



The
**Richards
Group**
FINANCIAL, INSURANCE
& HR SOLUTIONS

Mental Health in the Workplace & What We Can Do

Presented by

Shannon Prescott, CWCA, COSS

Intro

Shannon Prescott, CWCA, COSS

Director of Risk Control



Before we begin.....

We will be talking about tough topics such as suicide when presenting facts and trends in workplace safety.

COOSTS





MENTAL HEALTH

— AT WORK —

dol.gov/mentalhealth



A 2020 GLOBAL STUDY BY QUALTRICS FOUND

- **42% OF PEOPLE HAVE EXPERIENCED A DECLINE IN MENTAL HEALTH**
- **67% OF PEOPLE ARE EXPERIENCING INCREASES IN STRESS**
- **57% HAVE INCREASED ANXIETY**
- **54% ARE EMOTIONALLY EXHAUSTED**
- **53% OF PEOPLE ARE SAD**
- **50% ARE IRRITABLE**
- **28% ARE HAVING TROUBLE CONCENTRATING**
- **20% ARE TAKING LONGER TO FINISH TASKS**
- **15% ARE HAVING TROUBLE THINKING**
- **12% ARE CHALLENGED TO JUGGLE THEIR RESPONSIBILITIES**

*Why does this
matter to
employers?*

Mental Health Impacts Workers Comp – Some Statistics

In 2021 the National Safety Council held a panel of employers discussing mental health in the workplace.

Laurence Pearlman , Sr. VP of Marsh Risk Consulting, noted:

- Studies have found that **3% of workers account for about 22% of workplace accidents**, and those **accident-prone workers are 50% more likely to suffer from a serious accident** than other employees.
- Studies have shown that being accident prone is typically a **temporary** condition, usually lasting only six to 12 months and caused by serious problems at work or home.
- These issues may include:
 - physical or emotional conditions,
 - a social or financial crisis,
 - or distractions caused by pressures such as the pandemic
- **“Having a mental health strategy is critical.** There are a lot of mental health conditions that are driving some outcomes at work that aren’t good for the employee, and not good for the company either.”
- This includes “really understanding what the impact of mental health is on **productivity, absenteeism and obviously incidents.**”

The Effects of Stress

Personal Lives

A study in *Occupational Health Science* found our sleep is compromised when we feel stressed at work.

Research at the University of Illinois found when employees receive rude emails at work, they tend to experience negativity and spillover into their personal lives and particularly with their partners.

In addition, a study at Carleton University found when people experience incivility at work, they tend to feel less capable in their parenting.



Anxiety Zone

***Why does
this matter
in regard to
Mental
Health?***

Why This? Why Now?

- **Harvard Business Review**
 - 58% of employees trust a stranger more than their boss.
 - 45% cite *lack of trust in leadership as the biggest issue impacting work performance*
- **How Institute For Society**
 - Employees in high-trust environments 11x more innovative.

Employee Mental Health by the Numbers

According to the National Alliance on Mental Illness:



An estimated **57.8 million** American adults experience a mental illness in a given year. This means **1 in 5** Americans are affected.



Less than **50%** of those with a mental illness receive treatment.



Depression is a leading cause of disability worldwide.



Serious mental illness costs the U.S. **\$193.2 billion** in lost earnings annually.



Suicide is the **12th** leading cause of death in the United States. Almost half (**46%**) of those who die by suicide had a known mental health condition.

10.2m

Approximately **9.2** million adults have co-occurring mental health and addiction disorders.



Anxiety Tops List of Mental Health-related Workplace Issues

Mental health provider ComPsych [revealed](#) that anxiety is the top mental health issue impacting workers. Nearly one-quarter (24%) of the individuals who contacted ComPsych for mental help assistance in 2023 were looking for help with anxiety. Last year, ComPsych facilitated more than 300,000 cases for American workers.

