

*Physical Health:
An Important Factor In Mental Health*

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Physical Health: An Important Factor In Mental Health

Physical and mental health can influence each other in complex ways that are not always well understood. This important relationship has significant implications for employees trying to build an effective health management program.



Physical Health: An Important Factor In Mental Health

Mental health is a state of psychological balance enabling an individual to maintain a subjective sense of wellbeing.

Physical health is a condition of optimal wellbeing and vitality, including freedom from disease or ailment.

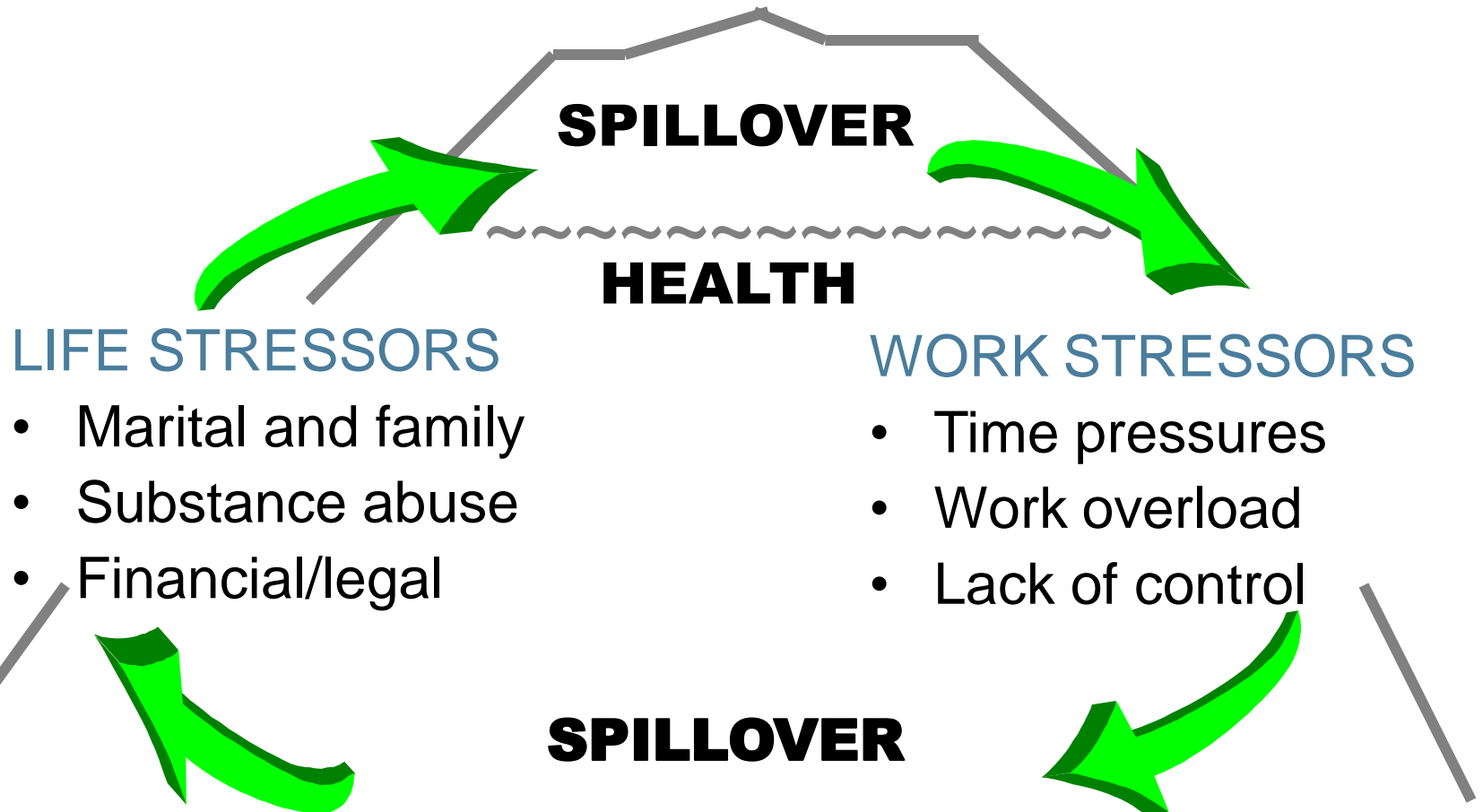


Events by themselves are not stressful.
It is how we react to them, or how we perceive them that determines whether they will cause us stress.



