

REGIONAL HEALTH AUTHORITY

MANITOBA BLUE CROSS Employee Assistance Program

Workshop Topics 2010

Topics may vary based on facilitator availability.

Achieving Positive Physical and Mental Health (1 or 2 hours)

Competing demands mean that many of us are pulled in many directions at once. Although we can't always reduce our commitments or create more time for ourselves, it is important that we try to maintain balance and manage our stress. In this workshop, a holistic perspective towards stress management is taken. Topics covered will include:

- Beliefs about stress, including the way we perceive it and how we respond to it
- The impact of stress on the mind, body, and behaviour
- Tips for stress management

Participants will gain an understanding of how stress impacts the body and mind, and what one can do to manage this and promote wellness.

Appreciating Differing Work Styles (3 hours)

The challenges we face in the workplace have become increasingly complex, requiring that we engage and interact frequently and effectively at an intellectual level. Given this reality, our individual work styles become evident and we often risk coming into conflict with each other. In order to manage this potential problem, we are well served to understand:

- What we mean by different work styles
- Why different styles are critical
- The advantages of variation in styles
- The importance of a respectful workplace

Participants will learn about the many ways in which we work, and will gain a better understanding of how to effectively interact with others in the workplace.

Balancing Work and Life Roles (2 hours)

All too often, we find ourselves struggling to balance our commitments to family and the workplace. Busy schedules, eldercare, that important meeting – how do we create a balance, and still keep everyone happy? What about time for ourselves? In this workshop, we will explore:

- How we define balance
- How to assess your own level of balance
- What can support, or hinder, balance

Participants will learn a variety of ideas and techniques for supporting balance in our lives.

Beyond Surviving to Thriving – Couple Relationships (3 hours)

An interactive, strength-based workshop for couples who have a healthy relationship and want to make it even better through a better understanding of themselves and their partners.

Boomers, Xs, Ys and More – Generational Diversity (1 or 2 hours)

In this day and age there can be many different Generations working in the same organization and each generation has its own unique characteristics and challenges.

Caring for the Professional Caregiver (1.5 or 2 hours)

It is not often by chance that people find themselves in the caring professions. More often, it is a choice: a choice to make a difference in the lives of people in our communities, and a choice to be a force in enhancing the quality of life for others. This choice also involves a degree of commitment, and the recognition that one has made a clear contribution. However, the commitment can also risk extricating a high price from the professionals involved. People often speak of burn out, vicarious trauma, or compassion fatigue. The stakes are high not only for the professionals involved, but also for a society that relies more and more on a variety of professional caregivers. In this session, we will explore:

- The nature of caregivers
- The risks of caregiving
- Stress and caregiving
- Strategies for mitigating the risks

As the flight attendants always point out, "In case of emergency, put your own oxygen mask on first." Participants in this workshop will gain an understanding of the importance of ensuring our own needs are met, and how this allows us to continue to care for others.

Caught in the Middle – The Sandwich Generation (2 or 3 hours)

Because middle aged people could have children and even grandchildren who require attention, as well as parents who require personal assistance, caught in the middle as they are, they have been called the Sandwich Generation. The workshop explores who they are, where we are going and where are you?

Communication, Conflict, and the Romantic Relationship (2 or 3 hours)

An intimate relationship is one of the most significant partnerships an individual can experience. It takes hard work, special attention and commitment to make a relationship function. This session identifies:

- Early warning signs of a troubled relationship
- Different ways in which men and women handle relationship stress
- Tips on how to improve communication with your partner

Participants will gain an understanding of how conflict may be effecting their intimate relationships, and how to address conflict.

Communication Techniques and Conflict Resolution (3 hours)

The workplace has become a place in which many of us spend a majority of our time. We are often required to interact with others in complex and challenging ways, to solve equally challenging problems. Effective communication skills are essential to prevent misunderstandings and resolve inevitable conflicts. Topics to be explored include:

- Barriers to communication
- Healthy and helpful communication skills
- The conflict resolution model

Participants will gain new ways to enhance the potential for being understood and decrease the potential for conflict, as well as ways to resolve conflicts that arise.