Furthermore, these findings about anxiety come just weeks after ComPsych revealed that mental health-related leaves of absence are rising in the workplace—up 33% in 2023 from 2022. Looking again at a surge in anxiety over the past several years, mental health-related absences are up 300% from 2017 to 2023. Female employees and younger workers (e.g., millennials and Generation X) accounted for most leaves of absence.

U.S. Department of Labor | December 19, 2023

Statement by Assistant Secretary for Occupational Safety, Health on 2022 Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries

WASHINGTON – The U.S. Department of Labor’s Assistant Secretary for Occupational Safety and Health Doug Parker issued a statement regarding today’s release by the Bureau of Labor Statistics of [its 2022 Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries](#):

“Today’s announcement by the Bureau of Labor Statistics of **5.7 percent increase** in fatal occupational injuries is a sobering reminder of the important work we must do, especially for Black and Hispanic workers who saw the largest increase in workplace fatalities.

“In 2022, 5,486 workers in the U.S. lost their lives. This equates to one worker death every 96 minutes, with deaths the highest among transportation and construction workers. We also saw growth in disparities for workers of color, including Black workers, whose fatality rate increased 12.4 percent, and Hispanic workers, whose rate grew by 10.4 percent.

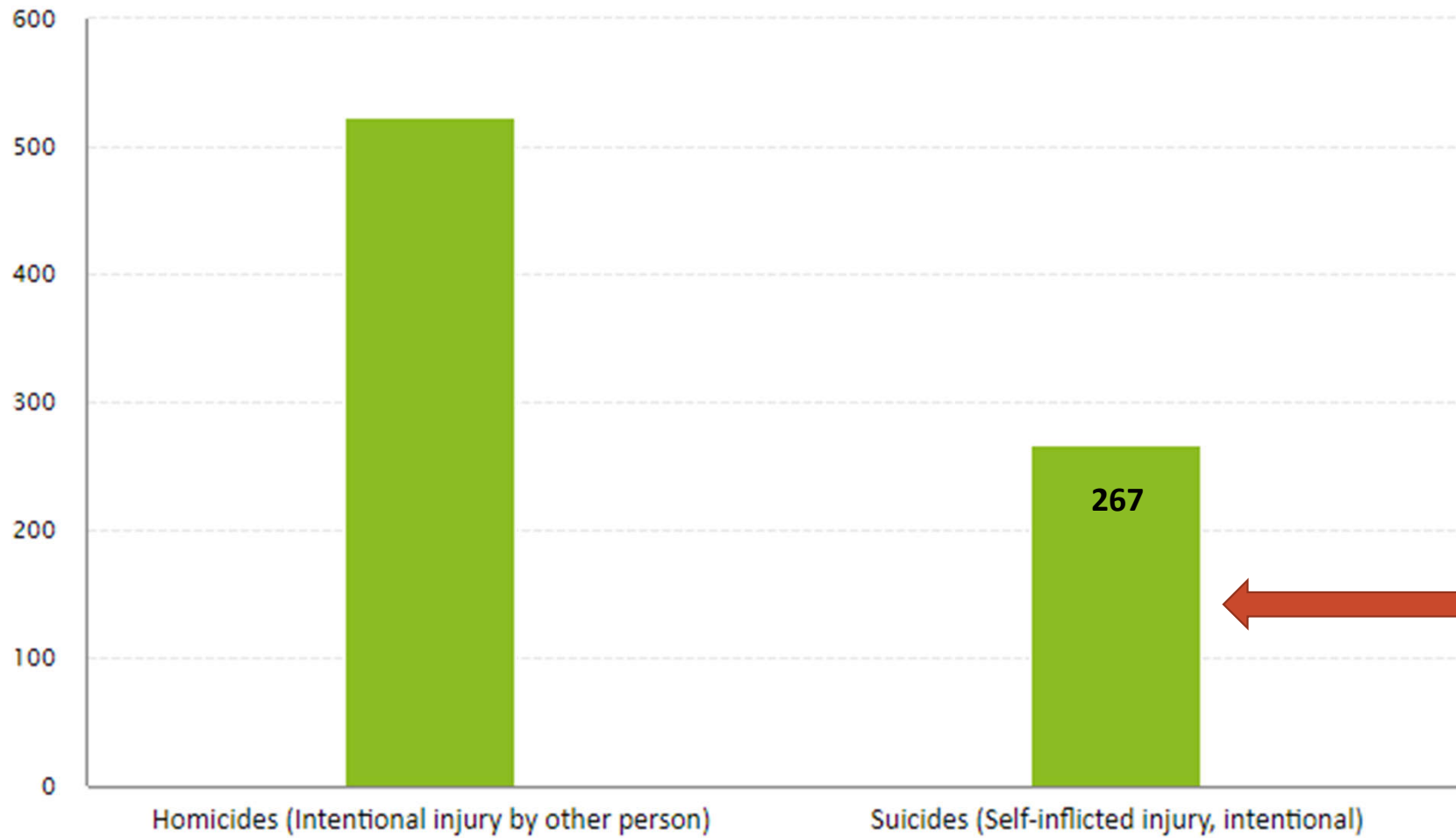
“No worker should ever be disadvantaged because of their skin color or ethnicity; and that is never truer than when it comes to their lives and health. This is why the Department of Labor has expanded its efforts to protect those disproportionately at risk of injuries and illnesses on the job.

