



CANADIAN CENTRE  
FOR VICTIMS OF TORTURE

# OCASI MENTAL HEALTH KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE

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# STRESS

- WE ALL KNOW WE WORK IN A STRESSFUL ENVIRONMENT.
- LOW PAY, NOT SUFFICIENT BENEFIT, NO PENSION, LONG WORK HOURS AND UNREALISTIC TARGETS- ALL LEAD TO STRESS- MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEMS.

# LESSONS LEARNED FROM A DECADE OF PROGRESS

- 2007 GREAT WEST LIFE TOOK EARLY LEADERSHIP BY LAUNCHING GWL MENTAL HEALTH IN THE WORK PLACE.
- 2007 MHCC WAS ESTABLISHED BY THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT-RESEARCH
- 2010 BELL CANADA LAUNCHED THE BELL LETS TALK CAMPAIGN.
- 2013 THE NATIONAL STANDARD OF CANADA FOR PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY IN THE WORKPLACE WAS LAUNCHED
- MHCC SPONSORED SEVERAL DISCUSSIONS AND RESEARCH PAPERS ON MENTAL HEALTH AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STANDARDS- CCVT WAS ONE OF THE 40 ORGANIZATIONS THAT ACTIVELY PARTICIPATED.

- **NO ONE IS IMMUNE, NO MATTER  
WHERE THEY LIVE WHAT THEIR AGE OR  
WHAT THEY DO IN LIFE.**

So how do we define Mental Health.

- WHO DEFINES MENTAL HEALTH AS A STATE OF WELL BEING IN WHICH THE INDIVIDUAL REALIZES HIS OR HER OWN POTENTIAL, CAN COPE WITH NORMAL STRESSES IN LIFE, CAN WORK PRODUCTIVELY AND FRUITFULLY AND IS ABLE TO MAKE CONTRIBUTION TO HER OR HIS



# MENTAL HEALTH

**One of the things we tend not to understand clearly in the Canadian context is that different cultures have different concepts of being well, especially when it comes to mental health and mental illness.**

*Notisha Massaquoi, Executive Director of Women's Health in Women's Hands Community Health Centre*



WORKPLACES WITH POSITIVE APPROACH TO MENTAL HEALTH/PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY OR HEALTH WILL HAVE:

- IMPROVED EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT
- CREATIVE AND INNOVATIVE
- TAKE OWNERSHIP OF AGENCY MISSION
- BETTER SERVICE DELIVERY

# WHAT ARE SOME OF THE TRIGGERS OF MENTAL HEALTH?



# WHERE ARE YOU IN ORGANIZATION CHANGE?

DESTINATION OR JOURNEY?

LEADERSHIP! CRITICAL LEADERSHIP!  
ENGAGEMENT AT ALL LEVELS

## Traumatization in the Workplace\*

Awareness of vicarious traumatization

low

- The existence of vicarious traumatization at the work site is denied. Incidents are dismissed as isolated or circumstantial.
- Only extreme cases are acknowledged, and these are sensationalized. Cases are considered to be rare.
- Vicarious traumatization is recognized as a potential hazard of the work situation. More attention is paid when workers show signs, and circles of support are implemented at the work site.
- Vicarious traumatization is recognized as a condition that creates work-related problems.
- Signs and symptoms of vicarious traumatization are acknowledged. Colleagues, supervisors and others address the issue.
- Guarantees at work are in place – supportive conditions, decent work schedules and preventative care are assured. Workers are educated beforehand about vicarious traumatization and its impact on themselves, their families, and those they work with.

high

\*adapted from the *Psychosocial Trauma Institute*

# WHAT IS DEBRIFING?

- Debriefing is a process during which a counselor is supported to reflect on what has happened for them.
- It is a safe container where the counselor can experience their own feelings and reactions, without judgment in order to make sense of current challenges.

# WHO DOES DEBRIFING?

- Debriefing can be done with a peer in a peer group, mentor, by outsider to organization, or by a manager/supervisor. The person or people being debriefed feel a sense of psychological safety and its always a voluntary undertaking.
- Having a person in power over the individual or group may inhibit debriefing.



# DEBRIEFING FORMAT

✓ FORMAL



✓ INFORMAL



✓ GROUP



✓ ONE ON ONE



# “ We care” “ Trauma Informed Care”

Organizational policies and procedures need to reflect the importance of employee health given the stress that their work can cause. And to relegate appropriate time and space for this to happen.

For example:

- Some Breakfast/Friday
- Doctors on site
- Leaving at 4
- Zumba - Yoga
- Freedom to control schedule and no formal booking after 3
- Recommending no more than 4 clients per day
- Annual retreats
- Generous Policies

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# FIVE STEPS THAT WE CAN ALL TAKE TO IMPROVE OUR MENTAL WELLBEING

- Connect
- Be active (physically)
- Take notice (mindful, reflective)
- Keep learning

<http://www.nhs.uk.conditions/stress-anciety-depression/improve-mental-wellbeing>

# SOME SUGGESTIONS

- LOOK FOR EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM
- DON'T SWEEP IT UNDER THE CARPET- IT IS OUR CORPORATE RESPONSIBILITY- EMPLOYEES FEEL SAFE, PROTECTED AND COMFORTABLE – HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE
- IDENTIFY STRENGTHS AND CONTRIBUTIONS-PERFORMANCE REVIEWS (IS WELLNESS DISCUSSED AND FOLLOWED UP ?)
- PROVIDE SUPPORTIVE GUIDANCE AND MENTORSHIP



Take a walk

Support each other

Celebrate together

Be proud of your work and get involved



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# RESOURCES

- VICARIOUS TRAUMA AND SELFCARE  
[HTTPS://CCRWEB.CA/SITES/CCRWEB.CA/FILES/VICARIOUSTRAUMASELF-CARE\\_CCVT.PDF](https://CCRWEB.CA/SITES/CCRWEB.CA/FILES/VICARIOUSTRAUMASELF-CARE_CCVT.PDF)
- CCVT MENTAL HEALTH PROTOCOL 2017 [HTTP://CCVT.ORG/WP-CONTENT/UPLOADS/2017/11/CCVT\\_MENTAL\\_HEALTH\\_PROTOCOL\\_2017.PDF](http://CCVT.ORG/WP-CONTENT/UPLOADS/2017/11/CCVT_MENTAL_HEALTH_PROTOCOL_2017.PDF)
- FREE COMMUNITY TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES: CAMH IMMIGRANT AND REFUGEE MENTAL HEALTH PROJECT [HTTPS://IRMHP-PSMIR.CAMHX.CA/](https://IRMHP-PSMIR.CAMHX.CA/)
- WOMEN'S HEALTH IN WOMEN'S HANDS CBT TRAININGS: CULTURALLY ADAPTED COGNITIVE BEHAVIOURAL THERAPY (CA-CBT)
- BELL LETS TALK COMMUNITY GRANTS  
[HTTPS://LETSTALK.BELL.CA/EN/COMMUNITY-FUND](https://LETSTALK.BELL.CA/EN/COMMUNITY-FUND)