Creating Your Assertive Self (1.5 to 2 hours)

Many people feel unable to express their needs directly to colleagues, family or partners. They may worry their behaviour could be perceived as aggressive or selfish, but there can be implications for not speaking directly: your actions may be misinterpreted, or your wishes might not be communicated. By communicating assertively, you can allow others to be aware of your feelings without taking over the room. Topics include:

- Identification of assertive, aggressive and passive behaviour
- Exploration of how non-assertive communication affects you and others
- Exploration of the benefits of communicating assertively

Participants will also review and practice assertive communication techniques in the workshop, and will gain an understanding of how to utilize these techniques with others

Diversity Awareness (2 hours)

Employment equity and affirmative action approaches focus on bringing underrepresented groups into the workforce. Diversity awareness training seeks to create an environment where all differences are valued, and where each employee can develop to his or her potential. Focusing on diversity reminds us that it is not enough to hire employees from underrepresented groups. We must also provide an environment where all employees are supported and valued. In this workshop, we will explore:

- How we define diversity in the workplace
- The benefits of supporting diversity
- The harmful effects of stereotyping
- Challenges in maintaining a diverse and respectful environment

Participants in this workshop will gain an increased sense of the importance of diversity within the workplace, and how to support an inclusive environment for all employees and coworkers.

Emotional Intelligence in the Workplace (2 hours)

Emotional intelligence has been a buzzword in recent years, but how do we define it? And why does it matter? If you've ever been in a situation where you wish you had trusted your gut, this workshop is for you. In this workshop, the concept of emotional intelligence is explored, and the impact of emotions on self and others is presented. You will learn more about:

- Recognize how emotions affect work behaviour and performance
- Assessing your emotional strengths and limitations
- Assessing work experiences and identifying areas in which you wish you had behaved differently
- Responding to challenging work situations with appropriate empathy and listening skills
- Negotiating and resolving disagreements, both at work or at home.

Participants will take a better awareness of the concept of emotional intelligence with them, allowing them to understand how emotions impact themselves and their interactions with others.

Essentials of Professional Communication (2 hours)

When deadlines are tight and we are juggling multiple demands, it can be difficult to convey our thoughts and feelings in just the right way. Communication that is unclear or confusing can mean that others won't understand our intentions, or may even be offended. How do we ensure that our messages will get through? In this workshop, we will explore:

- Barriers to effective communication
- Creating understanding through good communication
- Challenges within the workplace
- Communicating effectively through email and the web

Participants will leave with a renewed understanding of the importance of effective communication. Tools and tips for effective ways of communicating with others in the workplace will be provided.

Experiential Practice in Stress Reduction (3 hours)

We all experience various levels of stress in our daily lives. Managing our stress levels is an essential part of maintaining balance in our lives. Many of us have heard about the benefits of meditation and relaxation, but may not have had a chance to explore these techniques. This experiential workshop provides participants with some 'hands on' learning in these much-discussed areas. Participants will also learn more about:

- The distinctions between positive stress and negative stress
- The impact of stress on personal balance
- Relaxation techniques, meditation and guided imagery

After attending this workshop, participants will have an understanding of techniques to manage stress, as well as an understanding of the impact of stress.

Financial Management (2 hours)

For many of us, our finances are always on our minds. We might wonder if we have enough money, if we're making the best decisions for our financial futures, if we are saving enough, or spending too much. A budget can act as a roadmap, allowing us to see where we might be headed and plan for the future. Participants will receive information about:

- The value of a budget
- Techniques for money management
- Credit and how it can affect you

Participants will leave with tools to create a working budget, and tips for managing personal and family finances.

Healthy Communication in the Workplace (3 hours)

Our workplaces have become increasingly complex, and to be productive in these systems, we must be able to communicate clearly and effectively. However, when we have competing demands and increased workloads, it can be easy to become focused only on completing our tasks, and lose sight of how our words and actions can affect others. By communicating in healthy ways, we can help ensure that our messages will get through as intended – which might make your busy day a little bit easier. Topics covered in this workshop include:

- Healthy vs. unhealthy styles of communication
- Tools for healthy communication
- Ways to create an environment in which healthy communication exists

Participants in this workshop will leave with a better understanding of ways in which they can utilize tools for healthy communication in the workplace. Group discussion and activities will allow participants to practice using these techniques within the workshop environment.

