



Carleton
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SPROTT
SCHOOL OF BUSINESS

Mental Health and the Accounting Profession

Thursday November 28, 2019

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PARG



<http://sprott.carleton.ca/parg/>

Funding by CPA Ontario

Agenda

- Welcome – Dr. Dana Brown, Dean, Sprott School of Business
- Opening Remarks – Professor Merridee Bujaki, FCPA, FCA
- An Accountant’s Perspective - Denis Trottier, FCPA, FCA
Chief Mental Health Officer, KPMG
- Strategies for Ourselves and our Colleagues – Dr. Tim Simboli
Executive Director, Canadian Mental Health Association, Ottawa
- Mental health and nutrition break
- Best Practices for Organizations – Caroline Workman
Certified Return to Work Coordinator, Organizational Health Consultant,
Great-West Life
- Opportunity for Questions
- Closing Remarks and Resources

Mental Health - Definition

Mental health “is a state of well-being in which the individual realizes his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to his or her community”

World Health Organization. Promoting mental health: concepts, emerging evidence, practice (Summary Report) Geneva: World Health Organization; 2004.

Background

- We all have mental health – everyday
 - How is your mental health today?
 - Are you ‘Not myself today’?
 - Are you green, yellow or red today?



- We have a list of resources available later for anyone who may need them.

A few statistics

- In any given year, 1 in 5 people in Canada will personally experience a mental health problem or illness; 500,000 each week
- “1 in 3 workplace disability claims are related to mental health problems or illnesses; 70% of disability costs are attributed to mental health problems or illnesses”
- “The total cost from mental health problems to the Canadian economy exceeds \$51 billion annually”
- “In 2011, mental health problems and illnesses among working adults in Canada cost employers more than \$6 billion in lost productivity from absenteeism, presenteeism and turnover”

Mental Health Commission of Canada <https://www.mentalhealthcommission.ca/English/what-we-do/workplace>

Benefits of a Mentally Healthy Workplace

- Improved employee performance
- Improved safety
- Improved employee well-being
- Improved recruitment and retention
- Reduced absenteeism and turnover
- Decreased cost of employee benefits and disability claims
 - Mental Health Commission of Canada

My Academic Interest in Mental Health

- In 2015 I began working on a research project on health and productivity among women academics with two University of Ottawa colleagues, Drs. Ivy Bourgeault and Stephanie Gaudet
- A large percentage of the women we interviewed talked about health concerns, many of which have clear links to stress
- This early research led us to apply for funding for a Partnership Development Grant (2016-2018) under a joint SSHRC-CIHR research program, 'Healthy and Productive Knowledge Workers'
 - How do you work when your job is to think, and your thinking is adversely impacted by your mental health?

Mental Health in the Accounting Profession

- Review of the literature (academic and professional)
- Small sample online survey of 40 professional accountants
- In-depth interviews with 5 accountants and 4 stakeholder representatives
- Served as the catalyst for a for a five year Partnership Grant (2018 – 2022) to examine mental health among Professional Knowledge Workers

