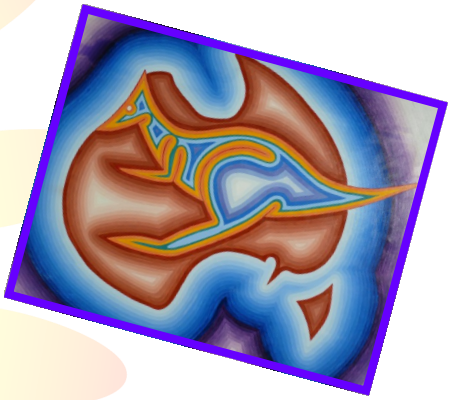
Mental Health and the Australian Workplace

The Facts

- One in five Australians will experience mental illness[1]
- In 2007, 45% of Australians between 18-85 years of age had experienced a mental disorder (anxiety, a mood disorder e.g. depression, or substance use disorder)[2]
- Studies show that each employee with untreated depression/related conditions will cost their organisation $9, 665 per year[2]
- Employment provides an income and a valuable opportunity for social engagement, which contribute greatly to self confidence and self esteem—vital for recovery from mental illness. Without support, employees experiencing mental health issues may withdraw (absenteeism) or leave



Research shows that a mentally healthy workplace can reduce the likelihood of your organisation contributing to these statistics.

MIFSA can help get you started.

MIFSA (Mental Illness Fellowship of SA)
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Workplace Education Sessions are run in partnership with the Mental Health Coalition of SA

[1] *Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2007*
[2] *beyondblue*

MENTAL HEALTH COALITION OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA

mifSA MENTAL ILLNESS FELLOWSHIP SOUTH AUSTRALIA

sharing the journey

Introducing MIFSA

Who is MIFSA?

MIFSA (Mental Illness Fellowship of SA) is a community based, not-for-profit organisation providing a range of services to people with mental illness, carers and the community since 1983. MIFSA is a member based and member driven organisation and is part of a national body (MIFA-Mental Illness Fellowship of Australia), with branches across states and territories in Australia.

More than 100 people are employed on a paid and volunteer basis across MIFSA's sites. Approximately 75% of employees have a lived experience of mental illness.

MIFSA's Vision and Mission

Our Vision is that every person with mental illness is able to make a valued contribution to society, without stigma or discrimination, due to an increased understanding and awareness of mental illness in the community and the availability of appropriate services as required.

Our Mission is to provide education, support, rehabilitation, and recovery based programs in a safe, quality environment to assist people with mental illness and their natural support network living in South Australia to enjoy the best possible quality of life.

How MIFSA is Funded

MIFSA receives annual funding from the South Australian Department of Health, South Australian Department of Families and Communities, Commonwealth Department of Health and Ageing, Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, and other grant opportunities as available.

In addition, fundraising, subscriptions and donations assist in delivering the broad range of MIFSA programs.

MIFSA Programs

- *Activity Programs (Activity Centre and in the Community)*
- *Therapeutic Groups*
- *Peer Work Program*
- *Personal Helpers and Mentors (PHaMs)*
- *Well Ways Programs (for families, carers and consumers)*
- *Self Help/Support Groups*
- *Respite Program*
- *Education Program*
- *Accommodation Advisory Service (joint project with Housing SA)*
- *Information and Resources*

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Workplace Education Sessions

Since 1993 MIFSA has provided education to more than 100, 000 South Australians, through the delivery of dynamic, relevant and informative education sessions.

We are proud to work in partnership with the Mental Health Coalition of SA to offer Workplace Education Sessions.

Session Objectives

Each topic is designed to provide the target audience with a deeper understanding of issues relating to mental health and wellbeing. We aim to raise awareness of the impact on the individual, families, colleagues, employers and the community, and offer strategies for prevention, impact reduction and recovery from mental illness.

The information provided is relevant to employers and employees in maintaining their own health and wellbeing, that of the workplace as a whole and in raising awareness of issues their clientele may be experiencing.