Honouring All Cultures in the Workplace: Aboriginal Cultures & Diversity For Managers (4 hours)

Building a Representative Workforce involves strategies to retain new and existing employees. This workshop will deepen understanding on various aspects of service delivery, policy, and practice; we will look at moving from awareness to action. The workshop explores the themes and issues emerging from participant experiences and knowledge to identify concrete and productive ways which lead to:

- Improved retention for Aboriginal employees
- Creating an environment that values diversity'

Introduction to Mindfulness (2.5 or 3 hours)

New for 2010

When we rush through our days, multitasking, and trying to get it all done on time, we miss the present moments of our lives. Mindfulness is simply paying attention to the moments, without judging.

Through conversation, presentation, and experiential practice, you will begin the journey of awareness. Participants in this session will also participate in a stress reduction/mindfulness meditation.

Mindfulness practices can help us take control of our lives, bringing peaceful balance, lowering stress, decreasing pain and allowing us to enjoy the present.

Managing Change and Transition in the Workplace (2 hours)

We are often not in control of the changes that occur in our workplaces. New managers, new facilities, new organizational structures – all of these changes mean that we must adapt to new ways of being in the workplace. All types of organizational change create a situation in which an employee must go through a period of transition. A transition is an internal psychological process through which the individual comes to terms with the new situation. This workshop focuses on understanding the change and transition process. Participants will:

- Increase self awareness of their personal reactions to change
- Understand and increase their own coping skills
- Participate in exercises and group discussions

Participants will leave with insight into how the change process may impact them, and ideas for working through the process in a positive and productive way.

Mentors in the Workplace (2.5 hours)

Mentors play a valued and meaningful role in our changing workplace. With many boomers retiring, new workers will need to gain skills and competencies to perform at their best. A mentor is someone who partners with another in the workplace to share their expertise and experience. Mentors serve as catalysts and guides to help learners see things in new ways, gain confidence and respond to challenges with a broader range of skills. In this workshop, we will explore:

- The value of mentors in the workplace
- How to mentor effectively
- The gifts and challenges of mentoring

Those attending this workshop will leave with a better understanding of ways they can effectively mentor other workers, as well as an affirmation of the value that mentors add in the workplace.

Pre-Retirement Lifestyle Planning (1 hour)

We spend many years anticipating our retirement. For many of us, however, our identities are intertwined with our professional roles and activities. Often, we approach retirement with mixed emotions. A fulfilling retirement begins with planning for the transition as we move into this new phase. This workshop takes a developmental planning approach, and includes consideration of:

- Relationships and personalities
- Activities, interests, skills and abilities
- Health
- Working again after retirement

Please note that this workshop does not include financial planning, which is a separate topic. Participants in this workshop will feel more confident as they move towards retirement.

Positive Discipline in Parenting (1-2 hours)

As a parent, one is constantly adapting, and responding to new situations and challenges. Children often test our patience and composure, and sometimes, even our sanity! In this workshop, participants will learn positive strategies for discipline that you can use to help manage a variety of situations. Participants will learn more about:

- General principles of motivation
- Reframing
- Developmental stages

Participants will enjoy exercises and discussion in this workshop. Those participating will leave with new tools to help maintain dignity for both parent and child.

Respectful Workplace (2 or 3 hours)

It has been recognized that work plays a critical role in the life of all people. Not only do we spend a significant amount of time in the workplace, but it is the means by which we define ourselves and create a place for ourselves in our communities. The workplace, or more accurately, the people in the workplace have a significant impact on our lives. This session explores the nature of a respectful workplace including:

- What it is
- Why it is so important
- How we can enhance it
- How we risk losing it
- What we can do to protect it

Participants will explore these factors and return to their workplace with an understanding how they can contribute in creating a respectful workplace.

