



Seeing the Unseen – the Invisible Disability

**Heart & Stroke Foundation of New Brunswick
April, 2011**



Build awareness about mental illness in the workplace:

- **Signs & symptoms**
- **Underlying physiology**
- **Risk factors & triggers**
- **Prevalence**
- **Resources available**



1985 - 1997

- **Psychiatrists**
- **Psychiatric units**
- **Psychotherapy**
- **Medication**
- **ECT**
- **Spontaneous remission**



1997 - present

- **Recovery**
- **Work**
- **Relationships**
- **Interests**



Common mental illnesses - characteristics

Depression:

- Low mood, low self-esteem, loss of interest in normal activities

Bipolar Disorder:

- Extreme swings in mood, thinking & behaviour – depression/mania (elevated mood, extreme behaviours, unpredictable emotional changes)

General Anxiety:

- Frequent, excessive, uncontrollable worry about a number of things

Panic Disorder:

- Anxiety characterized by recurring, severe panic attacks

Postpartum Depression:

- Tearfulness, anxiety, irritability, emotional instability after child birth

Obsessive Compulsive Disorder:

- Intrusive thoughts, all consuming worries, repetitive, ritualistic behaviours aimed at reducing anxiety

What does 1 in 5 look like?



One in five people suffer from mood disorders in their lifetime

- **less than half seek treatment**
- **less than 1/3 get treatment they need**

Depression and anxiety have many faces



Invisible disabilities - often misunderstood



Other's perceptions:

- **Can't handle stress**
- **Scamming the system**
- **Lazy / indifferent / egocentric**
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Self perceptions:

- **Useless**
- **Worthless**
- **Hopeless**
- **Guilty**
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Depression – a serious medical condition

Emotional symptoms

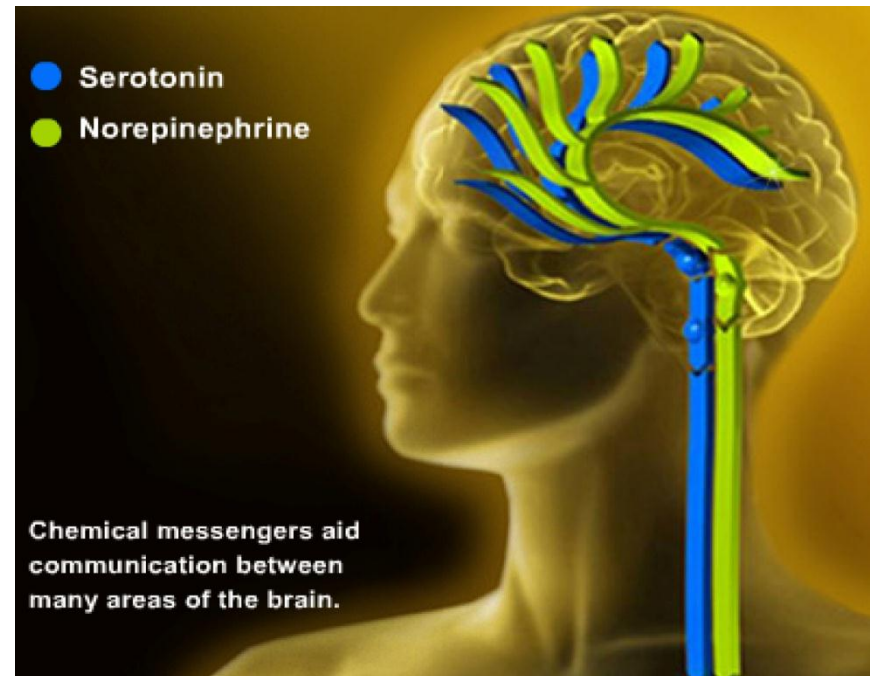
- **Sadness**
- **Loss of interest**
- **Guilt**
- **Restlessness**

Physical symptoms

- **Fatigue**
- **Aches & pains**
- **Headaches**
- **Weight/sleep change**

Cognitive symptoms

- **Memory**
- **Focus**
- **Recall**
- **Concentration**
- **Difficulty – decisions**



Genetic predispositions - family history

Traumas

- **Bereavement, separation/divorce**
- **Accident, illness, rape, abuse**

Personal stress

- **Perfectionism**
- **Difficulty taking care of oneself**
- **Lack of self esteem, difficulty letting go**

Occupational stress

- **Excessive workload**
- **Lack of control/knowledge/recognition**
- **Lack of consistency – values**
- **Conflict – interpersonal/organizational**