Preliminary Findings

Figure 1: Stress in Life in General

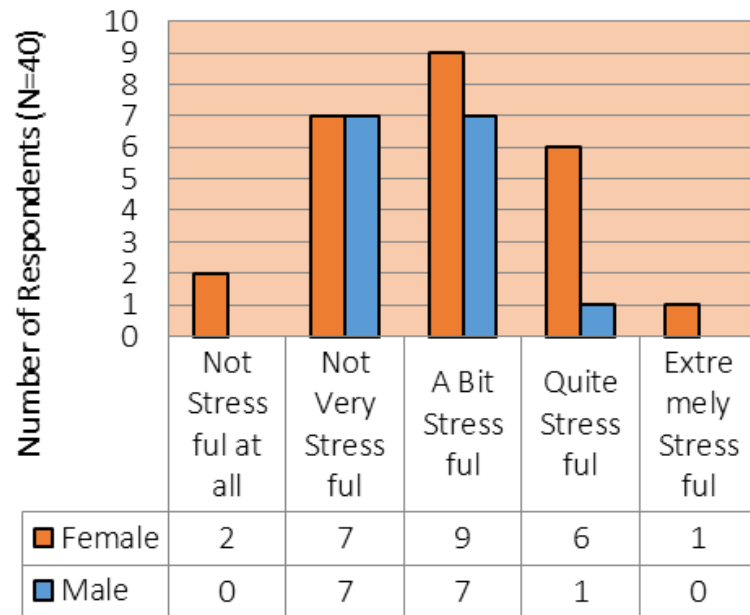
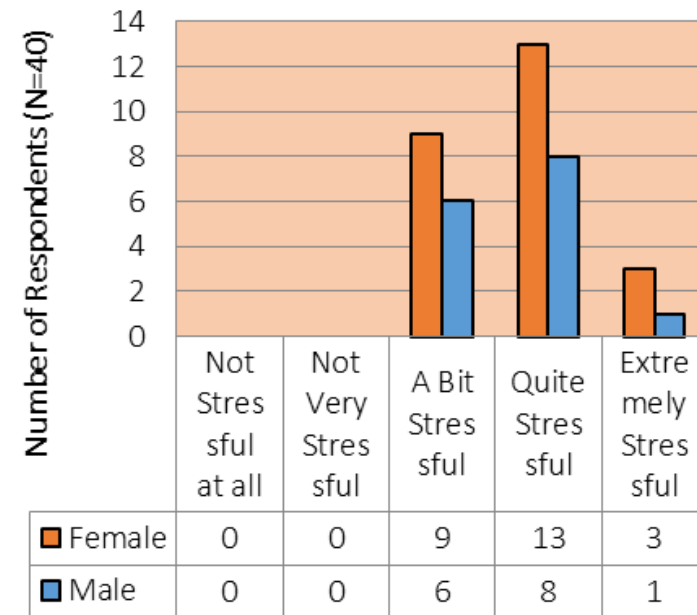
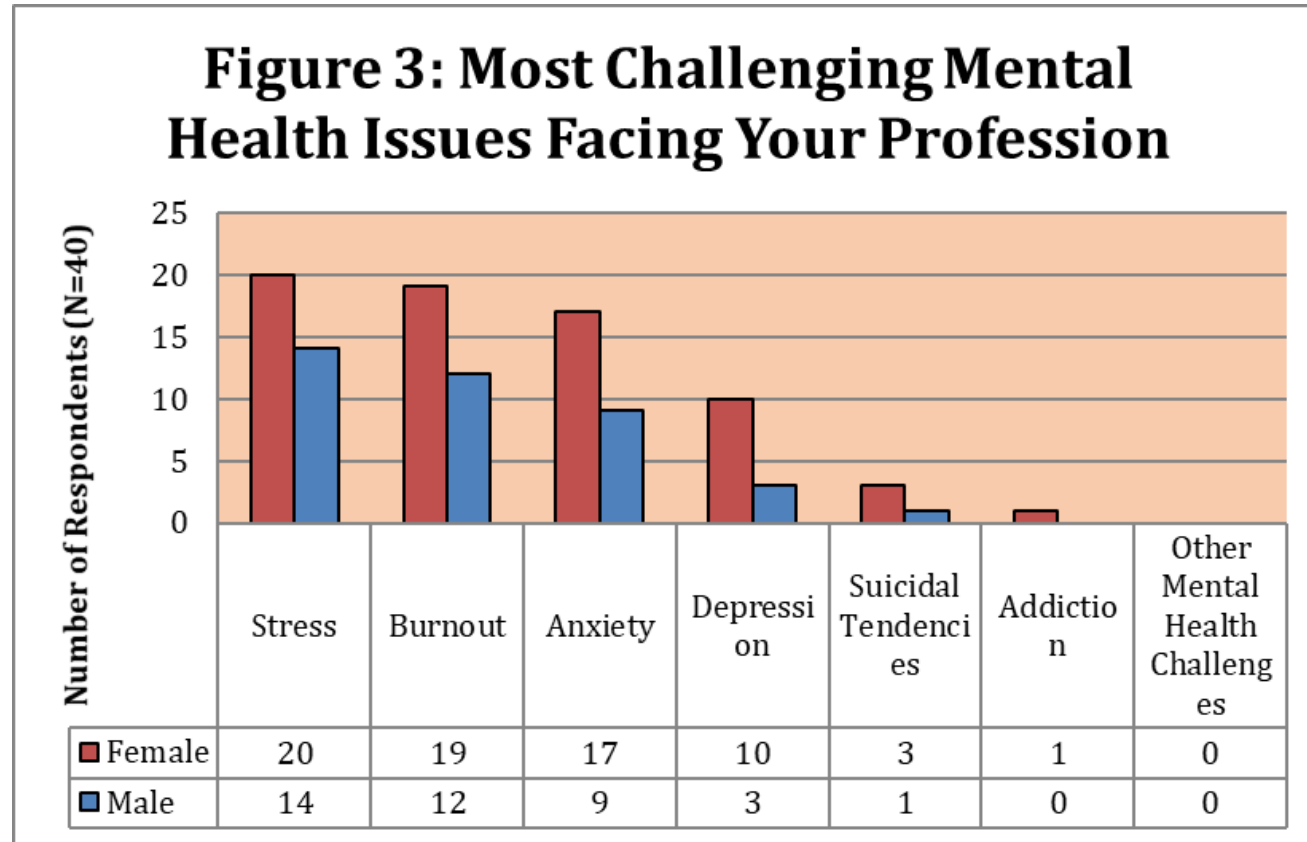


