



CSBT Newsletter | January 2021

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Happy New Year!

The Board of Trustees of Community Services Benefits Trust wishes each person and organization that is part of the CSBT family a happy and healthy 2021!

We are deeply aware that 2020 has been a very trying time for all of us in the community social service sector, as it has for all Canadians. And yet, we have come this far and continue to provide a high level of quality support and service that our many agencies were created to make possible.

We congratulate you, your employees, and your Boards of Directors for all you are, for all you have done, and for all you continue to do during these very trying times.

At CSBT, we want to continue to stand with you to ensure that our fellow citizens can count on us to meet their needs - wherever and whenever encountered.

Paul Wheeler, Chair, CSBT Board of Trustees
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Workplace Stress & Mental Health Webinar Recording

We were pleased to join the Ontario Disability Employment Network (ODEN) host an intimate and informative discussion on workplace stress and mental health titled '*Leadership Can Impact Workplace Stress & Mental Health*'.

We know that COVID 19 has had a significant impact on you and your employees on in the Social Service sector which impacts your health and the health of your

organization.

As leaders in the sector you may find yourself wondering how can you support your teams, the clients in your service, and yourself – all while managing the day to day operations of your organization. Watch the recording below.

[Watch the Recording Here](#)

Crucial Help during the Pandemic

Now, more than ever, employees working in community social services need strong support.

People are working in very stressful situations to provide support and care to so many deserving Canadians. Employees are doing their work despite a lack of real knowledge about where things are going. They are worried for the people they support, their families, and, themselves.

At CSBT, we know you want the best for your colleagues, and we want to help. We cannot provide PPE for each person, but there is something we can do and have been doing all along.

If you have extended health with CSBT, then your employees, except for a very few cases, have access to the LifeWorks Employee and Family Assistance Plan. Many employers are aware of how much their employees need support and are encouraging them to use LifeWorks.

We have recently received a current utilization report that tells us how many folks seek help and the types of support requested (nothing confidential is shared). I'm happy to report that the number of participant services requested has almost **doubled in the last year from just under 5% of total lives covered to 8.56%** .

Since utilization for this type of program is generally expected to be about 5%, this is a significant improvement. It means people know about their benefit and are using it as needed.

The top 5 issues leading to people reaching out to LifeWorks were:

- personal/emotional (795),
- family-related (253),
- work-related (157),
- couple/relationship (91), and
- addiction-related (29).

For these issues, the top actions taken were:

- tele counselling (544),
- in-person counselling (466),
- immediate support consultation (278),
- video counselling (43), and
- specialized support consultation (12).

Note that by a large margin, **the highest need for support was related to personal**

and emotional issues.

As we look at the in-depth information, we learn that the highest percentage of those cases were related to mental health and stress issues, much of which is exacerbated by the current Covid-19 crisis.

The leaders of social service organizations must make sure their employees know about LifeWorks and encourage them to use the service.

This is one of our gifts that keeps on giving. LifeWorks is included in most plans and can provide significant support to employees while also helping to keep your overall benefits costs down (less sick time, fewer prescription drugs, and so on).

We acknowledge that in the past, the service from LifeWorks was not as good as it should have been. LifeWorks listened to the feedback and has made tremendous improvements in every area of their program. So, now is the time to remind employees it is there and, when you know someone is struggling, give them the little card with the username and password and suggest they call.

You have got nothing to lose by encouraging people to get the help they need. And you might gain a happier, healthier employee who is better able to support the people you serve.

Three Tips to Cultivate a Positive Mental Health

The New Year marks a chance to step back, take stock, and make the changes you need to prioritize your well-being.

Good mental health is not about the absence of a mental health condition or illness, it's about feeling good about ourselves and being able to deal with life's challenges in a positive and healthy way.

Here are a few ideas of ways that you might boost your mental well-being.

- **Ease up on self-criticism.** What you think about yourself affects the way you feel. For example, when something goes wrong, try not to use harsh and negative self-talk, such as "I can't seem to do anything right here!" Instead, try to use more positive language that supports your feelings of self-worth and learning opportunities—"Adapting to different customs is tough and I'm bound to make a few blunders, but I'm getting the hang of things so I can do it."
- **Do things that bring you joy.** It's easy to feel isolated, especially if you're going through a stressful time in your work or personal life. Find time for fun. Seek out activities that you've enjoyed in the past, or try something new. Get involved with your community or volunteer to feel more connected to those around you.
- **Maintain a healthy lifestyle.** Sounds easy, but it can be challenging to eat well when you're busy. Try to make time to eat mindfully, and incorporate exercise into your daily routine. Drink more water to stay hydrated, and make sure that you have a bedtime routine that supports healthy sleep.

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