

## Occupational Health and Safety: A Psychosocial Perspective

### Bridging the Gap on Psychological Health/Injury

## Presented By

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## Statistics

- €27M Claims
- €800 Absenteeism
- 13% Of Reported Incidents To HSA

## What's Available?

- Support From The HSA
- Work Positive Audit Tool
- HSE Policies
- Reports From EU OSHA
- IOSH
- CISM Network Training

## What's missing?

- Information Concerning Psychosocial Injury
- Education And Training
- Guidance For Employers
- Collaboration With Organisations
- Greater Emphasis On Reporting
- Carrot And Stick

## Regulatory Route

- Current Legislation
- Benefit's Of Regulatory Route
- Specific Regulation

## Bridging the Gap on Psychological Health/Injury

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## Significance of Psychological Health/Injury

- ◉ The World Federation for Mental Health has predicted that by 2020, the primary cause of absenteeism in the workplace will be stress.

## Costs

- ◉ Ireland loses an average of 793 million euro annually through absenteeism - stress is the leading cause (Small Firms Association, 2008).
- ◉ In the United Kingdom in 2010/11 the HSE UK reported that over 10.8 million days were lost to work related stress (HSE, 2011).

## Work Related Stress

- ◉ It affects at least 40 million workers in the 15 EU Member States and costs at least 20 billion euro annually. (European Commission, 1999).
- ◉ For U.K. companies in the 1980's, stress in the workplace was ten times more costly than industrial relations disputes. (Confederation of British Industry)

## PTSD Litigation Risk

- ◉ The State Claims Agency indicate that one successful claim through the courts could cost the state up to €600,000 in total.
- ◉ Estimated direct cost 27 million euro
- ◉ The HSE is not included or other state schemes

## Dealing with Critical Incidents (Väänänen et al. 2012)

- ◉ Sources of pressure at work evoke different reactions from different people.
- ◉ Some people are better able to cope with these stressors than others, they adapt their behaviour in a way that meets the environmental challenge.
- ◉ On the other hand some people are more predisposed to stress, that is, they are unable to cope or adapt to the stress-provoking situation.

## Psychological First Aid

- Refers to the psychological support of victims, family members, members of the action force or witnesses to an extreme event or a disaster, in an attempt to prevent the development of long-term psychological problems or disorders such as post-traumatic stress disorders (Manz, 2007).

## Reactions of Frontline Staff (Rhoads et al., 2008).

- The majority of rescue workers may experience stress that does not necessarily lead to diagnosable mental disorders, but instead to a variety of symptoms such as.....
- Emotional reactions: shock, anger, guilt, helplessness, emotional numbness,
- Cognitive reactions: disorientation, lack of concentration, memory loss, guilt,
- Physical reactions: tension, fatigue, pain, racing heartbeat
- Psychosocial reactions: avoidance of socialising, isolation, distrust, being distant

## What's needed?

- Polices: Are they developed?
- CISM: Is it in place?
- Information: Before and after events
- Peer Support Workers: Are they in place and trained?
- Training- Senior Management, Managers, Supervisors, Staff
- New entrants: Do not let them learn the hard way!
- Needs to be a real working model (not just on paper!)

## Bridging the Gap

- Currently, CISM Network Ireland are working in collaboration with the Health and Safety Authority (Patricia Murray HSA Occupational Psychologist/ Inspector) on developing a ' Psychosocial Risk Assessment Tool' for state agencies/organisations.
- PHECC currently developing Stress Awareness E learning tool

## A warning to us all.....

- Oster & Doyle, (2007) argue that Critical Incidents are more incapacitating than physical trauma because it can still be present long after the physical healing is completed.

## Thank you.....

Ireland took the lead in Europe banning tobacco in the workplace and it's been clearly proven to be the right thing.....

Now let's consider taking the lead in 'bridging the gap' with psychological injury in the workplace!

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