Figure 2: Stress in Worklife



Work related stress is more significant for accountants than stress related to personal or family life
 Women generally report more stress – both in general and at work

Key Mental Health Concerns in Accounting

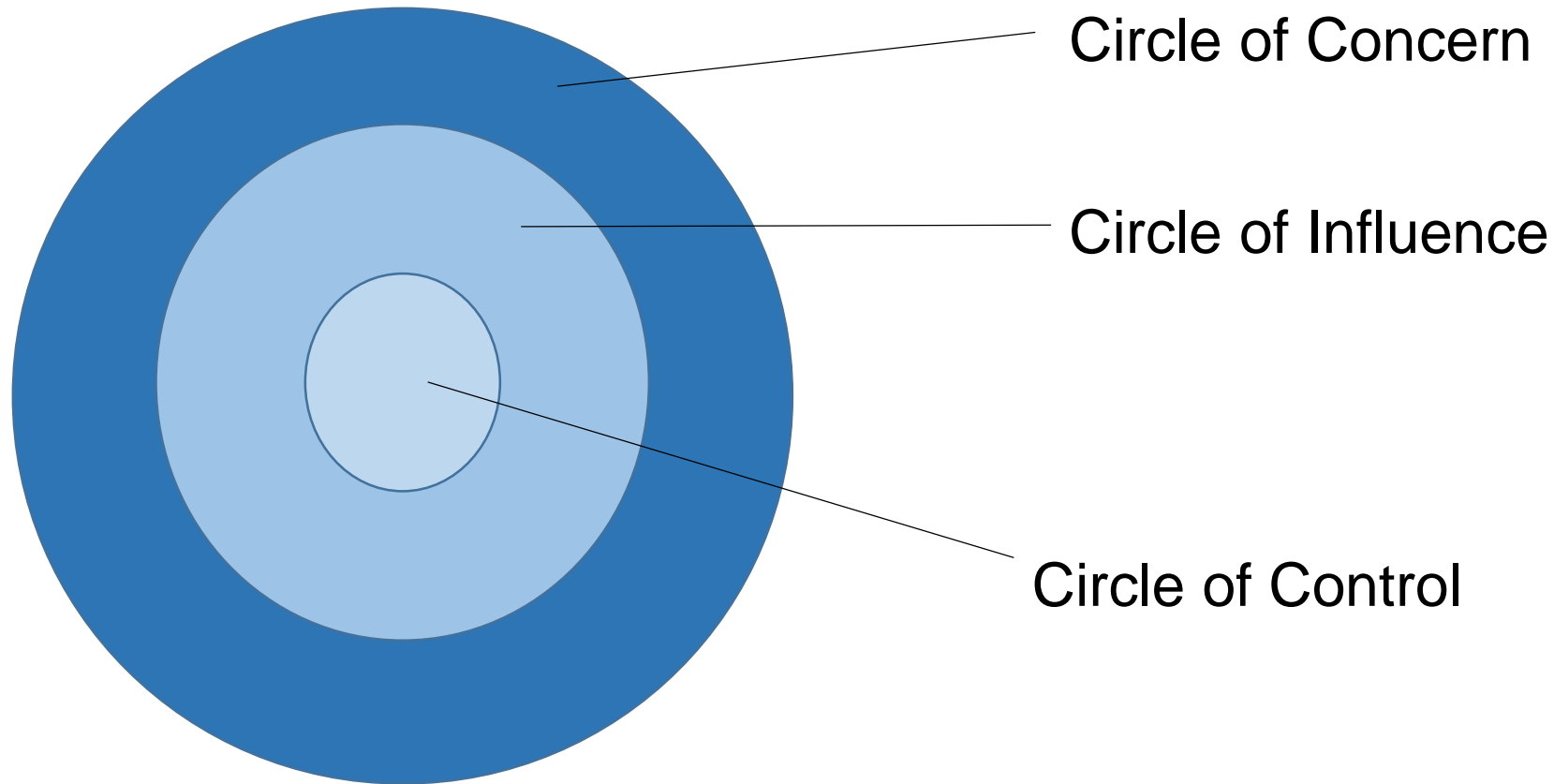


85% of respondents identified stress as one of the most challenging mental health issues facing the accounting profession, followed by 78% and 65% mentioning burnout and anxiety, respectively

Mental Health in the Accounting Profession

- 95% of respondents to the preliminary survey attributed mental health issues to work circumstances, particularly work overload
- Survey respondents identified concerns about taking advantage of available mental health programs
 - Stigma in terms of potential impact on future career
 - Programs not able to address root causes of mental health issues
- Many accountants decide to **leave** their employer and look for other job opportunities hoping for greater quality of work and life balance; less likely to take a **leave of absence** for mental health reasons
 - A number reported an absence of formal return to work programs

Tools for Resilience



Based on Dr. Stephen Covey's (1989) book "The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People"

Next Steps

- It is very important to continue the conversation we've had this morning and seek out relevant resources – **before** they are needed
- Variety of ways
 - With yourself – Plan for Resilience
 - With your colleagues – Supporting a Colleague
 - With your organization – Workplace Strategies for Mental Health
 - With researchers
 - Health Professional Knowledge Workers







