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Meeting employees where they are: The rise of workplace mental health services

Gaddy Noy, Ravi Navin Shah

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Abstract

Many key organizations have called attention to the importance of addressing workplace mental health. In this Open Forum piece, two academic psychiatrists present recommendations from their experiences providing psychiatric care in a corporate setting. A literature review using the PubMed database was performed. The search found no peer review articles that discuss the topic of employer-sponsored mental health services outside of traditional employee assistant programs. Based on first-hand experience, the authors of this forum describe key issues and best practices to ensure employer-sponsored mental health services are a successful treatment for patients and mental health providers alike.

Key Words: Employer sponsored mental health; Employee mental health; Psychiatry; Corporate wellness; Workplace mental health; Mental health

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Core Tip: The importance of mental health has been ever present in our society and has been highlighted during the stress of the coronavirus disease 2019 pandemic. As corporations continue to recognize the value of a mentally healthier workforce for their employees, their business and their bottom line, it would behoove corporate business to implement embedded psychiatric services with integrated models and enhance the wellness of their community; providing easy access, affordable and timely mental health services. Our experience sheds light on the benefits these services can offer.

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INTRODUCTION

Many key organizations, including the Centers for Disease Control, World Health Organization, and American Psychiatric Association have called attention to the importance of addressing workplace mental health[1-3]. Employers recognize the toll of mental illness on their employees (less productivity, increased absenteeism, increased substance use, increased medical comorbidities)[4]. As the idea that a mentally well workforce is good for the bottom line has gained more traction, a growing cadre of corporations are contracting with mental health companies like Modern Health (valued at > \$1 billion), Lyra Health (valued at > \$2 billion), Ginger (valued at > \$1 billion), Spring Health (valued at \$200-500 million), and others to provide mental health services directly on-site or *via* telehealth as an employee benefit[5]. These employer-sponsored mental health services create a platform in which corporations link employees to mental health providers (therapists and/or prescribers) *via* either employee assistance programs or in-network service providers.

CONCLUSION

The importance of mental health has been ever present in our society and has been highlighted during the stress of the coronavirus disease 2019 pandemic. As corporations continue to recognize the value of a mentally healthier workforce for their employees, their business and their bottom line, it would behoove corporate business to implement embedded psychiatric services with integrated models and enhance the wellness of their community; providing easy access, affordable and timely mental health services. Our experience sheds light on the benefits these services can offer.

FOOTNOTES

Author contributions: Noy G and Shah RN contributed equally to this work.

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