

Walking the talk on employee mental health

From the ground-breaking expansion of our internal support for employee mental health, to our introduction of an integrated, strategic approach to supporting the mental, physical and financial wellbeing of our clients, 2016 was a watershed year for our organization – one that reinforced our continued leadership in the mental health area.

2016 was a busy year. With support from our Integrated Health Solutions team, we were thrilled to introduce a new, integrated approach to the three areas of health – physical, mental, financial. A key part of this approach was the development of our industry-leading online Workplace Mental Health Risk Assessment, in conjunction with world-renowned researcher Dr. Arla Day.

The Assessment measures an organization's mental health support, and covers all 13 factors contained in the Mental Health Commission of Canada's National Standard on Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace. It's an essential element in helping organizations determine next steps; specifically, their areas of need and focus – and their long-term strategy in addressing employee mental health and overall wellbeing. To date we have seen great success with clients, some of Canada's most recognized workplaces, which are leveraging the Assessment in order to define their own organizational health strategy and action plan.

Raising the bar on support for employee mental health

Just as importantly for our organization, we used the Assessment and strategic process internally at Sun Life – a process that enhanced the way we approach mental health with our own employees.

Almost nine months ago, on May 1, 2016, we made significant enhancements to our Employee Flexible Benefit plan. We increased the psychology benefit maximum from \$1,200 up to \$10,000 or \$12,000 per claimant, based on the coverage option elected, expanded the list of eligible practitioners, and aligned our EAP provider with our eligible provider list to ensure continuity of care.

This action truly raised the bar on support for employee mental health. This move is part of an integrated health strategy that focuses on mental, physical and financial wellness. This includes targeted support for chronic conditions, and health insights and action plans at the business unit level. We are leveraging work on the Canadian strategy to develop a framework for implementation of a Global Wellness Strategy for Sun Life.

As part of an overall integrated organizational health strategy, this type of action is central to increasing access to resources, decreasing stigma, and sending a strong message of our commitment to employee mental health.

Group Benefits are provided by Sun Life Assurance Company of Canada, a member of the Sun Life Financial group of companies.



More to come

Our innovations in support of employee mental health are continuing, and we'll be launching new initiatives this coming year. As an organization, we're proud to lead the way in our support of employee mental health – and in serving the needs of organizations across the country in support of their mental health initiatives.

Questions?

Contact your Sun Life Financial group benefits representative.