“The BLS census also finds work-related overdoses and suicides continue to be causes of great concern, and they are another call to action for the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, employers and other stakeholders to address these very serious issues. Mental health must be part of overall worker safety and health. We are [committed to supporting the mental health of all workers](#), just as we are committed to protecting them from physical hazards on the job.

“Every worker death has profound impacts on family, friends, co-workers and communities. That is why investing in worker safety and health must be a core value in every workplace across the country. All workers have a right to do their job without fear of being injured or sickened.”

Fatal occupational injuries by event or exposure, 2022

Intentional injury by person



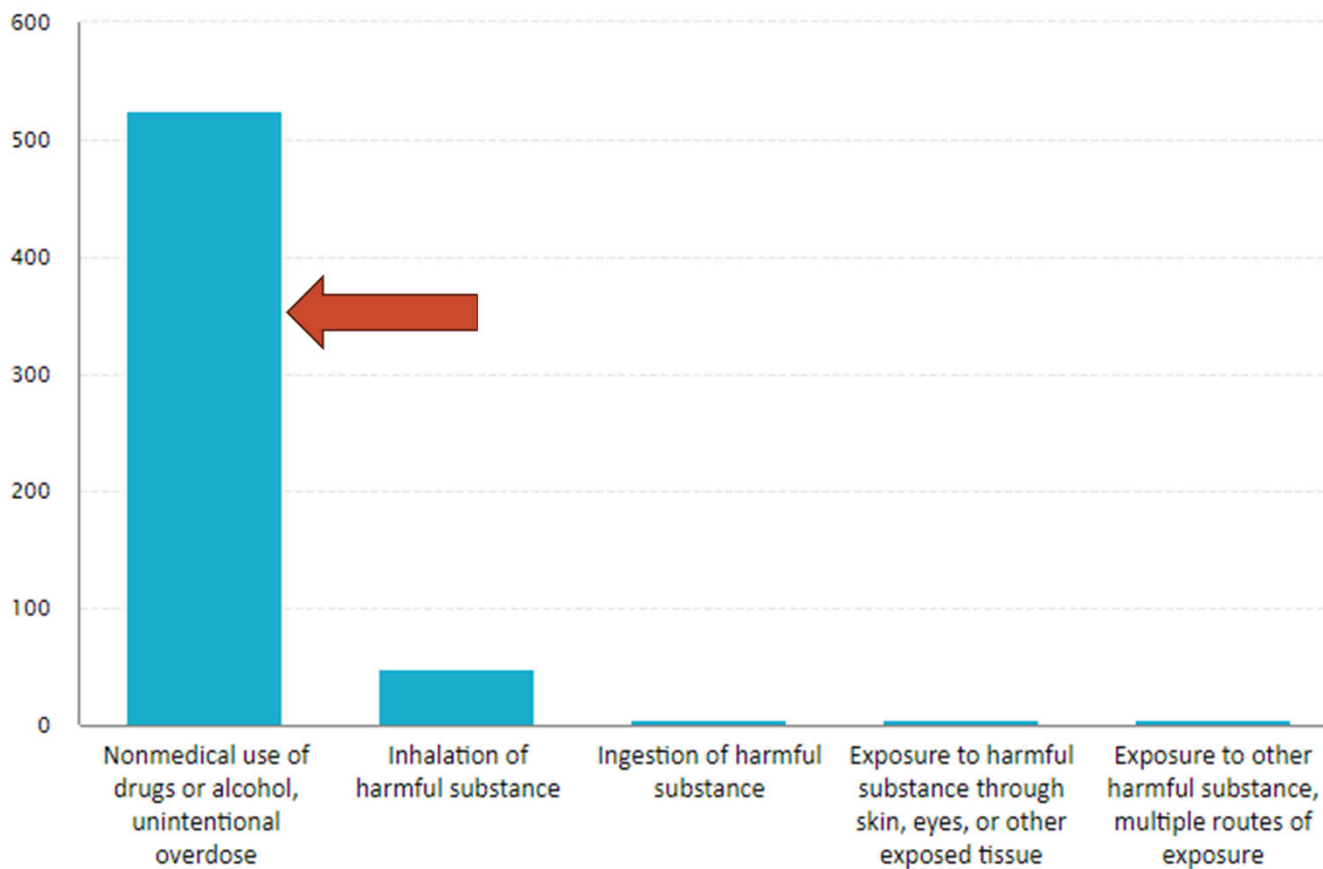
236 in 2021

259 in 2020

307 in 2019
Historic High

Fatal occupational injuries by event or exposure, 2022

Exposure to other harmful substances



Click columns to drill down. Hover over chart to view data.
Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.





Workplace Stress

SAFE WORKPLACE GOOD HEADSPACE

WORKPLACE STRESS

Make Work Better – Mental Health Matters

| | |
|-------------------------------|---|
| | |
| Understanding the Problem | > |
| Guidance & Tips for Employers | > |
| Training Resources | > |
| Real-World Solutions | > |

Overview

Stress can be harmful to our health and increase mental health challenges. Mental health challenges can include clinical mental illness and substance use disorders as well as other emotions like stress, grief, feeling sad and anxious, where these feelings are temporary and not part of a diagnosable condition. While there are many things in life that induce stress, work can be one of those factors. However, workplaces can also be a key place for resources, solutions, and activities designed to improve our mental health and well-being.