Symptoms of depression can affect functioning

Symptoms

- **Irritability**
- **Sadness & tearfulness**
- **Anxiety**

- **Loss of pleasure**
- **Negative thinking**
- **Suicidal thoughts**

Functions

- **Conflict**
- **Isolation**
- **Avoidance**

- **Withdrawal**
- **Poor motivation**
- **Erratic behaviour**

Symptoms of depression can affect functioning

Symptoms

- **Impaired concentration**
- **Poor memory**
- **Difficulty with decisions**

- **Agitation, restlessness**
- **Sleep & eating changes**
- **Fatigue, low energy**
- **Substance use**

Functions

- **Decreased task efficiency**
- **Increased errors**
- **Poor decision making**

- **Reduced task vigilance**
- **Neglect of duties**
- **Self-limited activities**
- **Violence & accidents**

Mood disorders may impact individuals' ability to work

Presenteeism

- **Reduced work performance**
- **Impaired interpersonal relations**
- **Increased effort & longer time at work**
- **Frequent breaks**
- **Poor judgement**
- **Aggression/inappropriate behaviour**

Absenteeism

- **Lateness**
- **Leaving early**
- **Frequent sick days**
- **Unplanned absences**
- **Failure to achieve/maintain fulltime employment**
- **Loss of overtime**

Disability

- **"Stress leave"**
- **High consumption of medical resources**
- **Failure to return to work when expected after illness or injury**
- **Failure to start or compete retraining**
- **Frequent job loss**
- **Reliance on social assistance**

Canadians absent daily due to mental health issues – 500,000

Short term disability claims citing mental illness as an issue - 78%

- as compared to 56% (musculoskeletal / back); 41% (accident)

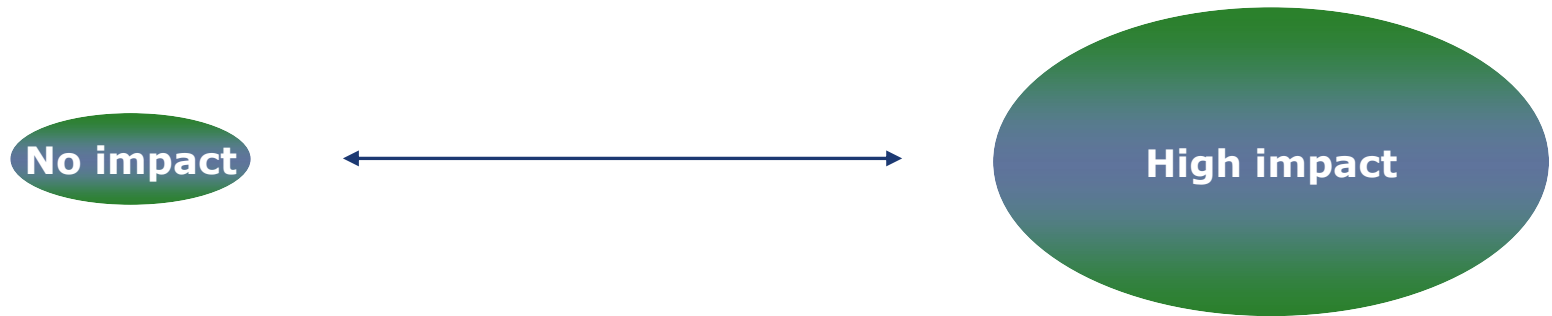
Long term disability claims citing mental illness as an issue – 67%

- As compared to 47% (cancer); 41% (musculoskeletal / back)

➤ **Workplace mental illnesses cost Canadian cos. 15% net profits**

➤ **Workplace mental illnesses cost Canadian economy \$31 billion**

What impact do mental illness issues have on your work?



How do mental illness issues impact your work?