Retirement Planning (2 or 3 hours)

As we plan for retirement, our finances are usually a primary consideration. We often wonder if we have saved or invested sufficiently to enjoy the lifestyle we prefer, or if our pensions would be sufficient if we choose to retire earlier. In this retirement planning workshop, we focus on the financial planning that is an integral part of preparing for retirement. Topics that will be covered include:

- Goal setting and retirement attitudes
- Linkage to estate planning
- Importance of proper investment planning
- Understanding available pension options
- Projecting post-retirement income and expenses

Participants will receive a detailed handout providing information and resources for further planning.

Sibling Rivalry (1, 2 or 3 hours)

If you have more than one child in your home, or if you grew up in a family with brothers or sisters, chances are you are familiar with the concept of sibling rivalry. Sibling rivalry is a problem that is widespread and deeply felt by almost every family. It can cause a significant amount of stress on family members and likely leaves parents feeling frustrated, angry and helpless. In this workshop, we will explore

- The roots behind sibling rivalry
- How to improve your children's relationship with each other
- Coping strategies for the parent

Participants in this workshop will leave with an increased awareness of the dynamics of the sibling relationship, as well as accessible strategies to deal with sibling rivalry.

Stress Management (2 or 3 hours)

Stress is a popular topic of conversation for many of us. We talk about how we are 'feeling stressed out', about what factors are 'causing stress' and of being 'under stress.' However, our experience of stress is not in itself an external factor - it is our internal reaction based on our resources and situation. Although stress can be difficult to manage effectively, it can also be a motivator for us to achieve within our deadlines. This workshop explores:

- Stress management techniques
- Positive work environment characteristics
- Ways of managing change

By exploring these points in an interactive discussion, participants will gain a better understanding of their own stress reactions, and new ways of coping.

Surviving Adolescence – Parenting Teenagers (1 or 2 hours)

The workshop seeks to help parents understand the teenager within the Family Life Cycle as a normal, but challenging period and the factors that influence a healthy transition from childhood to adulthood.

Team Building the TRUE COLORS Way (1 day)

(Please note there is an additional cost for materials for this workshop.)

From Hippocrates to Myers-Briggs, throughout time we have sought to understand people and their personalities. In 1978 TRUE COLORS was created based on the work of Dr. David Keirse using the metaphor of four colors. From self-discovery to getting along with others, the workshop goals are to enhance communication, reduce conflicts and increase understanding of others.

Team Building (3 hours)

(In order to address the needs of the group most effectively, this workshop can be requested as specific to management and supervisors, or for staff only.)

Many of us are working in situations in which team work is essential. We do not work in isolation, and to achieve our goals and objectives both individually and collectively, we need to be able to work effectively with others. This workshop will explore the essential elements to creating and maintaining a functional and healthy team. It will focus on fostering and enhancing a positive team environment.

- Systems and structures that are necessary in order to create a positive work environment
- Specific strategies on how to build teams in positive ways
- How to foster and enhance positive and healthy working relationships

Participants will strengthen their knowledge of team work and team building through experiential activities and interactive discussions.

Understanding Addictions: For Managers and Supervisors (3 hours)

Many people deal with addictions issues in their personal lives, and this is reflected in the workplace. Addictions can affect one's behaviour, finances, physical and mental health, as well as relationships with those around them. As a manager, you may wonder how you can best support someone who may be dealing with addiction. This session will assist managers and supervisors in the identification and support of employees with addictions. Topics to be covered include:

- The prevalence and patterns of addiction
- Understanding addictive behaviour
- Indicators of potential addiction
- Intervention strategies, and helping resources

Participants will gain a better understanding of the nature of addictions as well as how to recognize an employee who may be dealing with addictions issues.

Understanding Depression and Helping Others with Depression (1 or 2 hours)

(This workshop can be adjusted to meet the specific needs and concerns of management and supervisors.)