Workplace stress and poor mental health can negatively affect workers through¹:

Statistics

- Nearly one in five US adults live with a mental illness².
- Workplace stress has been reported to cause 120,000 deaths in the US each year³.

Current Stressors



BUSINESS INSURANCE.

Mental health decline poses workplace hazard: Experts

Posted On: Jan. 3, 2024 6:55 AM CST

Jon Campisi

Employees who feel unsafe on the job are more likely to report symptoms of work-related depression and anxiety, and those who study worker mental health have discovered a relationship between anxiety and increased work injury rates, industry experts say.



“There is more and more data coming out showing just how inextricably intertwined mental health and physical health are in the workplace,” said Dennis Stolle, senior director of applied psychology at the Washington-based American Psychological Association.

Psychological safety, a concept defined as a belief that workers won’t be punished for raising concerns or making mistakes at work, is also on the radar for workplace safety researchers, said Shanna Tiayon, a social psychologist and CEO of Yes Wellbeing Works LLC, a Washington-based organization that focuses on employee wellbeing.

Ms. Tiayon and Mr. Stolle were among several experts who spoke about the relationship between worker mental health and workplace safety during the virtual SAFER Summit hosted by the National Safety Council in December.

There’s a workplace correlation between psychological safety and stress, Ms. Tiayon said, and workers should be able to feel they can make mistakes without fear of retribution.

