

**December
2011**

In this Issue...

[Poor Mental Health
Harming Productivity](#)

[Burnout: Signs and
Strategies for Non-
Profits](#)

[Toronto Distress
Centre - Top Charity
Intelligence Pick](#)

[Education Committee
Members Wanted](#)

Upcoming Events

SOV 2012
Nominations
Packages
Distributed
January 2012

ED Exchange:
March 20, 2012 -
Pickering/401 area

June 20, 2012 -
London/401 area

November 15, 2012 -
Oakville/
Mississauga/QEW
area

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Froehliche Weihnachten. Sun nien fai lok. Xin nian yu kuai. Štastný Nový. Chronia Polla. Godt Nytår. Gelukkig Nieuwjaar. Onnellista uutta vuotta. Joyeux Noël. Shinnen Omedeto. Kurisumasu Omedeto. Sung Tan Chuk Ha. Bada Din Mubarak Ho. Hyvää Joulua. Anamikaadiwi-giizhgad. Happy Hanukkah. Buone Feste. Wesolych Swiat Bozego Narodzenia. God Jul. Sawatdee Pi Ma. Chúc Mung Nam Moi. Sarbatori Fericite. Trevlig Helg. Boas Festas. Sretni praznici. Beannachtaí na Féile. Blwyddyn Newydd Dda. С наступающими праздниками. Feliz Navidad. Voorspoedige nuwe jaar. Maligayang Pasko.

*Happy Holidays
from Distress Centres Ontario*

Poor Mental Health Harming Productivity

One in five workers suffer from a mental illness such as depression or anxiety and these conditions increasingly affect productivity in the workplace as many struggle to cope, according to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).



OECD's report, *Sick on the Job? Myths and Realities about Mental Health at Work* found people with mental illness are often off sick from work, and between 30 and 50 percent of all new disability benefit claims in OECD nations are now due to poor mental health. Two studies published earlier this year found that up to 40 percent of Europeans suffer from mental and neurological illnesses each year, and the annual cost of brain disorders is almost 800 billion euros.

Depression alone is already a major cause of death, disability and economic burden worldwide and the World Health Organisation predicts that by 2020 it will be the second leading contributor to the global burden of disease across all ages.

The report suggests that health systems in most countries were narrowly focused on

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treating people with severe disorders such as schizophrenia, who account for only a quarter of all sufferers. Around 50 percent of people with severe mental disorders and more than 70 percent of those with moderate illness currently get no treatment at all.

The OECD urged policymakers to focus on providing good working conditions which help employees reduce and manage stress, to introduce systematic monitoring of sick leave, and to help employers reduce workplace conflict and avoid unnecessary dismissal caused by mental health problems.

[back to the top](#)

Burnout: Signs and Strategies for Every Nonprofit Professional

By Jodie Shupac

"Burnout" is emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and a reduced sense of personal accomplishment, especially prevalent in the social services and not-for-profit sectors.



Given a greater emotional involvement in their work, service staff are more susceptible to burnout.

By recognizing triggers and symptoms, nonprofits can establish support systems to alleviate or stave off burnout, both at a managerial and institutional level.

Triggers

Dr. Patricia Fisher is a clinical psychologist who runs a company offering assessment, consultation, and employee wellness services to high-stress workplaces. Dr. Fisher cites a heavy work load and minimal resources as triggers for burnout.

"[Human beings] are... not designed to do very well is stay in high levels of chronic stress response, and that's where we start getting into all the really big long-term health consequences."

Keith Harding is regional director of Ontario FSEAP, a national social enterprise that provides employee assistance programs to hundreds of nonprofits. Harding says burnout is increasingly prevalent sector-wide due to an unrelenting shortage of resources.

Signs and symptoms

As many of you know, extreme stress in the workplace can alter an employee's attitude and physical health, causing a person to feel constantly tired, irritable, or have difficulty adapting to change.

Other indicators are if an employee suddenly takes a slew of sick days but doesn't

report a major illness, is unable to keep up with phone calls and paper work, and demonstrates that seeing clients has become a chore.

Dr. Fisher says the past few years have seen an explosion of biological, physiological, neurological and immunological research on burnout. Studies show stress creating compromised immune systems, which can in turn lead to a litany of physical and mental problems, including anxiety, depression, concentration and memory difficulties.

Support from managers

To nourish strong relationships between staff and supervisors, managers should work to ensure a safe and respectful workplace environment by engaging staff in regular discussions about workload and giving recognition on a day-to-day level. Giving anonymous surveys to check in about job satisfaction, stress levels, salary and quality of supervisors is also advisable.

