

Mental Health in the Workplace



Target Groups Unit

InFocus Programme on Skills, Knowledge and Employability

ILO's Primary Goal

Decent Work

Promote opportunities for women and men, including those with disabilities, to obtain decent and productive work in conditions of freedom, equity, security and human dignity.



Target Groups Unit

InFocus Programme on Skills, Knowledge and Employability

Background

- **610 million people with disabilities – 386 million of working age**
- **High unemployment**
- **Disability benefit costs – high and raising economic cost of exclusion – exorbitant**



Definition

ILO Convention No. 159 (1983) on Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment of Disabled Persons:

«...an individual whose prospects of securing, retaining and advancing in suitable employment are substantially reduced as a result of a duly recognized physical or mental impairment»



Implementing Decent Work

- **International labour standards**
- **Policy advice**
- **Technical assistance**
- **Research**
- **Publications**



Target Groups Unit

InFocus Programme on Skills, Knowledge and Employability

The ILO and Mental Health Issues

- The promotion of a healthy workforce
- The promotion of decent work opportunities for people who have not been able to find jobs or who have lost their jobs due to a mental health difficulty



Mental Health in the Workplace: Situation Analyses



Purpose of the Situation Analyses

- **Examine the scope and impact of mental health difficulties in the workplace**
- **Examine mental health policies and programmes affecting the workforce and the workplace**
- **Examine the role of the various partners: government, employer and employee organisations, NGO's**
- **Provide basis for future ILO activities**



Methodology

- **Definition of terms and conceptual framework**
- **Five countries selected: Finland, Germany, Poland, UK, US**
- **Hired country specific consultant**
- **Literature review and interviews**



FINDINGS

Target Groups Unit
InFocus Programme on Skills, Knowledge and Employability



Size of the Problem

« At any given time, it is estimated that approximately 20% of the adult population have a mental health problem »

- Incidence and costs have risen during the last decade
- Often underreported and underestimated
- Job stress ranked among the most common work related health problem
- Stigma & Social Exclusion



Costs Associated with Mental Health Problems

« The costs associated with mental health difficulties are a common concern in all five countries »

- **Direct costs – sick pay, disability pensions, medical treatments, recruiting and training replacement staff**
- **Indirect costs - reduced productivity, high rates of staff turnover, low morale**



Legislation

« **Legislative framework is often the basis of national differences in dealing with mental health issues** »

- **UK & US – anti-discrimination legislation in employment for people with disabilities**
- **Finland, Germany, and Poland – numerous overlapping laws & policies**



Access to Services

- **Lack of parity in resources provided for mental health versus physical health**
- **Lack of parity in health insurance coverage**



The Role of Government and the Social Partners

- **Competent Authorities**
- **Employers**
- **Employers' Organisations**
- **Workers' Organisations**
- **Non-governmental
Organisations**



Progress to Date

- **Growing awareness and recognition**
- **Legislation**
- **Development of programmes**
- **Social partners taking steps to address these issues**



Remaining Concerns

- **Reduce stigma**
- **Increase parity in mental health services and health benefits**
- **Increase promotion, prevention and rehabilitation programmes**