Depression is a common illness. At some point in their life, around 1 in every 5 women and 1 in every 10 men will suffer from depression. Naturally, problems which are common in the general population are also common in people at work. In any one year about 3 in every 10 employees will have feelings of distress or of their life being out of control which, if left untreated, could result in depression. When someone is depressed it is not just distressing for the person involved. It may impact others in the workplace, it may make the person affected less productive and can lead to high rates of sick-leave, accidents and staff turnover. Colleagues at work are often in a good position to notice an employee or co-worker is becoming depressed.

This workshop will focus on:

- Signs and symptoms of depression
- Myths about depression
- How to recognize someone who may be experiencing depression
- How to help someone who may be experiencing depression

Participants will have a greater awareness of the signs and impact of depression, and will be better equipped to respond to others in their lives that may be at risk.

Understanding and Managing Anger (3 hours)

Anger is a powerful emotion, and can make us uncomfortable or scared – or even get us into trouble, depending on how we react. We often react in similar ways to the anger of others, which can mean that our problem solving skills are not fully utilized. Regardless of whether your own reaction to anger is to avoid it or embrace it, this workshop can assist you in better understanding your anger. We will explore the basis of angry feelings, how to manage anger, and how to effectively deal with angry people. Topics include:

- What we know about anger
- How anger can go awry
- How to experience anger and use it adaptively
- Knowing your own rights and responsibilities

Through discussion and self-assessment, participants will gain a better understanding of the roots of anger, as well as their own reactions to angry feelings. This will allow participants to better manage their anger, both at home and in the workplace. A comprehensive handout is provided.

Understanding and Managing Yourself in Conflict (3 hours)

This conflict resolution workshop is designed to introduce you to the idea of conflict as a necessary precursor to change. In addition to learning a new attitude towards conflict, you will have the opportunity to discover your preferred conflict management style, alternate styles and when to use them, what aids or hinders communication in conflict, and a basic problem-solving method. You will also have the opportunity to try out these new learnings in a conflict resolution role play. The structure of the workshop is as follows:

- Define conflict, costs/benefits of conflict
- Cycle of conflict
- Developing new attitudes & responses to conflict
- What is your preferred conflict management style?
- Blocks to effective communication
- What do we communicate? – Positions versus Interests
- Basic problem-solving method
- Conflict resolution role play

Who's the Bully? Identifying and Dealing with Bullying in the Workplace (2 or 3 hours)

When we think about bullying, often our thoughts will go back to our experiences in the schoolyard. Unfortunately, bullying behaviour often continues into adulthood, and many of these interactions play out in the workplace, albeit in more subtle ways. In this workshop, participants will explore:

- How to recognize workplace harassment and bullying
- Definitions of workplace harassment and violence
- Dynamics of victim/perpetrator interactions
- Characteristics and response pattern of the victimized person
- Characteristics and response pattern of the perpetrator

An exploration of the psychological effects will include:

- physical and emotional symptoms
- maladaptive coping responses
- disruptions in work and relationships

Participants will gain an understanding of the dynamics of victim/perpetrator interactions, and gain strategies to deal with bullying and harassment.

You Don't Understand – Gender Issues in Communication (2 or 3 hours)

The Workshop looks at the different ways women and men think, behave and communicate in their interactions with each other and how our societal expectations influence both genders.

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Yours, Mine and Ours – The Blended Family (2 or 3 hours)

The Blended Family, often called the stepfamily, has an adult couple with at least one of the adults having a child from a previous relationship. The workshop examines the many variations of the blended family and the challenges they face.

Wellness Workshops

New for 2009-2010!

Label Reading 101 (1 hour)

With all the information available on eating well-balanced meals and snacks we need to be able to make the right choice in the grocery aisle. When looking at a food label, it is important to know what the numbers and percentages mean. In this workshop a, Registered Dietician will analyze food label information. You will also:

- Learn about the nutrition information found on food labels including the: *Nutrition Facts*, the *Ingredient List*, *Nutrition Claims* and *Health Claims*
- Learn to identify amounts of nutrients, calories, and serving sizes on Nutrition Facts labels
- Learn to use the 5%-20% DV Guide to get LESS of some nutrients and get ENOUGH of others
- Compare food labels to determine which foods contain higher or lower amounts of nutrients or calories

Participants will gain an understanding of how to make informed choices and become top notch detectives!

