Supporting Clients with Mental Health Problems: The Career Practitioner’s Role

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Cannexus Conference, January 24th 2012, Ottawa, ON
Project's Roots
Project context
MH work-related costs

- Fastest growing occupational disability
- Cost to Canadian economy
  - $14.4 B lost productivity
  - $18.6 B substance abuse
- Focus is on workplace mental health
Understanding stigma & discrimination:
What is stigma & why does it exist?
Stigma Attribution Model

1. **Labeling:** Characteristics signal important difference.
2. **Stereotyping:** Differences linked to undesirable characteristics.
3. **Separating:** Distinction between ‘normal’ & labeled group creating ‘them & us’.
4. **Status loss:** Devaluing, rejecting, discriminating & excluding.
Decade of the ‘Broken Brain’
I’m dealing with depression. *Stupid names don’t help*
Impact of Media

- 102 Dalmatians
- Screwball on the Loose
- The Soloist
- Breakdown: Canada's Mental Health Crisis
- PlayStation 2: manhunt 2
- Entertainment: He's Back!
- Mental
What works to reduce stigma?
Contact is most effective…

- Contact is common - disclosure is not - creates a distorted image
- Relationship of equal status
- Context of cooperation
- Opportunity for discussion
- Credible presenters - disabuse common myths
Social inclusion is the journey towards greater participation and citizenship...
Survey Findings:

CHARTING THE COURSE

Mapping the Career Practitioner Role in Supporting People with Mental Health Challenges
Project Approach

Engage  Survey  Share & Learn  Plan to Act  Promote

Survey tool
Who participated?

266 survey participants in total (81.5% completion)

- 176 Career practitioners
  - 46% report having mental health problems/illness (65)

- 90 Clients
  - 62% report having mental health problems/illness (56)

- 100 stakeholders participated in 5 regional meetings

- Meeting of 25 Career Resource Centre Managers
Contact is common - 1 in 5
“Only those close to the person would ever know they are experiencing a mental health problem” Client

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Career Practitioner contact with MHP/MI</th>
<th>% Yes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Co-worker</td>
<td>86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Close family/friends member</td>
<td>78%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Personal experience</td>
<td>46%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Client contact with MHP/MI</th>
<th>% Yes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Co-worker</td>
<td>78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Close friend</td>
<td>77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Close family member</td>
<td>71%</td>
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Contact is common
Disclosure is not...
## Disclosure

People disclose when they feel safe

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>LIKELY to DISCLOSE</th>
<th>LIKELY to be ACCEPTING</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Spouse</strong></td>
<td>92%</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Family</strong></td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Friend</strong></td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Guidance/Career</strong></td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work-mates</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employers</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neighbours</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>18%</td>
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To help clients Career Practitioners need to know...

- Impact of stigma on work (99%)
- About mental illness (99%)
- Mental health resources (98%)
- About peer support (97%)
- Skills in motivating clients (96%)
- Work-related coaching (95%)
- How to support employers (94%)
- About recovery practices (89%)
- About treatment for MI (79%)
Clients rating vs Career Practitioners

- Knowledge of mental health
- Making right referrals
- Recommend peer support
- Comfort working with clients
- Discussing +/- disclosure
- Understanding & explaining rights

Across all categories Career Practitioners rate themselves higher than Clients
Client rating cont…

Career Practitioners:

- Share *tools for coping with work* 50%
- Good support & access *work/training* 35%
- Have knowledge to help me re: *work* 33%
- LESS likely to refer *clients for training* 28%
Satisfaction working with clients

“Same as with all clients”

Seeing progress… Supporting change… Gaining trust… Helping clients get / maintain job… Support people to reach their goals… Improving self-esteem… Supporting greater social inclusion
Frustrations working with clients
“Sometimes (stigma and discrimination) is very apparent and other times it is hidden but lurking below the surface. I was once told at a workplace that I would advance no further in my career because of my mental illness.”

“When I was first diagnosed with schizophrenia in my early 20's, I went to what was then called the Manpower Office and asked for training. The counselor told me there were no training opportunities for me because I was chronically ill with schizophrenia.”
Impact of mental health problems?

Client rating

- Self-confidence: 98%
- Finances: 96%
- Employment: 91%
- Community involvement: 91%
- Family relationship: 81%
- Friendships: 78%
Have you seen workplace discrimination?

Clients: 90% - Yes  “Happens all the time…”

Career Practitioners: 48% - Yes  “Quit being paranoid”
Clients agree…

- Agree discrimination is common (96% vs 76%)
- Few feel fairly treated by employers (< 7%)
- Agree work improves mental health (89% vs 80%)
- Agree recovery is possible (87% vs 76%)
- Have hope they will work (79%)
- Don’t need to be symptom free to work (76% vs 86%)
- Agree mental health problems make work stressful (52%)
- Career Practitioners disagree less reliable employees (86%)
90% CLIENTS agree

- Given **choices** (91%)
- Believes my **capacity** to **recover** (91%)
- Can **trust** my counselor (91%)
- Feel **respected** (94%)
- Treated **fairly** (94%)
- My **privacy** is respected (93%)
- **Listen** without judgment (91%)
- Inspires **hope** (91%)
- Feel care & **compassion** (84%)
Strong agreement on how to help

“Treat People Like People… Not a Disorder”
“Include us as partners in planning”
Where would clients prefer to receive career planning service?

- Specialized mental health/disability employment services: 43%
- Mainstream employment counselling services: 23%
- Mental health peer support employment counselling services: 18%
- Don't know: 16%
Career Practitioner Training Needs
Lessons Learned
recognize mistakes
observe what works
document them
share them
Take away messages...
“Have your people not be therapists...but be knowledgeable about the clients they are trying to help integrate back into society. We want to be part of the workforce but may only dip our toes in and then back away, come back and test the water again...several times before we are really ready.

HAVE PATIENCE....we will jump in when we are ready, just offer the tools and services so that we can make an informed decision. Do not force us. We have enough struggles already, this has to be something that we do for ourselves...and we will...trust me! :0)”

http://Chartingthecourse.nscda.ca
AN INSANELY INTERESTING 'FIRST PERSON' BLOG ON MENTAL ILLNESS

http://chartingthecourse.nsceda.ca/index.php/workplace
Stigma & Discrimination Related readings

Bio-medical framing

- B. Schulze. (2007) Stigma And Mental Health Professionals: A Review Of The Evidence On An Intricate Relationship; International Review Of Psychiatry; 19 2 ;137-155
- Walker I. And Read J. (2002) The differential effectiveness of psychosocial and biogenetic causal explanations in reducing negative attitudes toward "mental illness"; Psychiatry-Interpersonal And Biological Processes; 65 4 ;313-325
- LAM Danny C. K., SALKOVSKIS Paul M.; An experimental investigation of the impact of biological and psychological causal explanations on anxious and depressed patients’ perception of a person with panic disorder, Behaviour Research and Therapy Volume 45, Issue 2, February 2007, Pages 405-411
Education & changing attitudes


Self-stigma