This is especially applicable to the high-risk manufacturing and construction sectors, she said, where not disclosing mistakes could potentially lead to injuries or death.

Many workers surveyed recently expressed a preference to work for an organization that values their emotions and psychological well-being, and that, “psychologically, a healthy workplace is critical for overall population health in the workplace,” Mr. Stolle said during the summit.

Researchers also found that one in five workers describe their workplace as “toxic,” with those employed in customer service, patient services and client services reporting the highest levels of workplace toxicity, he said.

Stress and psychological issues outside the workplace could also affect employment, Mr. Stolle said. Workers experiencing mental health issues may suffer from insomnia, for example, and exhaustion from sleepless nights at home could pose a workplace hazard.

Some experts say a decline in workplace mental health could be attributed to an ongoing crisis of social disconnection, something exacerbated by the pandemic and which continues in an era of remote work.

Data suggests that high levels of social isolation and loneliness experienced in communities nationwide have negatively affected people’s health and working lives, experts say.

Tackle Workplace Stress



Nearly 80% of Americans consider their jobs stressful.



In fact, according to the American Institute of Stress, **46%** of employees reported that their workload was the biggest cause of their workplace stress, and **1 in 4** employees view their jobs as a top stressor in their life.

6 Signs of Employee Burnout

The World Health Organization (WHO) now considers burnout to be a syndrome. The WHO's decision to upgrade burnout to a syndrome and provide a detailed set of symptoms communicates its serious stance on the dangers of burnout. Managers should be able to recognize the following six signs of burnout to help affected employees get the support they need.

Increased Absences



If an employee is experiencing burnout, they're more likely to take days off from work due to illness or inability to get out of bed to come into work.

Disengagement



A burned-out employee is more likely to become disengaged with their work, their co-workers and, sometimes, their life in general.

Exhaustion



Employees who are experiencing burnout will display emotional, mental and physical signs of exhaustion, as well as an inability to focus.

Increased Mistakes or Accidents



If an employee is experiencing burnout, the chances of them being involved in a workplace accident or making errors will increase.

Withdrawal and Isolation



Burnout can cause employees to withdraw from their work and peers. For example, an extroverted employee that's experiencing burnout may become increasingly introverted.

Higher Sensitivity



Employees experiencing burnout are likely to be more sensitive and emotional about things they weren't before.

Current Stressors

*Why would this
matter to
employers?*

Inflation-related Anxiety Financial Stress

This has led many Americans to reexamine their spending even when it comes to everyday needs such as **groceries and gas.**

groceries and gas.

It's important to understand the relationship between financial, physical and mental wellness.

Current Stressors

American Psychiatric Association's Healthy Minds Monthly Poll found that nearly 90% of residents in the United States report "feeling anxious" or are "very anxious" about inflation.

The anxiety induced by financial stress can contribute to:

- heart disease,
- high blood pressure,
- insomnia,
- more frequent colds and minor illnesses,
- and more.

***Why would this
matter to
employers?***



Current Stressors

Further, many cope with stress in unhealthy ways, such as:

- Smoking/Vaping/Chewing
- Drinking/substance abuse
- and Overeating

All of which can decrease overall health.

Why would this matter to employers?





Current Stressors

To make matters worse, when people's anxiety takes a toll on their physical health, it can often lead to increased medical bills.

At a time when inflation is so high, this can worsen anxiety for those already experiencing it.

Client Case Study

| | | | | |
|---------|---|----------------|-----------|-------|
| Jan 21 | ee experienced a shaking bowl on mixer in room 3, mixer did trip the auto safety feature, ee injured left wrist | maintenance | contusion | wrist |
| July 21 | while walking ee banged kneecap on bowl, aggravated previous injury | struck against | contusion | knee |
| Nov 21 | lifting racks | Lifting | strain | back |
| Dec 21 | pushing full row of cooling pizza racks, injured foot. | Pushing | strain | foot |

