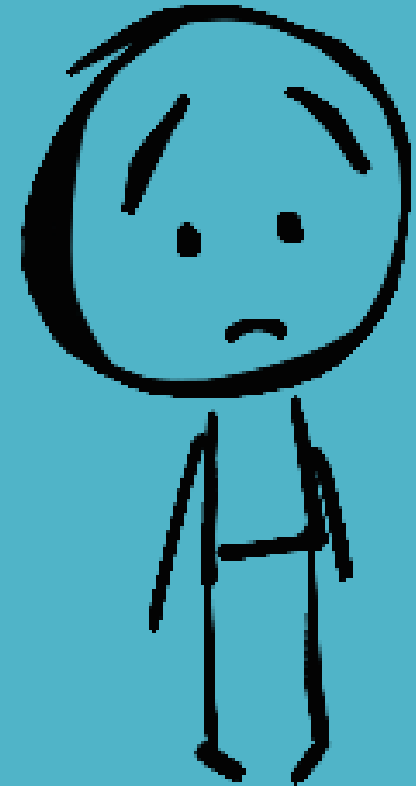
## Drug-induced or Disorder:

- ❖ mood swings, suspiciousness, paranoia
- ❖ blunt or flat emotions
- ❖ irrational or angry reactions
- ❖ reduced energy or motivation
- ❖ difficulties with concentration, controlling thoughts
- ❖ sense of altered self, others or outside world
- ❖ delusions, hallucinations
- ❖ detached language withdrawal, deterioration, sudden excesses

