Best Practices for Improving Mental Health in the Workplace

With a growing amount of attention being brought towards mental health in recent years, several research and health organizations have developed evidence-based best practices in order to improve the quality of care and preventative services. As an employer, you can adopt any of these strategies not only to improve the wellbeing of your employees, but also to save your organization costs.
<u>*Make sure to check off the initiatives your organization plans to incorporate into your workplace.*</u>

SAMHSA's Eight Dimensions of Wellness

Best Practices: Evidence-Based

☐ **Free Online Mental Health Screening Tool** Inform your employees about a confidential, online resource that can help to identify mental illness in its earliest stages. This tool is supported through the CDC's Healthier Worksite Initiative as well as (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)[1]. SAMHSA notes that online screening encourages employees who have difficult work schedules or hesitations about screenings to receive services.
Please visit: http://www.mentalhealthscreening.org/screening/workplace

☐ **Coping with Work and Family Stress™** This science-based program has been designated as one of five, Model Prevention Workplace Programs by the SAMHSA. Through rigorous evaluation, it has been shown to reduce alcohol, tobacco, and substance use, to decrease psychological symptoms, including depression and anxiety, and to increase the use of support from supervisors and co-workers, with an overarching goal of enhancing employee health and productivity. The Developers, Dr. David L. Snow, Ph.D. and Susan Ottenheimer, LCSW are available contractually through The Consultation Center at Yale University to train facilitators in the delivery of WFS at your workplace. Please send inquiries to: susan.ottenheimer@yale.edu

☐ **Offering a Smoking Cessation Resources can Improve Mental Health** A study at the Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis of almost 5,000 people, found that quitting smoking often leads to a better psychiatric health[2].
For CDC cessation programs for offices, visit:
http://www.cdc.gov/workplacehealthpromotion/implementation/topics/tobacco-use.html#T1

☐ **Primary and Secondary Online Preventative Programs** Two internet websites, MoodGYM and Blue Pages, serve as depression intervention tools by offering cognitive behavioral therapy and education about depression (respectively)[3]. Randomized control

trials found that MoodGYM significantly reduced symptoms of depression in comparison to the control group, which received weekly telephone advice.
Please visit: http://www.bluepages.anu.edu.au/home/ and https://moodgym.anu.edu.au/

☐ **Take a Mental Health First Aid Class** This course teaches participants how to help a coworker who is developing a mental illness or is in a crisis. This program has been certified "evidence-based" by SAMHSA. Learn more about course locations by visiting the following website: http://www.mentalhealthfirstaid.org/cs/

Resources for the Office

☐ **New to Mental Health in the Workplace?** Check out the CDC's "STRESS… At Work," which provides an introductory overview on the scope of stress in the American workplace, causes, approaches to job stress, and locations for additional information. Forward this webpage to your employees and managers to spread the word.
Please visit: http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/docs/99-101/#e

☐ **Complete the CDC Worksite Wellness Scorecard** Understand where your workplace stands on stress management and depression in order to learn where your areas for improvement exist. Please visit pages 24-26:
http://www.cdc.gov/dhdsp/pubs/docs/HSC_Manual.pdf

☐ **Depression and Alcohol Calculators** Use these free online calculators to see how much depression and alcoholism affects your company's bottom line:
http://www.depressioncalculator.com/Welcome.asp & http://www.alcoholcostcalculator.org/

☐ **Improve Mental Health by Combating Obesity in the Workplace** Because obesity can bring about mental health issues, such as depression, implementing weight management programs can improve the state of mental well being in your workplace. For sample lectures, healthy food campaigns, and support systems, please visit:
http://www.thecommunityguide.org/obesity/workprograms.html

☐ **"Working Through It" Video Series** Give your employees access to a video series that explains topics such as why mental illness affects work, who can help employees at work, and what employees can do to feel better.
Please visit: http://workplacestrategiesformentalhealth.com/wti/Section3Page.aspx

☐ **Take Your Office on a Tour of "Mind Tools"** This online resource provides an abundance of self-help tools for employees to use for objectives such as reducing stress, managing boundaries, and harnessing positive thinking. These ideas are fun, interactive, and successful. Please visit: http://www.mindtools.com/smpage.html

References:
1. http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpao/hwi/toolkits/mental_health_screenings.htm
2. http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2014/02/140211211129.htm
3. http://lancastergeneralhealth.org/LGH/About-Lancaster-General-Health/Community-Health-Involvement/Community-Health-Involvement/Community-Needs-Assessment.aspx?hcn=modules.php%3Fop%3Dmodload%26name%3DPromisePractice%26file%3Dindex