WEF Global Agenda Council on Mental Health
Case Study: Examples of Good Practices for Addressing Mental Health in the Workplace

AT A GLANCE – CASE STUDY: BELL CANADA

RATIONALE & DEVELOPMENT
As part of the Bell Let’s Talk mental health initiative launched in 2010, Bell Canada committed to leading by example in workplace mental health practices. Bell actively participated in the development and early adoption of the Canadian voluntary National Standard for Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace which helped guide programme development.

To address mental health in the workplace, existing vendor relationships were leveraged to help deliver elements of the programme helping to ensuring consistency and sustainability. The scope of the programme is national, available in the two official Canadian languages (English and French), and allows for flexibility to be customised to suit diverse workforce segments. Given that the employee base is dispersed across a large geographic expanse, an additional consideration was that the programme would use technology.

PROGRAMME
- Bell’s internal and external strategy is built on four pillars: anti-stigma, care and access, research, and workplace.
- The mental health programme under the workplace pillar adopts a continuum of care approach from prevention to support. Psychological factors are integrated in existing human resources and health and safety programmes.
- Prevention: Bell has three internal mental health awareness and promotion campaigns per year; dedicated mental health intranet site with information, videos and weekly articles; mandatory mental health leadership training for all people leaders (managers) and targeted training for Health and Safety and Union representatives.
- Support: Enhanced support is provided to employees and family members facing mental health difficulties. This includes employee and family assistance services and enhanced benefits coverage for psychological care. Bell has adopted a multidisciplinary support approach to facilitate return to work.

STAKEHOLDERS
- A number of stakeholders are actively engaged in the development and implementation of the mental health programme. This includes employee involvement across a number of business functions across the company and senior leadership, external mental health experts and vendors including partnering with an insurance carrier involved in managing short-term disability claims, and the community. Integral to the success of designing and delivering a mental health programme was having clear executive commitment by the CEO.

MONITORING & EFFECTIVENESS
- Over 90 KPIs are measured quarterly and assessed for trends and programme improvements.
- Mental health metrics are included in health and safety dashboards for senior reviews and reporting is a requirement to ensure compliance.
- A double-digit decrease of mental health short-term disability claims has been observed over the last five years.

KEY TAKEAWAYS, LESSONS LEARNED, POINTS OF INTEREST
- Early detection of mental health issues enables strategies to prevent and reduce disability and allow employees to remain at work while addressing mental health issues.
- Executive commitment initiated by the CEO was integral to successful development and delivery.
- Mandatory training is auto-assigned to leaders with timeline alerts to ensure uptake
- Mental health resources are available on the company’s intranet which helps build mental health literacy, indentify local community resources and combat stigma.
- Care and support through employee and family assistance program and psychological care benefits – 24/7 coverage with multiple modalities including virtual counselling and apps to facilitate help seeking.
- Programmes to address mental health are designed to ensure they can successfully respond to a diverse workforce. Business units are expected to leverage programme resources and tools which can be customised
- The company’s decision to actively participate in the development and early adoption of the Canadian Voluntary National Standard for Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace has served to strengthen its leadership as an organisation committed to addressing mental health. Bell shares its learnings with other organizations to help increase uptake of workplace mental health practices.

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IN-DEPTH OVERVIEW – CASE STUDY: BELL CANADA

PROFILE
Organisation: Bell Canada
Sector: Telecommunications
Country: Canada

"Adults are spending the majority of their active time at work and we felt the workplace had to be included as a critical area to offer a supportive network."

DEVELOPMENT STAGE

The Bell Let’s Talk mental health initiative was launched in 2010 and includes a commitment to workplace mental health practices. The Company recognises that most adults are spending the majority of their active time at work and felt the workplace had to be included as a critical area to offer a supportive network. In addition to workplace mental health leadership, the Bell mental health initiative includes foci on anti-stigma and charitable funding for research and programs that improve access to supports and services.

Since 2010, Bell has committed more than $79 million to support over 600 mental health organizations, large and small, from coast to coast, focusing on tackling stigma, access to good care, workplace mental health and research.