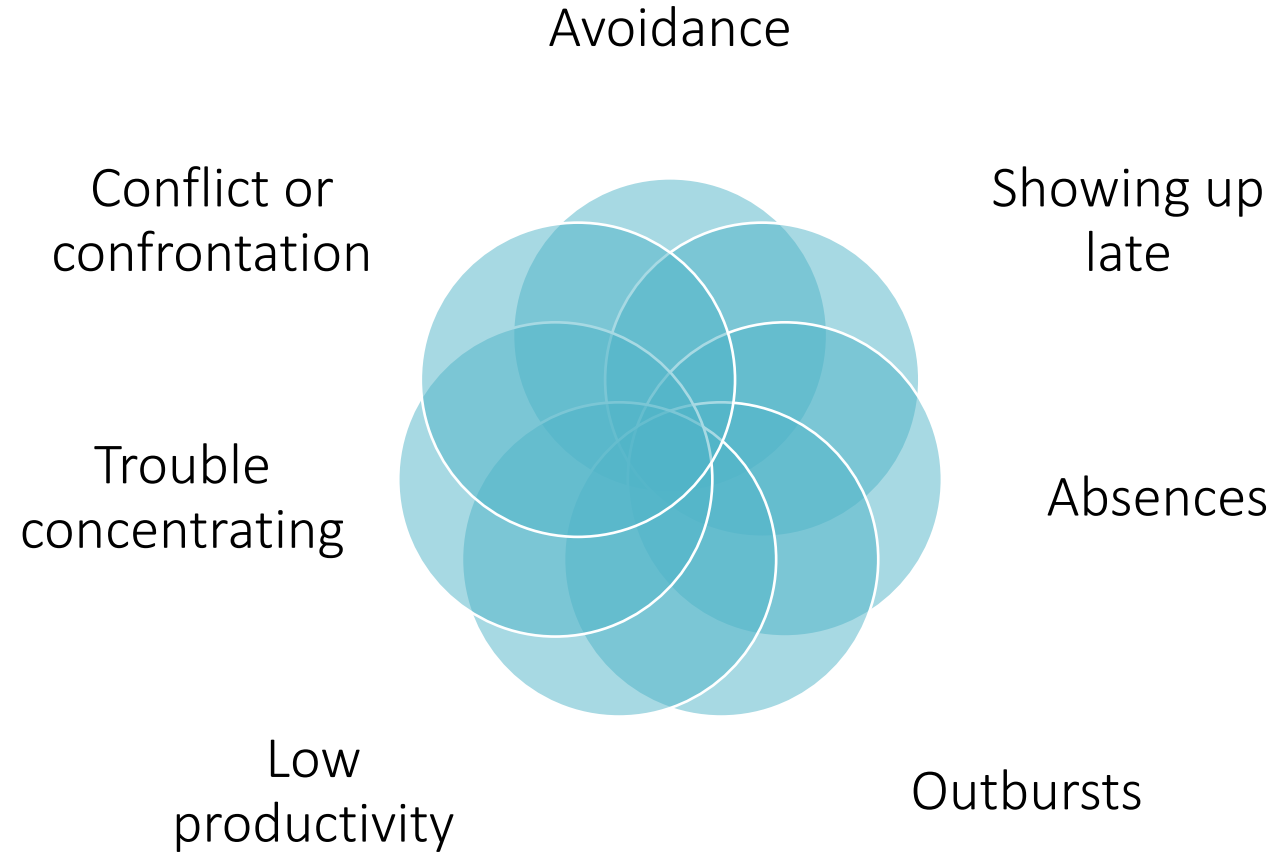


# Warning Symptoms

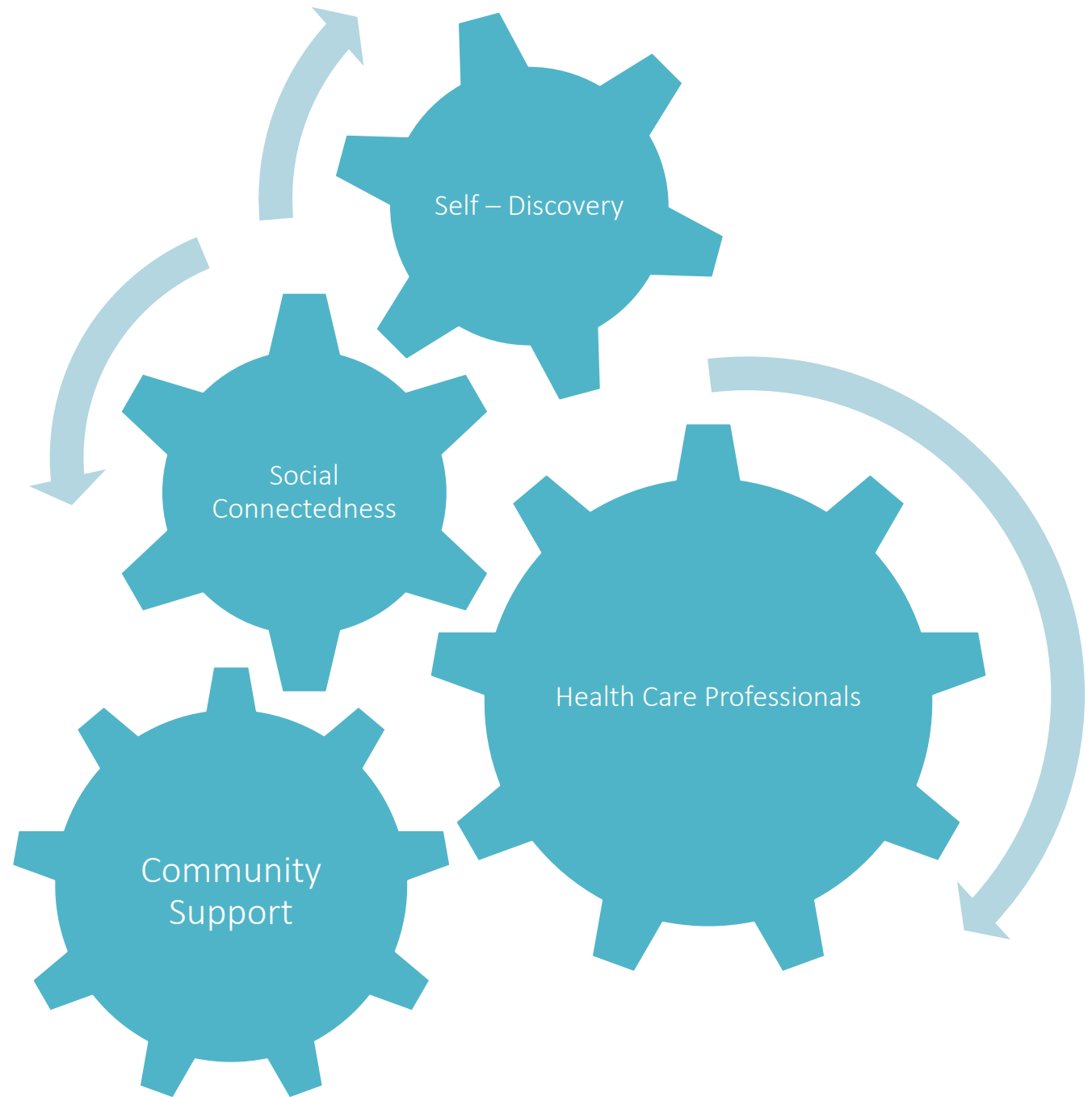
- ❖ Feeling anxious, irritable
- ❖ Apathy, loss of interest in work
- ❖ Problems sleeping
- ❖ Fatigue
- ❖ Muscle tension or headaches
- ❖ Stomach problems
- ❖ Using alcohol or drugs to cope