Plan for Resilience

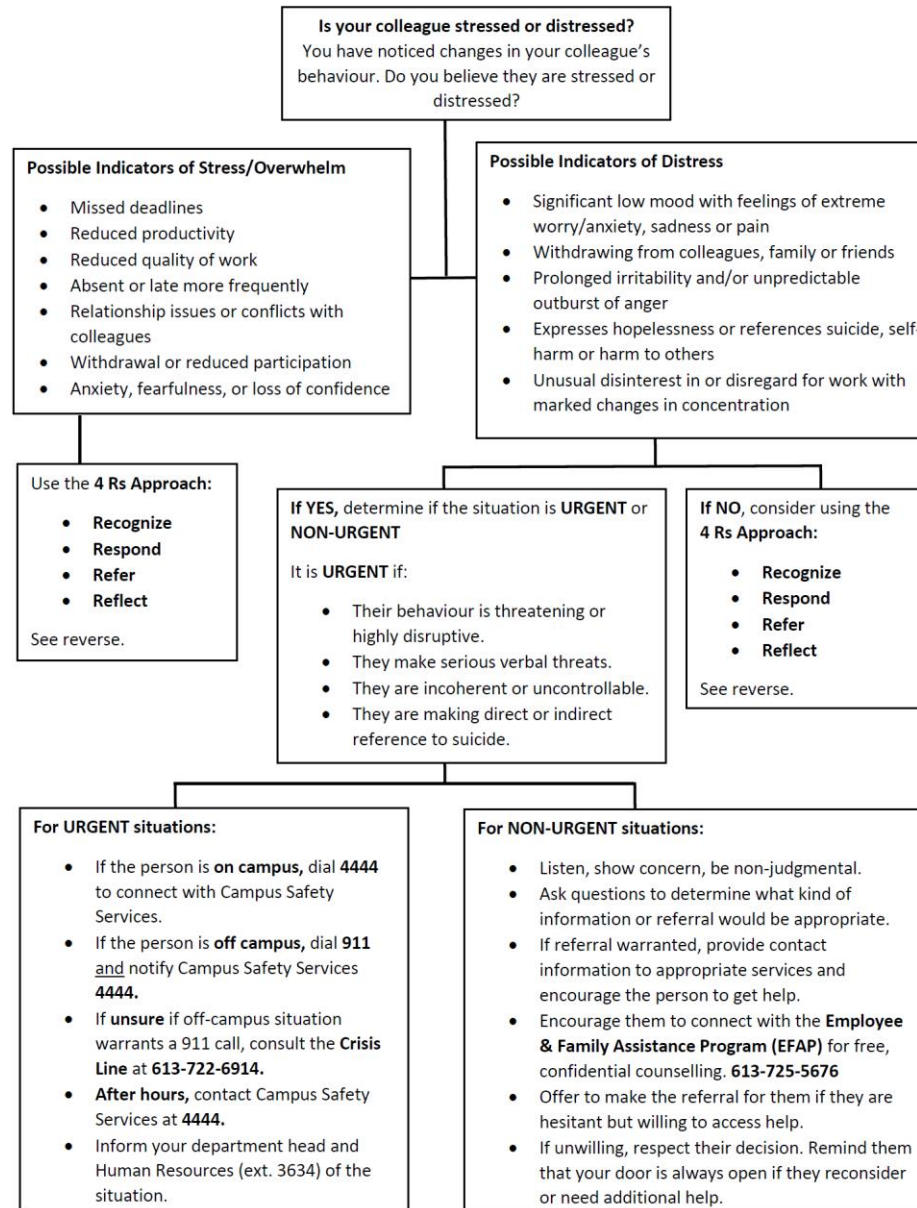
Workplace Edition

For Leaders, Employees and Self-Employed

<https://www.workplacestrategiesformentalhealth.com/employee-resources/plan-for-resilience>

<p>RECOGNIZE</p> 	<p>You may be the first person to recognize that someone is in distress or to notice a change in their typical behaviour.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trust your instincts. • It's okay to ask and express concern. • Be specific about the behaviour that worries you. <p>See reverse for possible indicators of stress, overwhelm and distress.</p>	<p>"I've noticed you seem distracted and upset lately – I'm concerned. Are you okay?"</p>
<p>RESPOND</p> 	<p>Talk with the person. Once you have recognized there may be a problem, or if others have expressed significant concern about the person, it is important to respond and let the person know you are concerned.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acknowledge: Express concern and be specific about the behaviour that concerns you. • Listen: Give your full attention and keep an open mind. • Reassure: Affirm their thoughts, feelings and experience in a sensitive and compassionate manner. 	<p>"It sounds like you're feeling overwhelmed. Can I connect you with a resource for help?"</p>
<p>REFER</p> 	<p>Encourage the person to get help and make a referral to one of the services on the back of this document. Ask if they are already connected to support.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide information about resources • Encourage help-seeking • Offer to help your colleague connect with resources <p>The person may say no to a referral or may not follow up with resources. We must respect their decision, except in the case of emergencies. Remind them that your door is always open if they reconsider or need additional help.</p>	<p>"If you'd like, we can call and book the appointment while you're here with me."</p>
