

INTERVIEW PREP BRIEFING

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Interview Date/Time: Monday 10:00 AM Pacific (Ashley to call Michael and conference reporter in)

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Interview Subject Matter: The Cost of Depression (Michael Klechefskey)

Questions

1. Why do you think employers have a tendency to overlook mental health and mainly focus on medical/pharmaceutical costs?

Medical and pharmaceutical costs include mental health. Employers need to have a better understanding that those off work for mental reasons need a different approach than those off for physical conditions.

There is less effective management of disabilities when they are mental because these conditions require different types of interactions and interventions than physical ailments.

2. By better managing employee depression, how does this affect the overall staff and engagement?

When someone is at work with a mental disorder, and at work and productivity starts to fall, people know it. Even if it is not measured, people know it. This can lead to resentment among employees.

Most employers rely on insurance carriers to get people with mental health conditions back to work, but the industry is not set up for that. The time to intervene with those off work for mental reasons is early on in the absence, which most short-term disability programs don't do.

Most short-term disability plans have limited intervention early on. Workplace Possibilities provides someone on site to help intervene early.

Intervention for someone with a mental health condition means call the employee quickly after they leave work and getting them connected to EAP and wellness program (stress reduction/financial management). They also contact the employee's supervisor and doctor or therapist to get them back work quickly.

Being off work too long is the great enemy – odds of returning to work drop dramatically the longer someone is out. The cause is subject of debate. One thought is these people develop a disability mindset and are comfortable receiving benefits. They are fearful of the stigma of being out for mental illness. This is a big deal. Coworkers know absence is not cause of physical ailment. Stigma is a big deal.

3. What can an onsite consultant do to help with this?

The consultant is responsible for preparing landing field for return to work. They don't provide therapy, but connect employee to other benefits programs they may need (stress management/marital counseling/etc.)

Best case for the employee is to meet quickly with an onsite person. If not possible, make sure that employees who are off work return as soon as possible – don't want them off too long.

Mental health conditions in the workplace are a growing problem. Anecdotally, you hear all the time.

Presenteeism is the new frontier

The presenteeism side – the cost of presenteeism greatly exceeds absence cost. There was a study done that examined employees with depression at a major national bank in the US. The cost of them being at work was 8x higher than them being absent (24 million versus 3 million).

Presenteeism is more costly because it is more hidden. There are people at work with depression and anxiety, and we know only quarter of those with depression are being treated. 25 percent of working population will struggle, but only small number gets help.

Engagement can have several definitions. One is employees are engaged if they generally feel satisfied and connect their jobs with strategic goals of co. Dealing with depression in the workplace should help meet that definition of engagement. People who have depression will have trouble focusing and trouble focusing on company goals. **Dealing with depression will help increase engagement.**

Talking Points

Statistics from the pitch:

- Per the European Depression Association:
 - 10 percent of workers experienced an absence related to depression
 - Average depression-related absence lasted 36 days
- Per the most recent Long-Term Disability Claims Review from the Council for Disability Awareness:
 - Musculoskeletal and mental disorders were the diagnoses most commonly mentioned by insurers as increasing in 2011
 - 29 percent of participating companies reported increased mental disorder claims
- Workplace Possibilities stats:
 - WPP customers filed 570 claims related to depression from Jan.-Aug. 2012
 - 277 of the claimants successfully returned to work after filing the claim
 - Compared to duration guidelines for depression, the WPP program has saved 5,000 workdays and \$500,000 in disability claim expenses