Client Case Study

| | | | | |
|--------|--|----------------|-----------|-------|
| Jan 21 | ee experienced a shaking bowl on mixer in room 3, mixer did trip the auto safety feature, ee | | | |
| Jul 21 | injured left wrist | maintenance | contusion | wrist |
| Nov 21 | while walking ee banged kneecap on bowl, aggravated previous injury | struck against | contusion | knee |
| Dec 21 | lifting racks | Lifting | strain | back |
| | pushing full row of cooling pizza racks, injured foot. | Pushing | strain | foot |

- All 4 of these claims were from the same employee. This facility rarely has WC claims and has never had 1 employee be injured twice in one year. The first 3 claims were minor but resulted in the need for first aid.
- The last injury resulted in lost time.
- In discussing these incidents with the Supervisor, it was found that the employee had a couple of other minor incidents that were not reported and was found sleeping in the breakroom on break one day.
- This new frequency, prompted an inquiry to the employee for a full accident investigation on each incident.

Client Case Study

| | | | | |
|--------|--|----------------|-----------|-------|
| Jan 21 | ee experienced a shaking bowl on mixer in room 3, mixer did trip the auto safety feature, ee | | | |
| Jul 21 | inured left wrist | maintenance | contusion | wrist |
| Nov 21 | while walking ee banged kneecap on bowl, aggravated previous injury | struck against | contusion | knee |
| Dec 21 | lifting racks | Lifting | strain | back |
| | pushing full row of cooling pizza racks, injured foot. | Pushing | strain | foot |

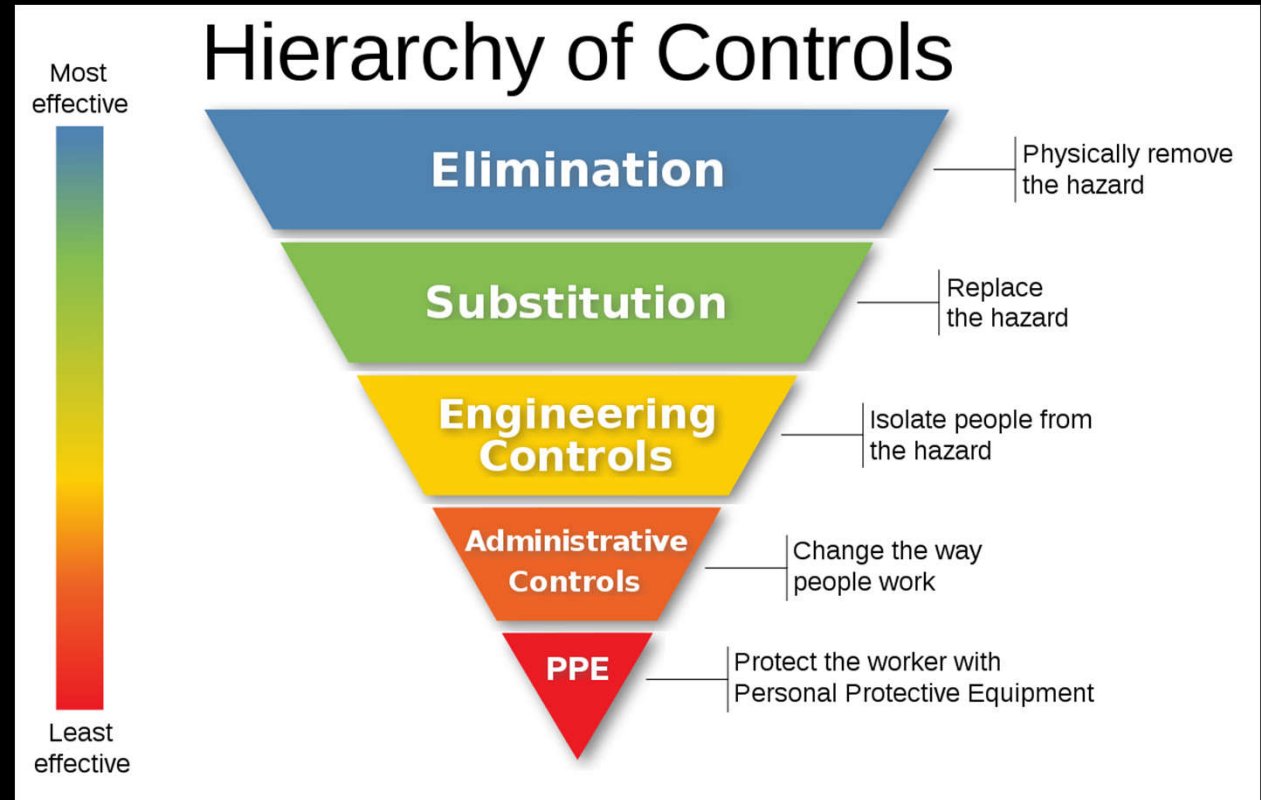
- During the conversation it was found out that the employee's spouse had to leave their job to stay home and help the kids with remote schoolwork.
- This employee picked up a 2nd job to make up for the lost income.
- They were working 7 days a week, 5 of which were at both jobs.
- The employee worked 2nd shift at this employer.