Sources of Stress

“Chronic high levels of stress are associated with two or three times the incidence of serious physical and mental illness.”



The Physiological Impact

“...anxious or depressed moods initiate a surge of unfavourable changes in endocrine and immune function and create an **increased vulnerability to a range of physical illnesses.**”

Too much stress weakens the immune system



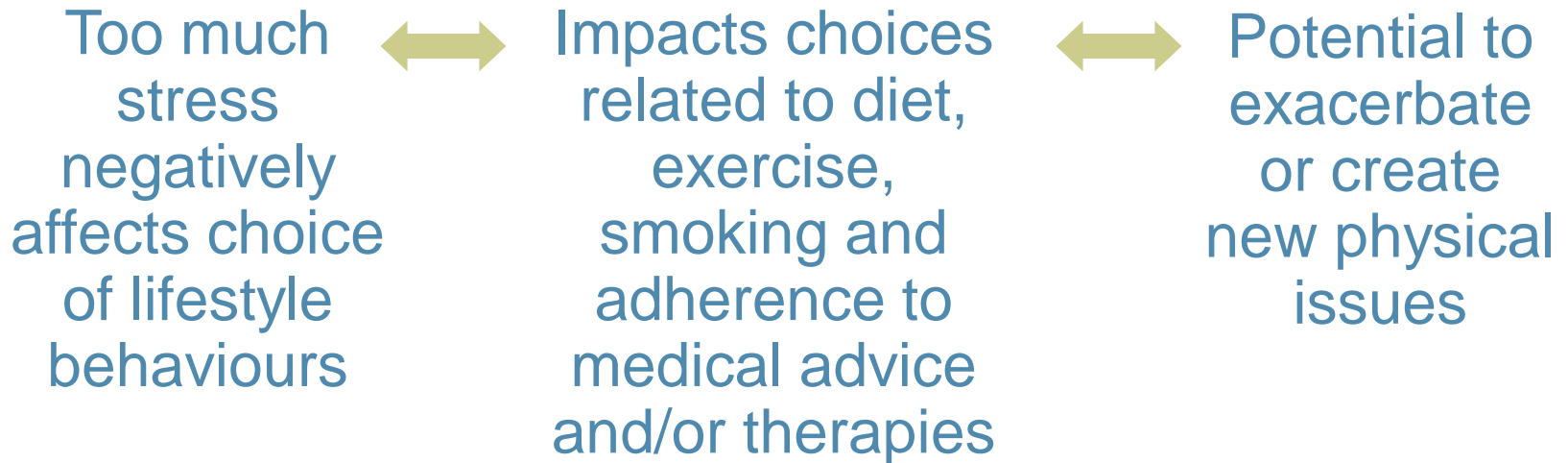
Creates vulnerability to a range of physical illnesses



More disposed to colds, coughs, urinary tract and other infections, and flare-ups of asthma and arthritis

The Behaviour Impact

“...anxious or depressed moods influence a person’s **health behaviour.**”



The Snowball Effect

Stress and other mental health issues can produce or exacerbate existing health conditions:

- Increased prevalence of chronic diseases such as diabetes, arthritis and asthma
- Increased cardiovascular disease risk due to higher prevalence(s) of physical inactivity, smoking and obesity
- Elevated cancer incidence and fatality rates
- Overconsumption of alcohol

People experiencing mental or physical issues may struggle with activities of daily living, **the stress of which can complicate or extend their recovery**

The Impact on Organizational Health

Presenteeism

- Nearly 25% of employees report not having the physical or mental energy to do their job most of the time
- Only 44% of employees report cutting back on their work when they are not well enough¹

Absences

- The average organization is spending more than \$10.5 million a year in total absence claims²
- Eight to 12% of Canada's workforce is off the job due to illness or injury and receiving some type of compensation³

¹*Driving Employee Engagement to Improve Financial Performance – 2007 WorkCanada Survey Report, Watson Wyatt*