<p>REFLECT</p> 	<p>After the conversation ends, it is important to support yourself and practice self-care. Seek personal support if needed, 24/7 from the Employee and Family Assistance Program provider, Family Services Ottawa at 613-725-5676.</p> <p><i>* For Managers/Supervisors/Academic Leaders: If you have observed concerning changes in behaviour in the individuals you manage/supervise, you have a legal duty to inquire. Reach out and say something. If you need support when preparing for this conversation, contact Human Resources for support in managing workplace-related health issues.</i></p>	

Supporting a Colleague: A Step-By-Step Guide



Mental Health Resources

- In an urgent situation
 - In Ottawa
 - 911
 - Mental Health Crisis Line 613-722-6914
 - Distress Line 613-238-3311
 - Nationally
 - 1-833-456-4566 (Quebec 1-866-277-3553) or crisisservicescanada.ca
- In non-urgent situations
 - Organization sponsored Employee Assistance Program
 - Canadian Mental Health Association cmha.ca
 - Workplace Strategies for Mental Health workplacestrategiesformentalhealth.com

Mental Health Resources

- Mental Health Commission of Canada mentalhealthcommission.ca
- Health Canada http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hl-vs/alt_formats/pacrb-dgapcr/pdf/iyh-vsv/life-vie/stress-eng.pdf
- Not myself today notmyselftoday.ca
- Bell Let's Talk letstalk.bell.ca
- eMentalHealth.ca
- National Standard for Canada for Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace <https://www.mentalhealthcommission.ca/English/what-we-do/workplace/national-standard>

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