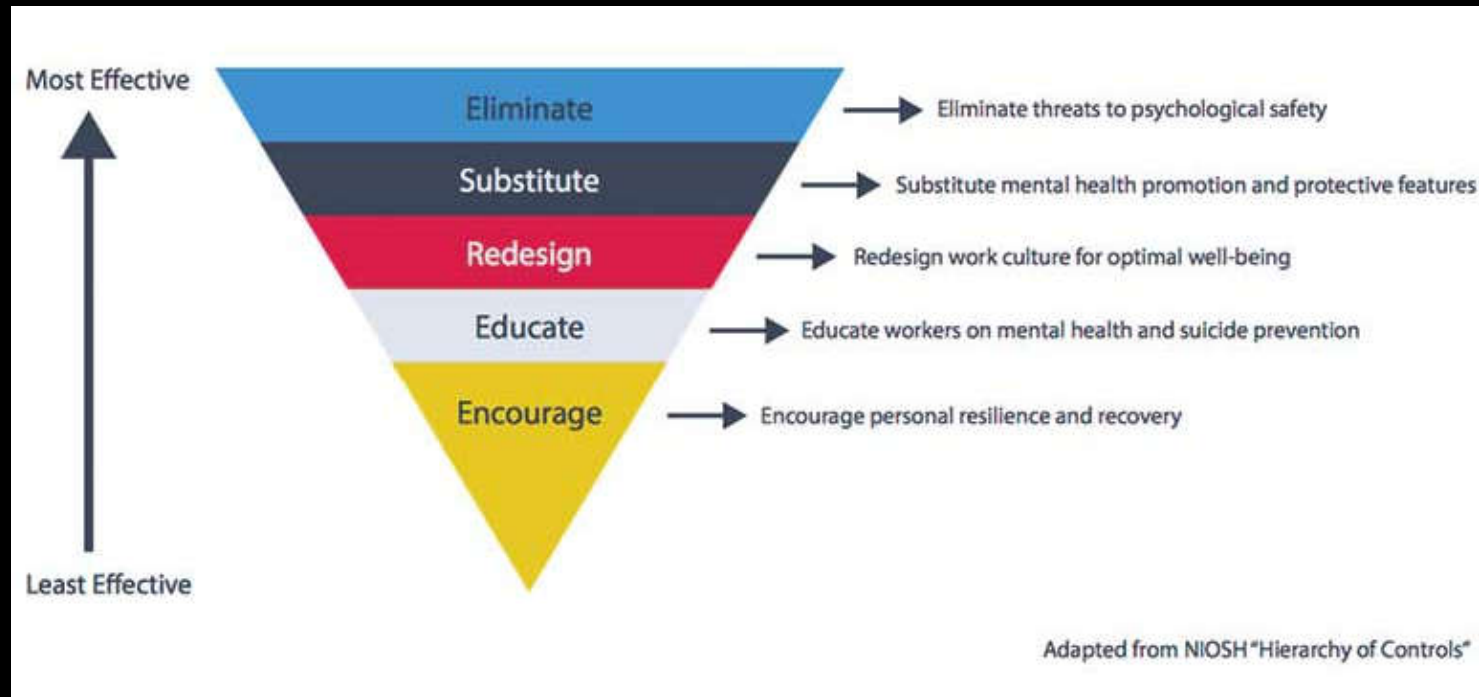
So what
can we
do?