²*Staying@Work: Effective Presence at work 2007 Survey Report, Watson Wyatt*

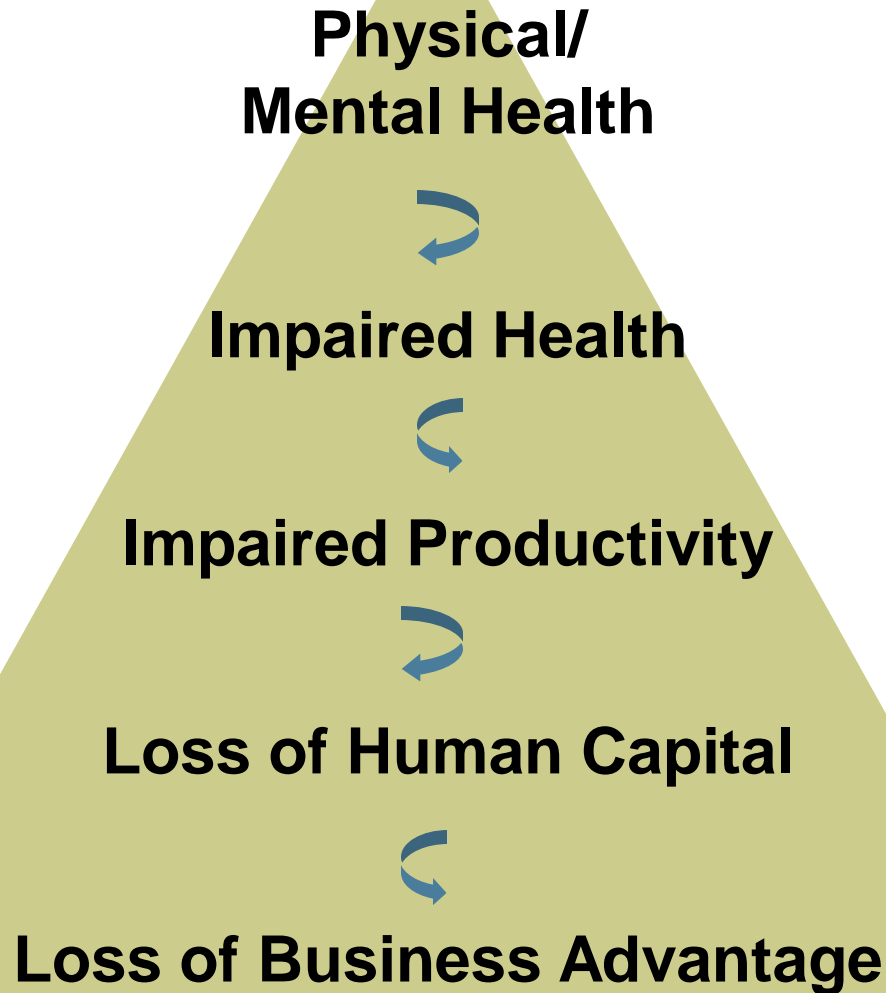
³National Institute of Disability Management and Research

The Impact on Organizational Health

Disability

- In the case of chronic physical conditions, the additional presence of chronic work stress (experienced by about a third of workers) appears to increase the probability of any type of disability day
- The proportions of individuals with a disability grows as the combination of conditions increases from no condition, to the co-occurrence of a mental disorder, a chronic physical condition, and chronic work stress

The Health and Engagement Continuum



“In many cases – even when mental illness is not the primary reason for being off work at the outset of the disability leave – depression materializes as a secondary diagnosis. If this fact goes unrecognized, the return to work could hit some rough spots.”

