

## Workplace Depression Intervention Shown Effective



Although not common place, a phone-based, case-management workplace intervention program has been shown to effectively help workers who have depression, according to new research. A National Institute of Mental Health study published Tuesday showed that employees who took advantage of a managed care plan that emphasized a telephone-based approach to helping people find treatment for their depression had lower scores on a depression symptom checklist, were more likely to stay on the job, and worked significantly more hours than those given usual employee assistance program services.

Depression and other mental health concerns cost employers billions of dollars a year in lost productivity. “A systematic program to identify depression and

promote effective treatment significantly improves not only clinical outcomes but also workplace outcomes,” Philip S. Wang, the study’s lead investigator, and colleagues wrote. “The financial value of the latter to employers in terms of recovered hiring, training, and salary costs suggests that many employers would experience a positive return on investment from outreach and enhanced treatment of depressed workers.” The researchers studied 604 employees from 18 different companies with significant depression who were covered by behavioral health plans through their companies. Since the initial health screening was voluntary, the research was not based on a completely randomized sample population.

Half the employees were contacted through a telephone outreach program and encouraged to seek outpatient treatment — therapy, antidepressants, or both. The other half acted as a control group to gauge the effectiveness of the outreach program. Telephone case managers, who were licensed master’s degree-level clinicians employed by the managed care company, monitored quality of care.

The case managers even made suggestions to clinicians when treatment was not working. Those reluctant to enter treatment were offered a therapy program over the phone.

The study found that employees in the telephone support group fared far better than those who got routine care. They had less severe depression and they were more likely to experience recovery. About 26 percent of workers in the intervention group recovered, compared with about 18 percent in the routine care group.

“While formal estimates of cost-effectiveness and employer return on investment are pending, it appears to be in the business interests of many employers to implement such programs to protect their investments in the retention and productivity of workers they have hired and trained,” wrote the researchers in their findings.

Employees are often reluctant to seek treatment for depression through their employer for fear of a lack of confidentiality, possible recriminations, cost, and the stigma commonly associated with mental health issues such

as depression. The program paid off for companies as well. Employees in the intervention group worked an average of two hours more per week over the course of a year or about two more weeks a year compared to those who got routine care. The study offers a compelling argument for investing in depression care.

*From- psychcentral.com*

## **National Drug-Free Work Week 2007 October 14-20**

National Drug-Free Work Week 2007 will be held October 14-20, and employers and workers across the nation are encouraged to participate. The purpose of Drug-Free Work Week is to highlight the fact that being drug free is key to protecting workplace safety and health, and to encourage workers with alcohol and drug problems to seek help.

The true spirit of Drug-Free Work Week lies in activities conducted by individual employers and their employees. Ideas range from simple to comprehensive, but all help promote safer, healthier workplaces and represent wise business practices that can be implemented at any time of the year. Although Drug-Free Work Week is a dedicated time each year to place emphasis on

the importance of working drug free, in a safe and healthy workplace, every week is Drug-Free Work Week. Here are a few suggestions for how organizations of all sizes and in all industries can take part in Drug Free Work Week:

- [Implement a Drug-Free Workplace Program](#)
- [Promote your Drug-Free Workplace Program](#)
- [Train supervisors](#)
- [Educate workers](#)
- [Remind employees about the availability of EAP or MAP services](#)
- [Offer health screening](#)
- [Publicize available community treatment resources](#)
- [Review your health insurance policy](#)
- [Create a Drug-Free Workplace Display](#)
- [Feature Drug-Free Work Week in the employee newsletter or Intranet](#)
- [Distribute a payroll message listing helplines or a reminder about Drug-Free Work Week for employees](#)
- [Hold a social event celebrating safety and health](#)

*from- dol.gov/asp*

### **Looking for Sound Financial Advice? Look to Psychology**

Psychologist, Kahneman and Tversky, laid the foundation for the new science of behavioral economics with their work on human judgment and

decision-making. They explored phenomena such as "loss aversion," decision "framing," and overconfidence, which can lead people to make self-defeating financial choices. One area of behavioral economics that is playing an important role is in the study of financial markets, which explores how informed people might make more rational investment decisions through behavioral economics.

Behavioral economics is a science that does a good job of explaining how money behaves if all of us made rational financial decisions. This is a new science that recognizes we don't always make rational decisions, and helps explain how real people behave around money, which in turn, can help people avoid unwise money moves.

Behavioral economics is helping people get the most out of their investments by showing that employees could more than triple their saving rates by putting in use the same behavioral tendencies, such as procrastination, that lead people to postpone saving indefinitely. Behavioral economics can also help us understand the less than logical money decisions we sometimes make in our everyday lives.

*from- psychologymatters.org*