

THE ROUNDTABLE WEBSITE – 2006

Welcome

Since start-up, this site has grown in reach around the world.

Our friend Dr. Gaston Harnois at The World Health Organization Centre at McGill University tells us this site is the most frequently-visited among those dedicated to mental health in the workplace. We feel the responsibility of that.

As recent as January, 2006, we received a request from Australia for our Year 2000 Business Plan to Defeat Depression, forerunner to this comprehensive plan. This demonstrates the appetite for information on this subject.

2005: A Big Year

Momentum has gripped mental health in the workplace.

- In 2005, Watson Wyatt Worldwide declared the business case for mental health “case made”. In its prestigious “Staying@Work” survey, 58% of employers (300,000 employees) said mental health claims were their top workplace concern.

2005 was the year that:

- The National Quality Institute put mental health into its definitive healthy workplace criteria.
- Medisys Health Group launched a national Health and Productivity Council, the first of its kind in Canada.
- The BC Business and Economic Roundtable on Mental Health brought health, business, government and insurance people together and found that, yes, we can reduce short-term disabilities due to mental illnesses.

2005 was a year when:

- The Conservative and Liberals both put mental health into their plans to govern the country.
- The Parliament of Canada unanimously passed a resolution establishing mental health as one of three national disease management priorities. The other two are cancer and heart disease. Depression is linked to both.
- The Canadian Institutes for Health Research launched a long-term research initiative focused squarely on mental health in the workplace. This is unprecedented.
- The Government of Canada announced the creation of the Canadian National Mental Health Commission. The first such agency in Canadian history.

- Our Senior Chairman, Honourable Michael Wilson, was named special adviser on mental health in the federal workplace.
- The federal and provincial ministers of labour put mental health on the agenda of their intergovernmental conference in Toronto.
- The World Health Organization produced a comprehensive review of mental health policies and programs in the workplace. Dr. Gaston Harnois was the author and authenticated mental health as an international workplace concern.
- The Ontario Chamber of Commerce held the first Economic Summit on Mental Health and Productivity and distributed RT information to 57,000 employers.
- McGill University's business school – the Faculty of Management – introduced a compulsory course on mental health and productivity for its MBA students.

Website Line-up

This website now corrals the theme of Mental Health and Productivity. It includes:

- The 2006 Business and Economic Plan, the most comprehensive and frank exposition of this complicated subject.
- A roster of “*Employers in Action*” (*EIA*) to promote collaboration and ideas-testing among employee organizations.
- An information and tool kit inside the Business and Economic Plan called “*Employers Getting Started (EGS)*” – a detailed and user-friendly account of what needs to be done to arrest mental disabilities in the work force.

The Roundtable's on-line website also includes:

- A summary of Watson Wyatt Worldwide 2005 “Staying@Work Survey.
- The National Quality Institute “Healthy Workplace Award” criteria including mental health.
- The Roundtable's “Publishers for Mental Health Statement” released in 2005.
- Verbatim transcripts of our unprecedented 2002-03-04 chief and senior executive roundtables.
- Our 2004 Roadmap for Mental Disability Management, 2003 CEO Survey on Mental Health, 2003 Charter for Mental Health in the Global Economy and 2000 Business Plan to Defeat Depression which has attracted interest across Canada and outside the country since its release in Toronto and Geneva.

We draw visitors attention to a terrific “tool for managers” called “***All You Need to Know About Mental Health***” produced by IBM Canada and the Conference Board of Canada based on input from Canadian HR executives.

Eight Years Later

Since 1998, Canada has been home to the development of a business and economic strategy to promote mental health and reduce the disabling effects of depression, anxiety disorders and substance abuse.

This strategy has articulated new concepts to ground mental health in business and economic terms.

- ***Sustainable performance in a brain-based economy***

Today’s economy puts a premium on innovation. Most of the new jobs coming on stream require cerebral not manual skills. We are seeing the advent of a brain-based economy.

- ***Brain-based disorders as leading source of worker disability***

We are witness to convergence of the brain-based economy with the advent of brain-based disorders significantly concentrated among men and women in the labour force.

- ***The physical properties of mental illnesses attack the myth that such conditions are a function of imagination or character***

The website discusses these facts of mental illness:

- Life experience and genetics affect the onset of mental disorders.
- Psycho-social influences including management practices, workplace environments and economic loss do the same.
- The workplace is a venue for mental health research, early detection and intervention.
- The lack of access to adequate mental health care in the publicly-funded healthcare system, present Canadians with historic conundrums.
- Productivity losses: “Depression is draining productivity from our economy like an unseen leak in a ship at sea,” says Senior Chairman Michael Wilson. The productivity losses of mental illness are heavier than the cost of treatment.