To address mental health in the workplace, existing vendor relationships were leveraged to help deliver elements of the programme helping to ensure consistency and sustainability. The scope of the programme is national, available in the two official Canadian languages (English and French), and allows for flexibility to be customised to suit diverse workforce segments. Given that the employee base is dispersed across a large geographic expanse, an additional consideration was that the programme would use technology.

Integral to the success of designing and delivering a mental health programme was having clear executive commitment which was initiated by the CEO. Bell has created a designated role as Chair of Mental Health to support this function. The company’s decision to actively participate in the development and early adoption of the Canadian Voluntary National Standard for Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace has also served to strengthen its leadership as an organisation committed to addressing mental health. Bell also gives itself an informal leadership objective to influence other organizations through best practices sharing and to help them accelerate their journey to deploy mental health strategies in the workplace.

PROGRAMME

Bell’s internal and external strategy is built on four pillars. These are: anti-stigma, care and access, research, and workplace.

Figure 1. Bell Canada Strategy for Mental Health
The mental health programme under the workplace pillar is designed to achieve six aims. These are:

1. Reduce workplace mental ill-health stigma and discrimination and encourage employees to seek psychological support early on;
2. Raise awareness and equip leaders to integrate best practices when interacting with employees;
3. Build and sustain a psychologically healthy workplace by embedding psychological protection factors in existing Human Resources (HR) and Health and Safety processes;
4. Improve productivity, innovation and customer service;
5. Strengthen talent attraction, development and retention;
6. Share overall benefits of investing in mental health and influence corporate Canada to follow and actively share and support other organisations;

Bell has defined a clear mental health policy. Services and resources are provided to foster a continuum of care approach from prevention to support.

**Prevention**

A range of mechanisms are in place to foster good mental health such as providing a psychologically healthy workplace and addressing stigma. Early detection of mental health issues enables strategies to help prevent disability and allow employees to remain at work while addressing mental health issues. For example, Bell has three internal mental health awareness and promotion campaigns per year, a dedicated mental health intranet site with information, videos and weekly articles, mandatory mental health leadership training for all people leaders (managers), and targeted training for Health and Safety and Union representatives.

**Support**

Support is provided to employees and family members facing mental health difficulties through its Employee and Family assistance services and enhanced benefits coverage for psychological care. Bell has adopted a multidisciplinary support approach to facilitate return to work and mental health accommodations. This has been developed in close partnership with an insurance carrier involved in managing short-term disability claims.

A number of stakeholders are actively engaged in the development and implementation of the mental health programme. This includes employee involvement across a number of business functions across the company and senior leadership, external mental health experts and vendors, and the community. The role of key stakeholders is outlined below.

- **Senior leadership involvement:** The Chief Executive Officer and dedicated Mental Health Chair are supported by the Executive Vice President of Corporate Services and the Human Resources (HR) Vice President as key sponsors;

- **Dedicated HR resources forming the workplace health team:** Responsible for developing and deploying
workplace mental health initiatives;

- **HR Professionals:** Responsible for supporting the deployment of mental health programs in their client groups and supporting employees as required;

- **Health & Safety joint committees:** Mental health is integrated as a standard topic covered in the Company’s joint Health and Safety committees. The Joint Committees serve as key ambassadors to support the deployment of mental health programs in business units;

- **Internal Communications team:** The team is responsible for developing the mental health promotion strategy, managing the dedicated intranet content and producing weekly articles and organising events;

- **Community Investment team:** The team ensures consistency and synergy between external mental investments and the internal program. They engage and leverage public spokespersons (celebrities, athletes) as role models in the community who have lived mental ill-health experience;

- **External mental health experts, vendors and people living with mental health issues:** Support the development of programs and educate the workforce;

- **Engagement of leadership at all levels:** Mandatory leadership training for all people leaders (managers). They are expected to lead by example and apply mental health best practices in day-to-day operations;

- **Overall team member accountability:** Participate in mental health campaigns and take advantage of online mental health training course to build resiliency and be better equipped to cope. There is accountability to respect the mental health policy and code of conduct in order to build a respectful workplace.

