

Bringing Mental Health Resources to Long-Term Care

Background

The Canadian Association for Long Term Care (CALTC) is the national voice of long-term care, with our members delivering resident-centred care services to seniors across Canada when they can no longer live at home. Since its inception in 2002, CALTC has been working together to share information, best practices, and evidence to improve the quality of care provided to residents in long-term care, no matter where they live.

The long-term care workforce has been subjected to intense stress, fear, uncertainty, public outcry, government debate, and most significantly the death of many residents in long-term care homes from uncontrolled COVID outbreaks. These experiences have been extraordinary in so many ways, that many employees have been deeply impacted. As pressures continue to change as we move through the waves of the pandemic, on top of many examples of short staffing, it is expected that many staff will have experienced emotional trauma. We know some employees in long-term care have access to a range of mental health tools, but not all. Many long-term care employers are doing their best to provide a range of mental health supports, but capacity and resources are a key concern for LTC employers as there is no budget provided for mental health resources.

Purpose

To build up the expertise within LTC homes in mental health education, homes need access to trained facilitators. By equipping homes with certified facilitators in The Working Mind Program (TWM) from the Mental Health Commission of Canada; homes will have access to deliver the training in a way that best suits their home/organization's needs.

The Mental Health Commission of Canada has customized TWM to best align with the lived experience of staff in long-term care homes. MHCC has collaborated with individuals who have worked or currently work in a home to ensure it captures the current and past experiences of staff. The LTC customization will also include videos with a long-term care staff who has recovered from mental health problem(s) and is willing to share their experiences.

With funding made available to administer training through this grant, supporting staff with mental health education helps build resiliency and retention in the workforce. TWM program aims to help individuals maintain their wellness while also supporting others living with a mental health problem or illness in a psychologically healthy and safe work setting. This program will assist employers who are interested to adopt the Psychological Health and Safety Standard in the Workplace.

The program is being evaluated by Dr. Keith Dobson, Professor of Psychology at the University of Calgary, who will look at the effectiveness of The Working Mind program, and its impact on participants. Dr. Dobson will specifically observe:

- Stigma in the workplace
- Coping and resiliency
- Asking about signs or symptoms of distress and in particular potentially post-traumatic stress symptoms (not post-traumatic stress disorder).

Accomplishments



103 trainers trained as of March 20



Customized The Working Mind Program for long-term care staff

Future Directions

With the first phase of the project completed, 160 trainers will begin training members of their teams. It is expected trainers will run at least two courses in their first year with at least 12 participants per course. Pending future government funding, more courses could run and more staff could be trained to be facilitators.

Staff from across the health care spectrum of seniors care have shown great interest in this course which is why it is strongly recommended to expand the scope of this project to reach all staff who work with the ageing population.

Minimum of 20,000 long-term care staff educated within 3 years



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for Long Term Care