Absenteeism

Behavioural issues

Productivity

Disability leave

Co-worker discontent

GOOD news about early intervention and illness mitigation

Depression is highly treatable

- **80-90% success**

Early intervention increases odds of success

Time to treatment is key

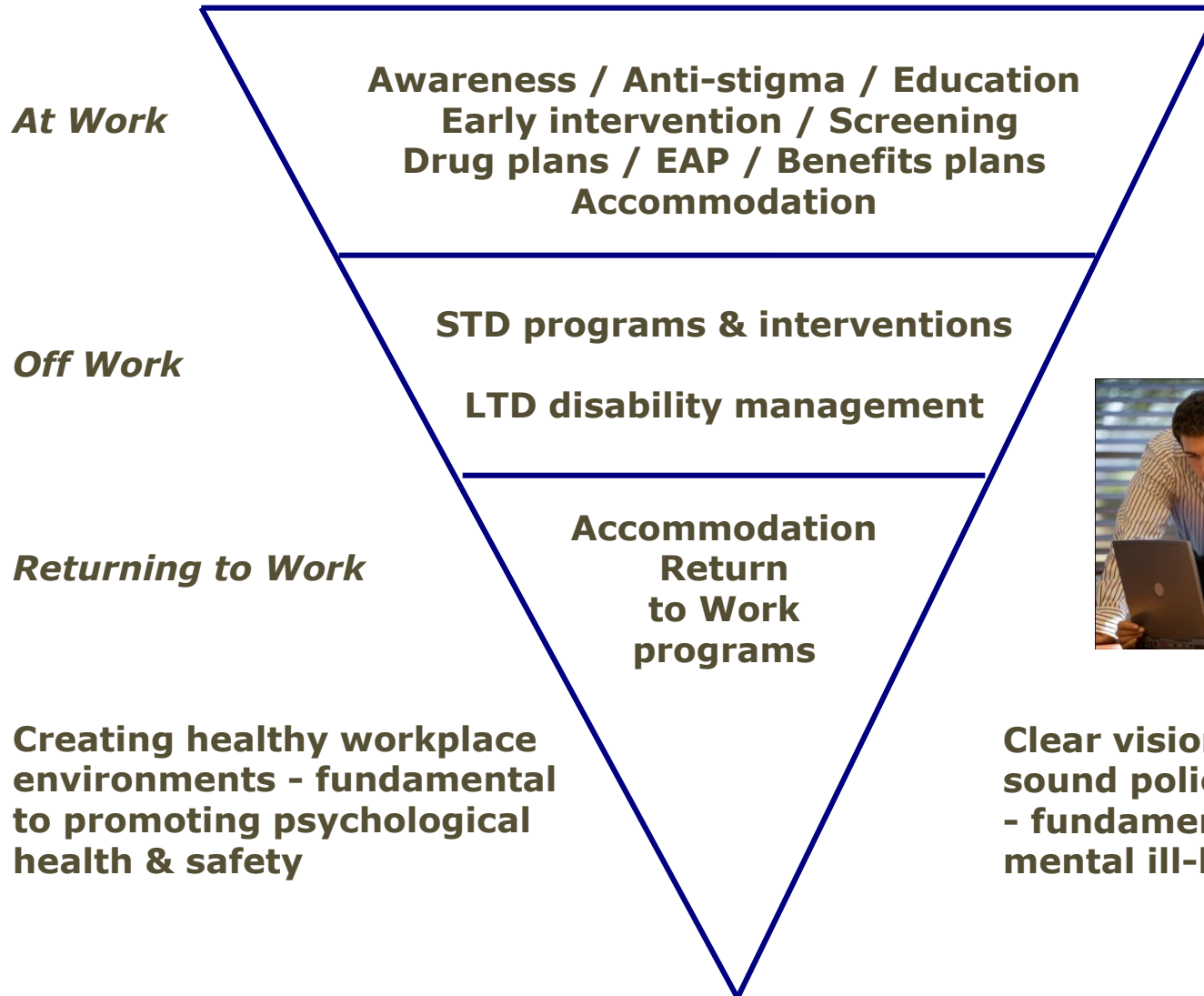
Getting the right help is critical

 **CHECK UP** *from the* **NECK UP**

- **Screening**
- **Education**
- **Links to support**



Comprehensive workplace solutions



Keeping employees healthy and productive at work

By building awareness fear & misconception can be reduced, attitudes can be changed

By educating, knowledge can be imparted, skills developed, behaviors changed

By putting in place sound programs and policies, employees can cope with their illness and make a meaningful contribution



Awareness

Education

Early intervention



In closing - valuable resources you can turn to



www.checkupfromtheneckup.ca



Working Through It

www.gwlcentreformentalhealth-com/wti



www.mooodisorders.on.ca

**mental health
WORKS**

www.mentalhealthworks.ca



www.gwlcentreformentalhealth.com/mmhm.html

Thanks for your participation

Your questions & comments?

Contact us if we can help:

Donna MacCandlish, Director Strategic Partnerships

donnam@mooddisorders.on.ca

1.888.486.8236 (225)

