

EXTRA Q&A

Webinar 11 November 2020

Anticipate and Plan for

ORGANISATION MENTAL HEALTH BEYOND COVID-19

Thank you so much for attending to the webinar. We didn't have enough time to answer all the questions that came through and I promised to answer them here for you.

1. Convincing senior managers and CFO's to invest isn't easy, especially in the current environment. What top tips do you have to help us influence those who make the decision?

There are a several reasons why we care about this and hope senior managers and CFO's do too - see the Executive Summary for some of the key reasons. But let's talk numbers. The ROI on mental health initiatives is impressive. Here's some ROI data, and links if you want to go further, that might help:

- [A 2013 study](#) by Beyond Blue and PwC found for every \$1 spent on mental health initiatives there's a \$2.30 ROI.
- [Deloitte UK](#) found that in 2019, the ROI of mental health initiatives was £5 return for every £1 spent. That's a 500% return on investment.
- It's important to measure and track the outcomes and benefits of your wellbeing initiatives so that you know which ones bring you the best ROI. Remember, too, that mental health programs are more likely to deliver greater returns as they mature.

Until you have your own numbers, 2019 research by [Deloitte Canada](#) has found that leadership training and return-to-work programs have the highest impact.

2. How do you deal with a front line worker too scared to come back to work and has got a medical certificate to reduce their days and hours. This is not a work-related illness.

I'd start by talking to them. To understand this from their perspective. We'll deal with what it all means later. We need to start with where they're at first. Anything else will likely be experienced as aggressive, insensitive and uncaring and potentially make things worse.

What are they too scared of? What might help? How can you help? What do they ideally want? For example, some might wish they weren't scared, others might want to wait until there's a vaccine, that's if they're scared of COVID. And if it's COVID, then reduced days and hours may not be the best solution. What else are they good at? I'm wondering if they can be redeployed temporarily. This kind of information helps you decide your next best steps.

I'm not sure if that helps. It's hard to know without the details.

3. With a small team of 8 staff we strive to maintain good mental health programs but it is difficult in a small team. Any tips for a small team on how to successfully maintain a healthy mental policy and actions in such a small team?

I've never had this question before! Things can be more intense with fewer people, but the principles still apply. I'm wondering what particular challenges you're having. Do you need to build in more white space? That is, time where you aren't all together all the time, if that's the issue? Building in some fun if things are too intense? Respect comes to mind too, for each team member. If that's not happening, then what are the ramifications for poor behaviour? This is where I find many leaders come unstuck. Avoiding the difficult conversations and not being prepared to follow through with the consequences.

4. *Vulnerability is often seen as a weakness. How would you approach the discussion to eliminate this perception and make it a strength?*

I think ‘contained’ vulnerability is easy to see as a strength. Where you’re vulnerable but not so much that it’s interfering with your ability to work well. It’s like you might need a day or two off now and then but that’s it and you’re back. It’s easy to talk about then too without the shame because you’ve got it under control and are successful despite it.

It’s a great story to share in the organisation, if you’re happy to share it. You’re supported with time off, your career is going well, you can talk about it. Whatever is true. All strengths.

When it’s more severe than that, and not yet well managed, I think it’s a challenge. Depending on your role, you can certainly argue for how it improves your soft/essential skills because it helps with empathy.

If you haven’t seen it, [Brené Brown’s Ted Talk](#): The Power of Vulnerability is great. She’s written a number of books too.

5. *What are your top couple tips on what front line leaders can do to support their team's mental health, especially for those who remain working remotely?*

I’d schedule in more 1-1s. and ask how they’re going. But be careful of being intrusive and only go there with permission. I’d make sure they know what supports are available. People do forget, surprisingly. Plus, mental health doesn’t need to be tackled directly. Leaders can role model good health and encourage the team to be healthy. That is, eat well, exercise, get plenty of sleep and be social. They’re all important for mental health too.

6. *What does a Progressive workplace look like? (I think this can be covered in handout provided)*

Here’s a link to the [HBR article](#) I referred to. And here’s an excerpt describing progressive workplaces: *“These companies’ defensive moves are selective. They cut costs mainly by improving operational efficiency rather than by slashing the number of employees relative to peers. However, their offensive moves are comprehensive. They develop new business opportunities by making significantly greater investments than their rivals do in R&D and marketing, and they invest in assets such as plants and machinery”.*

They go on to give some specific USA-based examples acknowledging that it’s easier to explain cutting costs across the board rather than slashing them in some areas and spending in others.

WANT MORE?

Please contact me if you have any further questions or would like to know more. If it’s easier, you can also [click here](#) to schedule a call.