



Making Mental Health Awareness A Priority in the Workplace



OVERVIEW

As part of their overall commitment to diversity and inclusion, Vancity is dedicated to ensuring that mental health awareness is a priority for its organization. In 2020, Vancity adopted a full Mental Health Strategy which is supported by an Executive Sponsor and has hired a fulltime Mental Health Consultant as a dedicated resource to implement all elements of the Strategy.

OBJECTIVES

- To ensure that Vancity has comprehensive and curated policies, protocols, training, metrics, and resources to increase the awareness of the importance of mental wellbeing and resilience on a proactive and preventative basis.
- Through communications, resourcing, and education:
 - Increase employee awareness of the importance of mental wellbeing and resilience.
 - Reduce stigma surrounding mental health issues.
 - Help employees identify their own mental wellness needs and develop their personal mental wellness toolkit.
 - Equip people leaders with relevant tools to promote mental wellness in their leadership and management, including knowing where to go for assistance with mental health issues among their team.
 - Reduce suffering related to mental health issues, with the aim of reducing the human and other costs they cause.

APPROACH

Included in the Strategy are several initiatives detailed below.

- Working Minds training for people leaders in 2021 with a plan to expand to all employees in 2022.
- Improved utilization of Employee Family Assistance Programs (EFAP) and communication with LifeWorks management to ensure high level of service to Vancity employees.
- Communicating availability of counseling extended health benefits.
- Regular meetings and participation in employee advisory group on mental health.
- Formalized Mental Health First Aid Provider Program through the Mental Health Commission of Canada; expanded number of Mental Health First Aid providers.
- Dedicated Mental Health page on InSite for ease of access to mental health resources.
- Partnership with CAMH over a 3-year period to learn and benefit from its expertise and resources.
- Implementation of Akira virtual health app for all Vancity employees and their immediate family members, free of charge.

Working Minds Training and Extended Health Benefits

Vancity has the goal of training all its people leaders in the Working Minds Training developed by the Mental Health Commission of Canada and once this is complete, the goal is to offer mental health training for all Vancity employees. Vancity is promoting the availability of counseling benefits available through its extended health plan.

Better Utilizing EFAP

Vancity is leveraging their EFAP in different situations, especially relating to COVID mental health issues.

Employee Advisory Group: Mental Health

Vancity has created an employee advisory group on mental health. The objective of this group is to gain insights from people with lived experiences with mental health. This group will help advise Vancity on how the organization can support employees with mental health challenges.

Mental Health First Aid Provider

Vancity has increased the number of employees trained as Certified Mental Health First Aid Providers through the Mental Health Commission of Canada. The certified provider helps people through mental health crisis including: intervention, immediate support and guidance, and having conversations about mental health. The Program is formalized with dedicated intranet advertising.

OUTCOMES

Vancity has seen an increased awareness from employees on mental health. The organization profiles mental health frequently, recognizing the issue, the seriousness and the effects. Vancity is continuing to monitor progress towards their objectives.

LESSONS LEARNED

Vancity has learned a great deal during their journey, and some of their key lessons learned are detailed below.

Know What Resources You Have Access to

There are mental health initiatives that have a budget associated with them, and other activities that are easier to implement with a very low/no budget. Knowing what resources you have access to can help determine what initiatives you choose to implement.

It Is an Ongoing Commitment

Vancity knows that in order for their initiatives and activities to have a lasting impact, it requires an ongoing, organizational commitment. Ensuring the conversation continues, remains relevant, and happens throughout the organization is part of that ongoing commitment.

Proactive vs Reactive

There is tremendous value in addressing mental health preventatively, before issues turn into crises. Vancity is increasingly trying to do more in preventing mental health crises by supporting employees early on and proactively.

NEXT STEPS

Vancity is committed to mental health awareness in the workplace. In addition to continuing the activities listed above, they are really looking to leverage their employee resource group to help advise the organization on how to support people with mental health. They are also working towards



having more people trained in Working Minds, Mental Health First Aid, Mindfulness, and having their managers trained in how to better support employees struggling with mental health challenges.