Healthy Eating for Life (1 hour)

Healthy eating is about feeling great, having more energy, and keeping you as healthy as possible. All can be achieved by learning some nutrition basics and incorporating them into your routine, in a way that works. Choose the types of foods that improve your health and avoid those that raise your risk for illnesses. In this workshop, you will:

- Increase knowledge and understanding of Canada's Food Guide – food groups, serving sizes
- Discover choices within the Food Guide
- Learn how to eat healthy on the job
- And learn the balancing act: putting it all together!

Participants in this workshop will expand their range of healthy choices to include a wide variety of delicious foods and learn to use guidelines and tips for creating and maintaining a satisfying, healthy diet.

Supplement Savvy (1 hour)

Many Canadians regularly take vitamins, minerals, herbal products, homeopathic medicines and the like. These products have come to be known as natural health products or NHP's. There are several important facts one needs to consider before deciding whether or not to take a supplement. In this workshop we will:

- Review of common supplements
- Discuss tips on how to make better dietary supplement choices, looking beyond marketing claims
- Learn to use food as the primary way to achieve your nutrition and fitness goals

Participants in this workshop will gain a better understanding of whether or not they need to take supplements. Information on possible side effects, guidelines for use and myths will also be reviewed.

Balance the Odds in Your Favor: Reduce the Risk, Notice the Symptoms and Take Action (1 hour)

It has been said that the majority of illnesses today are preventable in nature. There are many things one can do to lower the risk of developing chronic health care conditions. By focusing on a few key areas, individuals can take steps to decrease the risk of developing heart disease, stroke, diabetes and certain cancers. A nurse will review the following program topics with participants:

- Identify major illnesses
- Reduce your risk
- Know the symptoms
- Find out about community resources

Participants will gain an increased understanding of how their actions directly affect their health. Employees will learn how to make healthy choices and lower the chances of developing chronic conditions.

Take Back Control - Back Pain Clinic (1 hour)

Low back pain is as widespread as catching the common cold/flu. Active participation is required in order to manage, treat, and prevent possible future occurrences. The "magic pill" of pain relief is almost always some form of active role that a person plays and should also be accompanied by education on how the sufferer can take *back* control (no pun intended)! A physiotherapist will provide information including:

- Introduction to back pain, including some interesting statistics on back pain
- Common causes (structural/anatomical causes, work related causes, risk factors)
- Treatments available (varies from passive/active treatments, different health care professionals, wide spectrum of care from rest to surgery, etc.)
- Prevention strategies (exercise, education, work modifications, lifestyle changes)

Participants will also gain an increased sense of why physical activity plays an important role in managing lower back pain.

Women's Health Matters (1 hour)

Women's health issues have been gaining widespread attention and are now at the top of the health/research agenda. Chances are, if you are a women, you may be faced with one or more of the following or have questions about:

- Menopause
- Osteoporosis
- Breast health
- Reproductive health (cervix/ovaries)
- Cardiovascular health

Although many Canadian women are aware of issues and risks surrounding women's health, many are not working to prevent them. The good news? With help from a nurse, participants in this workshop will explore the many issues surrounding women's health and learn how to make good decisions. The workshop will provide information for living with optimal health!

Physical Activity and Lifestyle Changes (2 hours)

This wellness workshop will introduce employees to both exercise and nutrition guidelines. The workshop is geared toward individuals looking for some guiding principles on how to get started with an exercise program. A physiotherapist will answer the questions “how much” and “what kind.” Your food choices are also an important part of the picture. A review of Canada's Food Guide provides information on interpreting the guide and how making healthy food choices can benefit you. We will discuss:

- Determinants of health
- Importance of physical activity
- Stages of change
- Myths and misconceptions surrounding exercise
- Canada's Food Guide review

Participants in this workshop will learn the basics in both exercise and nutrition. Information gained will guide employees as they seek ways to increase activity and make wise food choices.