Session Format

All sessions begin by addressing the question, 'What Is?', before looking at the effects, the costs to the workplace and strategies for preventing or minimising the impact of particular mental health concerns. PowerPoint presentations are utilised to support the learning, with handouts of slides made available to attendees. Presenters supply additional reference material (e.g. brochures) for audience members to take at the conclusion of the session.

These sessions run for 1 ½ hours, enough time for vital learning to take place yet minimising the amount of staff down time. Sessions can be delivered in locations that suit your organisation—for example a head office, or to small groups of staff across suburban office locations. We also have access to MIFSA's conference and training facilities if you would prefer the sessions to be conducted off site.

Presenters

Workplace sessions are delivered by a qualified, experienced Adult Educator, with co facilitation provided by a trained Community Educator—someone who has a lived experience of mental illness and who will briefly share their story. This greatly enhances the information being presented and allows the audience to gain a better understanding of how particular issues impact on peoples' daily lives.

Topics

- *An Introduction to Mental Illness*
- *Beyond Monday Blues: Dealing with Depression in the Workplace*
- *Distressed or Destressed? The Choice is Yours!*
- *Holistic Health*
- *Making Sense of Challenging Behaviours*
- *The Effects of Workplace Bullying*
- *A Mentally Healthy Workplace*

With sufficient notice, we may be able to create a specific topic to meet your needs (refer to Terms and Conditions).

Session Overview

An Introduction to Mental Illness

Provides an overview of what mental illness is, the causes, signs and symptoms and who is at risk. We look at the more commonly encountered diagnoses of Mood Disorder (Depression, Mania and Bipolar Disorder); Schizophrenia; Anxiety; Psychosis and their impact on individuals and the workplace. Strategies for managing mental illness and recovery are discussed, along with suggestions for safe disclosure in the workplace and offering support to someone who is experiencing mental health issues.

Beyond Monday Blues: Dealing with Depression in the Workplace

We discuss the difference between 'the blues' and depression, exploring the causes, risk factors, signs and symptoms. Common myths and misconceptions are highlighted along with the cost to the workplace and tips for safe disclosure and management/recovery strategies.

D*i*stressed or D*e*stressed? The Choice is Yours!

A highly relevant session in any workplace context, this topic looks at healthy and unhealthy levels of stress and the implications for employees and employers. We highlight the many stressors that can trigger individuals to feel overloaded and overwhelmed, leading to stress becoming a source of distress. As a natural reaction to stress, we look at anxiety and the effects it can have on our daily life when unhealthy levels are reached. Strategies for keeping our stress and anxiety in a healthy range are discussed.

Holistic Health

This session raises awareness of the links between physical and mental health, and that care of the *whole self* is vital to our overall health and wellbeing. We look at risk factors that are known to contribute to chronic illness and impact on mental wellbeing. The presentation touches on the lifestyle and medical areas in which we can personally make positive change, with our emphasis being on how we get motivated to make and stick with our choices.

Making Sense of Challenging Behaviours

Aimed at highlighting some of the behaviours that may be present in people experiencing mental illness, as well as strategies for effective communication and management. This session has not only been popular with organisations in supporting staff, but also in understanding the often challenging behaviours of clients and customers.

The Effects of Workplace Bullying

Looks at what constitutes workplace bullying and how it differs from harassment and discrimination. We discuss the biological, psychological and social impact on the individual who is targeted and the workplace costs associated with bullying. We look at the factors that often prevent people from disclosing that they are being bullied and the possible pathway targets may follow in seeking resolution. Strategies are explored for maintaining mental wellbeing, whilst dealing with the issue. A list of SA services that are able to support victims of workplace bullying is supplied.

A Mentally Healthy Workplace

This topic explores strategies for creating a workplace that best supports the health and wellbeing of *all* employees. We discuss the benefits for all concerned and the possible detrimental effects that can result from a workplace culture that is not healthy.