Hierarchy of Controls - NIOSH



Hierarchy of Controls – Adapted for Mental Wellbeing of Employees



Return To Work Program

Tough transition - Employee mental health

Some companies and managers worry about violating confidentiality laws or invading the individual's privacy when contacting an employee out with an injury or disability. However, there are low-risk ways to reach out while complying with privacy laws—and the positive impact on the employee is often well worth it.



As a Manager:

What Can *I* Do?

As a Co-Worker:

What Can *I* Do?

As a Person with a Mental Health Condition:

What Can *I* Do?



VT RETAIN

Preventing work disability and supporting the health and work ability of people who live or work in Vermont.

“RETAIN” stands for Retaining Employment After Injury/Illness Network. At VT RETAIN, we provide support to people who live or work in Vermont and are at risk of work disability to reduce or eliminate the number of days that person is out of work after an injury or illness.

- Phone: 833-995-1085
- Email: labor.retain@vermont.gov
- Mail: Vermont RETAIN, PO Box 1138, White River Junction, VT 05001

Employee Assistance Programs

What does the EAP cover?

Your EAP covers a variety of areas that you may be having trouble with, such as:

- Substance abuse
- Stress management
- Financial problems

EAPs offer education, awareness and counseling services to help you with your problems. And your participation in the program is strictly confidential.

For more information about your EAP, contact the human resources department.

Flexible Workplace



Types of Flexible Working Arrangements

There are many types of flexible working arrangements being implemented across the nation which include:

- Part-time employment (reduced work hours temporarily or permanently)
- Flexible scheduling (employees are available within core hours during the day, but may vary the times they arrive in the morning and leave in the afternoon)
- Telecommuting (working from a remote location)
- Compressed workweeks (working a full schedule in fewer than five days)
- Phased return-to-work from leave (gradually increasing the number of hours worked after taking a leave of absence from work)

Types of Flexible Working Arrangements

There are many types of flexible working arrangements being implemented across the nation which include:

- Job sharing (dividing tasks and hours among several staff members who all work part-time)
- Summer hours (reducing work hours during summer months)
- Phased retirement (gradually decreasing the number of responsibilities and hours worked)
- Virtual work (working entirely through an electronic system without a formal work schedule or location)
- Hoteling (bookable workspaces for temporary use)
- Some employers can also create a workplace that is entirely flexible with no defined work schedule (known as a results-only work environment).



Minimum vacation time?

Allow time
for self care



Green Wave Nation

Parent Update #7- Thursday, September 12, 2024

**"People do not experience your intentions;
they experience your behavior."**

--Unknown



Develop Psychological Safety

the
fearless
organization

Creating **Psychological Safety** in the
Workplace for Learning,
Innovation, and Growth

Amy C. Edmondson
HARVARD BUSINESS SCHOOL

WILEY

Psychological Safety – The belief that the work environment is safe for interpersonal risk-taking.

Psychological Safety exists when people feel their workplace is an environment where they can speak up, offer ideas, and ask questions without fear of being punished or embarrassed.

Mental Health First Aid

Mental Health First Aid is the initial help offered to a person developing a mental health or substance use challenge or experiencing a mental health crisis. The first aid is given until appropriate treatment and support are received or until the crisis resolves.



What Participants Learn

- **Risk factors and warning signs** of mental health and substance use challenges.
- **Information** on depression, anxiety, trauma, psychosis and substance use.
- **A 5-step Action Plan** to help someone who is developing a mental health challenge or is experiencing a crisis.
- Available evidence-based professional, peer and self-help **resources**.

Thank you!



Shannon Prescott, CWCA, COSS



sprescott@therichardsgrp.com



Questions?