The national awareness campaigns, training initiatives, and mental health resources available on the company's intranet help combat stigma which is often a barrier to accessing support. To ensure mental health is a priority, mandatory training is auto-assigned to leaders with timeline alerts. Tracking and monitoring processes are undertaken to ensure high utilisation rates and to enhance mental health promotion. The intranet is also regularly updated with weekly articles. Additionally, as part of the programme, benefits are offered to employees and their family which act as incentives for seeking support.

As a national organisation with over 50,000 employees, the programmes to address mental health are designed to ensure they can successfully respond to a diverse workforce. Business units are expected to leverage programme resources and tools which can be customised to suit their workforce. All resources are available in both the official languages of Canada (English and French).

**MONITORING & EFFECTIVENESS**

Over 90 Key Performance Indicators are measured quarterly and assessed for trends and programme improvements. Indicators are reviewed on a quarterly basis by the HR Executive and the Mental Health Chair. Mental health metrics are included in Health and Safety dashboards for senior reviews and reporting is a requirement to ensure compliance. There is a semi-annual review with the Security Environmental Health & Safety governance board. Additionally, the Corporate Responsibility report is published annually. Bell is also participating in a three-year case-study project as part of its implementation of the Voluntary Standard which includes three audits (baseline, interim and final).

Some of the indicators include:

- **Employee and Family Assistance Program (EFAP):** The utilisation and resources of EFAP are analysed on a quarterly basis. A steady year-on-year increase has been observed showing that usage has doubled in the last five years.

- **Short-term disability claims including overall claims and mental health claims:** The incidence of claims is monitored. A double-digit decrease of mental health short-term disability claims has been observed over the last
five years. Other related indicators that are monitored include the duration of claims, number of relapses, recurrences within a one-year period, and costs.

- **Long-term disability breakdown by major causes and percentage linked to mental health**

- **Mental health training:** Participation in training and target population reach is recorded. There has been an observed satisfaction rate of over 80 per cent.

- **Mental health awareness and literacy campaigns:** Event participation and post-event survey results are assessed for continuous improvement (demographics, location, satisfaction, preferred topics for future events, etc.).

- **Number of hits on key segments of the intranet site**

- **Annual Employee Survey:** Questions are mapped to psychological factors. Results indicate higher than industry and national norms among Bell people. Results are analysed at the corporate and business unit level. Business units requiring further support are identified and those reporting high satisfaction rates are identified to share best-practices.

Bell recognises that ongoing monitoring and assessment helps with the development of programs based on identified needs and improvements. For example, in December 2015, Bell has launched a new Health Assessment Questionnaire. So far, over 26,000 employees completed the questionnaire which was offered on a voluntary basis and linked to an incentive to stimulate participation such as an enhanced benefit amount. Questions include physical and mental wellbeing. Individual answers will remain confidential and aggregated results (corporate level and major business units) will be analysed and will provide the Company with an additional source of data to capture overall health of its workforce and help develop tailored wellness programs.

**Appendix**

- Appendix A: Bell’s Mental Health Policy Statement
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Bell’s Mental Health Policy Statement

At Bell, we believe that the mental health of our team members is essential to achieving personal and organizational success. This policy statement applies to all employees in all locations where Bell business is conducted.

Workplace leadership is one of the 4 action pillars of the Bell Let’s Talk mental health initiative. Bell is committed to leading by example in our own workplace by promoting mental health and supporting team members with a mental illness.

Every member of the Bell organization is expected to take primary responsibility for their own health. Every employee also has a responsibility to contribute to a mentally healthy workplace.

Bell is committed to:

- Supporting employees experiencing mental illness through our workplace practices;
- Understanding what makes a mentally healthy workplace by reviewing relevant workplace factors, employee feedback, government and legal requirements, and current best practices;
- Setting objectives that drive continuous improvement of our workplace mental health strategy and regularly evaluating our approach;
- Implementing or adapting policies and practices that support a mentally healthy workplace within the context of our corporate priorities and the evolution of our industry;
- Providing resources and training to educate all team members about mental health;
- Encouraging employees to take part in activities that contribute to their own mental health in the workplace.

Additional policies supporting employee health and safety, and a positive and respectful workplace:

- Alcohol, drug and gambling problems
- Health and Safety
- Human rights policies
- Reasonable accommodation
- Violence prevention in the workplace