Best Practice Model in Health Management

Prevention

Keep healthy employees healthy

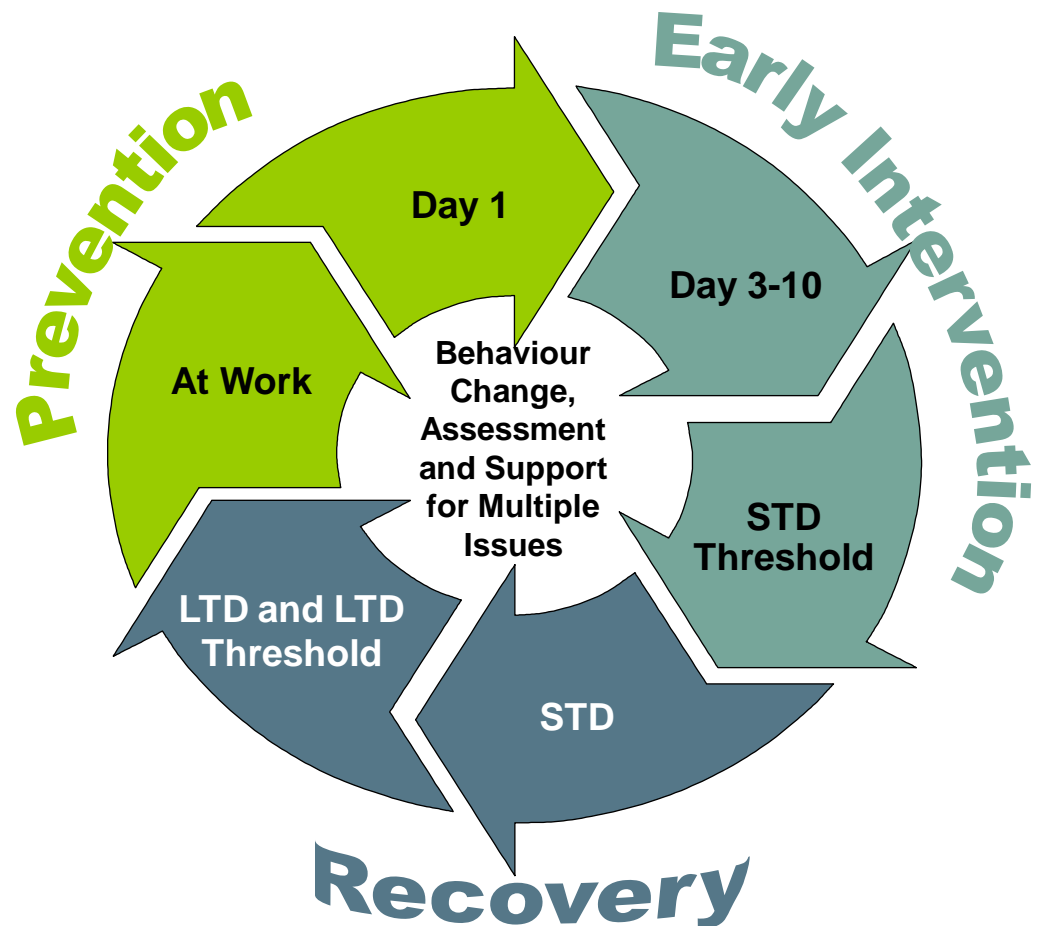
Early Intervention

Identify those at risk BEFORE condition worsens

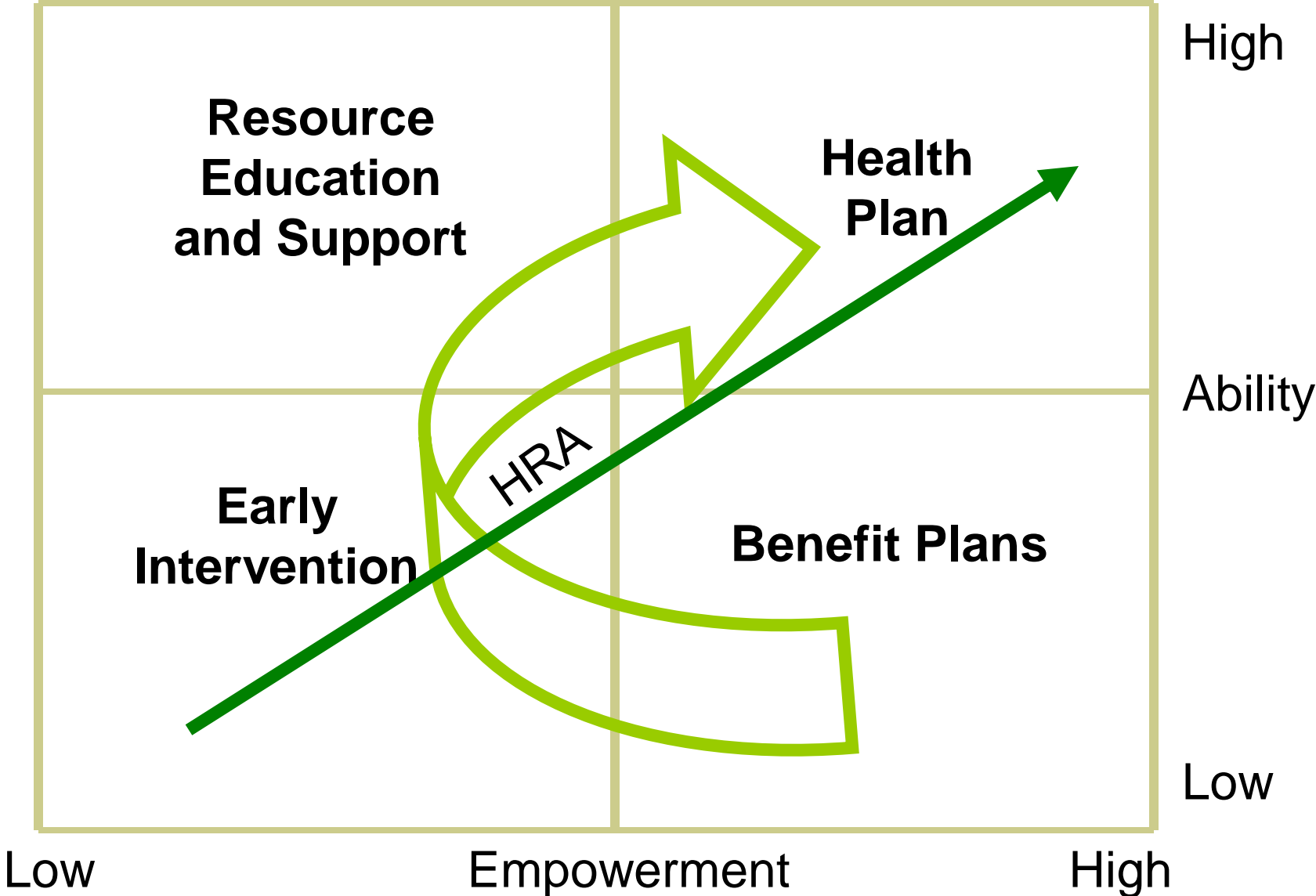
Recovery

Help employees manage chronic conditions to remain-at-work or return-to-work

Identify co-occurring mental and physical health issues



Key To Effective Health Management – Engage Employee in Health



Best Practice Model in Health Management

1) Define Objectives and Desired State

2) Identify Health Risks and the Impact on Organization

- Leading and lagging indicators
- Health cost drivers versus health issues

3) Assess Ability to Impact

- Behavior modification, demographics, readiness for change, organizational commitment

4) Identify Risk Management Strategies

- Targeted solutions that aim to reduce risk, cost and impact of issues, and build a health culture

5) Measurement & Outcomes

- Assess impact and report success
- Identify gaps and revisit model

The Business Value of a Holistic Approach

- On average, for every one dollar spent on employee medical/pharmacy costs, employers absorb two to three dollars of health related productivity costs – manifested largely in the form of presenteeism, absence and disability¹
- Companies who invest in multi-component integrated workplace health strategies experience an average reduction in sick leaves, health plan costs, workers' compensation claims and disability claims of more than 25%²

¹*Improving the Health and Productivity of the American Workforce: A Blueprint for Action*, 2008 Workforce Health and Productivity Summit

²Canadian Healthy Workplace Council and the Graham Lowe Group

Summary

- Physical and mental health is interconnected, making it necessary to have programs in place to identify co-occurring mental and physical issues at any level of complexity
- Organizations benefit from establishing a culture of health that encourages and supports employees making healthy lifestyle choices
- A holistic approach yields the greatest return and benefits and provides employees with the support and tools necessary to achieve **sustainable behaviour change**

Thank You

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