Grant says managers can normalize burnout by talking openly about burnout and offering staff dealing with stress strategies to continue to work effectively, like rotating staff and even taking short-term leave of absences.

Prevention strategies

Dr. Fisher maintains that access to organizational support systems, employee assistance, and workplace wellness programs are ideal to cope with burnout. Having good sick leave and vacation policies - and encouraging staff to actually take those days off - is fundamental, and staff should never be penalized for missing work to attend a therapy appointment.

Dr. Fisher agrees that a workplace lacking outlets for socializing is "a great recipe for burnout," and leads to inefficiency.

A good manager preemptively models working hard, taking substantial breaks and leaving the office at appropriate times. Further, an ideal manager or director refrains from sending emails after work hours, alleviating any expectation for staff to work into the night.

While every individual responds to stress differently, by building social elements, strong communication and support networks into the workplace, organizations stand a better chance at developing the resilience needed to combat burnout.

For the full story, please click [here](#).

[back to the top](#)

Distress Centres Toronto - A Charity Intelligence Top Pick

[Charity Intelligence Canada](#) researches and analyzes Canadian charities to help donors make better giving decisions by creating a balanced giving portfolio that reflects their giving interests and the changes they hope to achieve through their donations. CI helps donors give better and get higher returns on their gifts, based on researched evidence, not on emotion.



Toronto Distress Centres has been identified as one of 33 outstanding Canadian charities.

Charity Intelligence's analysis goes beyond plain subjectivity or narrow financial analysis to dig deeper to arrive at those charities proven to be the best in their field - not just 'do gooders' but 'good doers', too.

Ci researches and assesses Canadian charities' missions, theories of change, result histories, and management. This year, Ci identified 33 outstanding Canadian charities for their leadership, cost-efficiency and their bottom-line results in getting the job done in helping their clients. We are pleased to report that the Distress Centres Toronto (DCT) are among these 33 top charities in 2011!

DCT impressed Ci for several reasons:

- The lean centre carries administrative costs at 2% of total charity value and fundraising costs at 10% of total donations;
- DCT efficiently handled 120,000 calls in 2010, with 79% of crisis calls answered within the timeframe allotted by the Ontario Ministry of Health;
- 95% of Survivor Support Program participants reported immediate reduced vulnerability and risk for coping with loss from suicide/homicide, 73% reported reduced vulnerability and long-term risk, and 83% of program users improved functioning and pain management upon completion of the program to re-engage and function more effectively;
- DCT offers community consultation and outreach on suicide prevention, a resource library and support for persons dealing with a homicidal death through their Homicide Bereavement Programme;
- As the oldest 24-hour crisis response and suicide prevention helpline in Canada, the strong and experienced team behind DCT forms community partnerships to adapt to the changing needs of the community and is the source of information on current social trends, issues, and service gaps to those in need.

"Distress Centres is honoured to be one of the chosen 33 Recommended Charities by Ci."

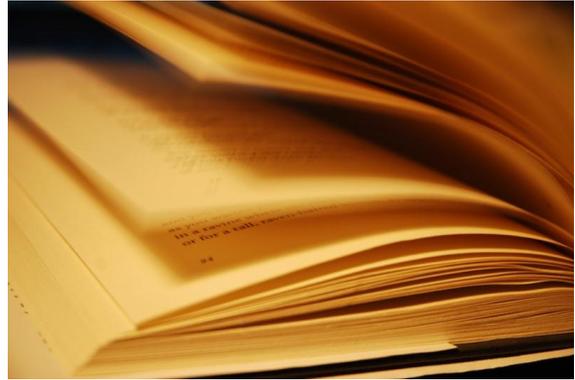
-Karen Letofsky, Executive Director, Distress Centres Toronto

Read the full report [here](#).

[back to the top](#)

A Call for New Education Committee Members

Are you looking for a forward moving committee to join? Do you like to share your insightful ideas that make a change for your volunteers? Are you interested in the training needs of your colleagues and call responders? Are you willing to commit to 1 ½ hours per month? If you have answered yes to these questions, then the DCO Education Committee is looking for you!



In the coming year you will have opportunities to share your ideas and give input on topics for Lunch and Learn webcasts, webinar series aimed at ongoing professional development for all crisis and distress line responders, deciding topics for Learning Forums, and liaising with the 1-800Suicide Ontario Training Committee. You will be able to use your creative ideas for upcoming networking events and share information regarding the exciting training strategies that you use at your centre.

If you are interested in becoming a member of the Education Committee, please email Lynn Brewin, DCO Education Coordinator at: lbrewin@dcontario.org who will gladly bring your name forward to the committee.

[back to the top](#)