# What does this look like at work?



# Getting Support



# Supporting a Co-worker or Employee

Keep in mind:

- ❖ Communication
- ❖ Boundaries
- ❖ Methods of support



# First Steps: Communication



## Starting the conversation...

❖ “I’ve noticed...”

❖ “Tell me more”

❖ “What can we do together?”

❖ “I am here to help”

Do not.....

- ❖ Probe or attempt a diagnosis
- ❖ tell them to get over it
- ❖ accuse the person of faking
- ❖ bring in personal anecdotes
- ❖ assume your experience mirrors theirs

# Boundaries

## Consider your own needs or circumstances

1. Do I have the time to do this properly or am I pressuring myself to rush through it?
2. Am I responding to hearsay (gossip) or speaking about known facts?
3. Am I in the right frame of mind to do this, or should I reschedule?
4. Am I considering my role in this?



# What is a Healthy Workplace?

*“One where employees and managers collaborate to protect the safety, **health**, and well-being of all employees in the **workplace** through:  
Promoting **health** and safety in the physical **work** environment. Promoting well-being in the psychosocial **work** environment.”*

– World Health Organization



Workplace support is key to maintaining positive mental health



# How to promote wellness in the workplace....

Awareness



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graph TD; A[Awareness] --> B[Responding & Collaborating]; B --> C[Prevention & Planning]; C --> D[Adequate Supports];
```

Responding & Collaborating

Prevention & Planning

Adequate Supports

# Tips for Employers: Investing in people



Build Trust



Make time to  
talk



Encourage  
Participation



Be specific



Respect  
Privacy



Educate



Be Positive

# Healthy Strategies

- ✓ Mindfulness
- ✓ Relaxation techniques
- ✓ Stay hydrated
- ✓ Ask for help
- ✓ Take breaks
- ✓ Gratitude – focus on what you appreciate
- ✓ Spend time outside
- ✓ Listen to music
- ✓ Laugh
- ✓ Improve sleep habits
- ✓ Make healthy food choices
- ✓ Massage therapy
- ✓ Spend time in silence

**SOMETIMES  
I FORGET  
PUTTING  
MYSELF FIRST  
ISN'T SELFISH  
BUT  
NECESSARY.**

KUSHANDWISDOM.TUMBLR

# Questions or Comments?

Further Training: Mental Health First Aid



Mental Health  
Commission  
of Canada

Commission de  
la santé mentale  
du Canada

**Mental Health  
First Aid Canada** 