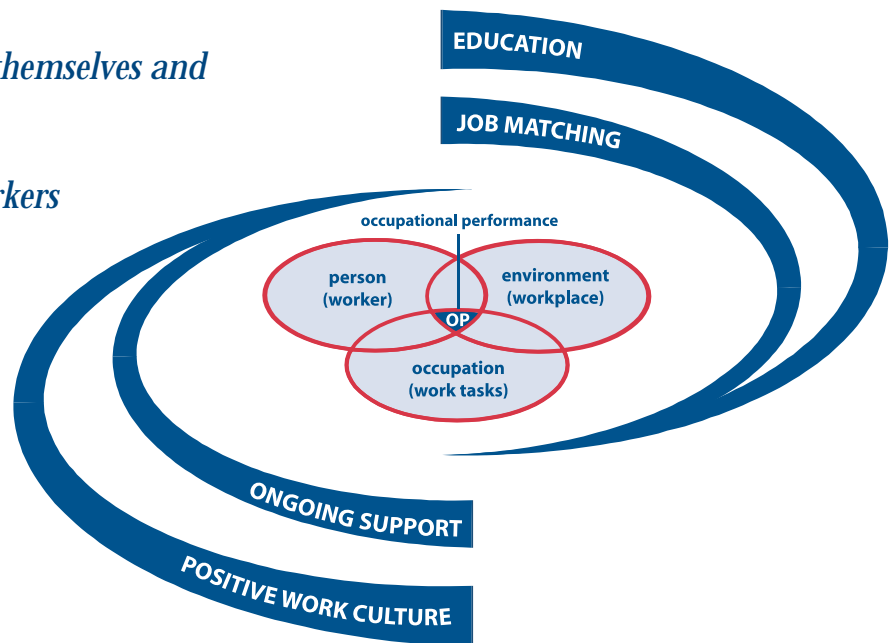


The Daily Essentials of Workplace Mental Health

An Occupational Therapy Guide

Mental health plays an important role in everyday life and especially at work. A workplace that provides the daily essentials of mental health

- *helps people feel good about themselves and to do well at work*
- *includes and supports all workers*
- *is something everyone has a right to, both socially and legally*



The Daily Essentials of Workplace Mental Health*

Education	Job matching	Ongoing support	Positive work culture
<p>Finding out about stress, depression and other mental health issues will</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • increase your chance of seeing them and getting help early • allow you to view these positively and to ignore common myths and stereotypes • help you feel comfortable talking about mental health 	<p>Choosing a job that's right for you — one that suits with your skills, interests and career goals — will encourage you to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • do your job well • remain interested in your work tasks • enjoy going to work each day • stay in your chosen occupation over the long term 	<p>Having supportive people at work who you can talk to will help you</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • communicate openly about mental health concerns • work out different ways to do your job when you need them; for example, working from home or changing your schedule to avoid rush-hour traffic 	<p>Good workplace mental health requires positive surroundings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • that minimize undue stress • that value diversity • that promote friendliness, respect, communication and flexibility

*Based on a literature review regarding mental health and mental illness in the workplace (Cockburn, Kirsh, Krupa, & Gewurtz, 2004. *Occupational Therapy Now*, 6(5), 7-14.)

Diagram is based on the same literature review and adapted from the Person-Environment-Occupation Model (Law, Cooper, Strong, Stewart, Rigby, & Letts, 1996. *Canadian Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 63(1), 18.)

Try these occupational therapy tips to take care of your mental health in the workplace

Education



Invite an expert to your workplace to talk about the early signs of mental illness and what can be done to prevent them.

Consider taking a specialized course or workshop to learn how to ...

- plan and pace your work to save energy and fight burnout

- communicate with colleagues effectively and build solid interpersonal relationships
- manage stress effectively and cope with multiple demands, including those from outside work that may affect your performance

Job Matching



- Take a good look at your skills, interests and goals when choosing an occupation or thinking about a career change. Consider vocational counseling to help decide what kind of job is right for you and to find work in your chosen field.
- Be conscious of your job's demands and your ability to meet them. Keep your

skills up to date so you can continue to do your job well as new trends emerge in your area of work.

- Adapt your work environment to your unique physical and mental needs to avoid strain, injuries and undue stress.

Ongoing Support



Don't be afraid to ask for help at work when you need it:

- If you're having trouble balancing the demands of work and your personal life, request reasonable accommodations to help you cope, such as flexible hours.
- If you find certain work tasks overly difficult, see if you can arrange for additional training or one-on-one coaching until you master them.

- If you've taken time away from your job for mental health reasons, talk to your employer about a return-to-work plan that will help you readjust to the workplace when you're ready to go back. For example, ask to come in part-time at first and to gradually increase your hours until you're back to your original schedule.

Positive Work Culture



- Be friendly and open with colleagues at all levels of your organization.
- Remember that everyone has different needs and try to be sensitive to others who may be dealing with mental health issues.

- Take pride in your work! Remember that everyone's job is important and that all contributions are meaningful.

To excel, people need to be well suited to their work tasks and workplaces. An occupational therapist may suggest changes — at both individual and organizational levels — to make optimal use of your abilities and to create an environment where you can thrive. Consult an occupational therapist today!

Occupational Therapy

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