

# **Making Mental Health a Priority: Practical Skills for Everyday Work-Life**

*A Workshop for Stantec Inc.*

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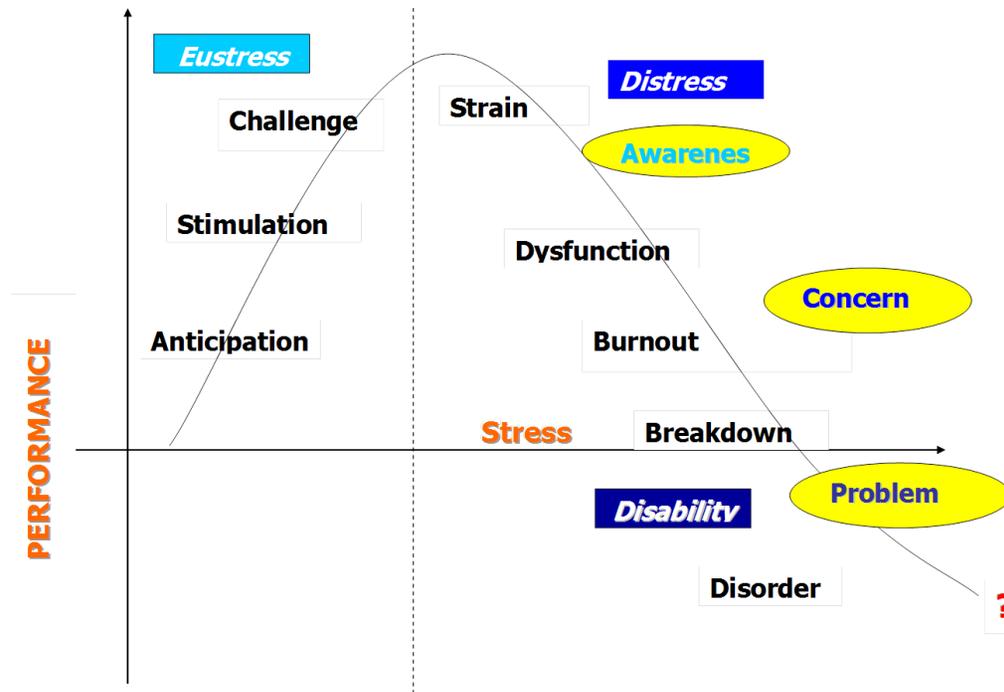
## ***What is mental health?***

*"...a state of well-being in which every individual realizes his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to her or his community."*

*World Health Organization*

***What makes you mentally healthy?***

***What does mental health look like at your office?***



Source: Dr. Dan Bilsker, Dr. Merv Gilbert & Dr. Joti Samra, Authors of Antidepressant

Skills @ Work: Dealing with Mood Problems in the Workplace ([www.carmha.ca](http://www.carmha.ca))

*How do you maintain yourself in the eustress area, when you're feeling challenged but not overwhelmed?*

*What are the signs or symptoms of being pushed into the distress area, when you're struggling?*

*What can you do when others don't realize that you're being pushed into distress? What happens when that becomes an expectation?*

# What Does Mental Illness Look Like?

## Depression and Anxiety Effect:

- sleep
- appetite
- energy
- concentration
- mood
- the way the body feels and reacts
  - vision and perception

*What does that look like in the office for yourself or your colleagues?*

***Have the Courage to Have the Conversation:  
Your Duty to Enquire***

**The essentials:**

- Ask compassionately
- Have concrete examples
- Maintain boundaries
  - Have patience
  - Practice with others
    - Refer
- Check-in, respectfully

*Remember: you're not a counselor and you're not an expert.*

*This will not be easy, but it's essential.*

## **Stress**

Physical, mental or emotional pressure or strain resulting from an overextension of personal resources.

*Stress is a major preventable factor in almost every chronic disease, like cancer, cardiovascular disease, diabetes and mental illness.*

*How can you manage your stress better?*

## Skills and Resources to Build Resilience:

- coping skills
  - a healthy support system
  - perspective: work-life balance
- personal and professional boundaries
  - a sense of self-worth
- awareness of personal and professional rights
  - building assertiveness skills
  - developing conflict resolution skills

## **Workplace Resources at Stantec**

- Great West Life- Extended Health Benefits
  - Up to \$750 for psychological services
- Employee Family Assistance Program- Shepell fgi
  - Health Care Spending Account
    - Health Wellness Account
  - Wellness Program – Kersh Wellness

## Community Resources

Canadian Mental Health Association

[www.cmha.ca](http://www.cmha.ca)

Anxiety BC

[www.anxietybc.com](http://www.anxietybc.com)

Here to Help

[www.heretohelp.bc.ca](http://www.heretohelp.bc.ca)

Mental Health Commission of Canada

[www.mentalhealthcommission.ca](http://www.mentalhealthcommission.ca)

## Creating Change for Mental Health

- Workplace culture
- Start small with measurable results
  - Individual commitment

*How does the culture of engineering cultivate health? How can you change the culture in your office?*

*How do your expectations impact colleagues' mental health or your own?*

*By learning more about mental health, we all protect ourselves to be less likely to struggle with mental illness, more likely to struggle with it for less time if we do end up mentally ill, and more likely to be able to help our friends, family members and colleagues get help.*

*Thanks for committing your energy to caring for yourself and others.*

*Contact me with any questions or concerns.*

*All my best,*

*Suzanne Jolly*

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