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DEVELOPING A PSYCHOLOGICALLY HEALTHY WORKPLACE:

HOW TO APPLY CLINICAL EXPERTISE TO BUSINESS SETTINGS

Mergers, downsizing, multi-national competition, rapid growth, personal financial uncertainty, relocations and information overload can affect employees' morale, job satisfaction and retention. Members of the American Psychological Association (APA) can apply clinical expertise to business settings by participating in the awarding of The Psychologically Healthy Workplace Award. The psychologically healthy workplace award recognizes organizations that address these concerns and the compounding societal issues facing employees today.

Together, work stress and family issues can affect an employee's ability to cope and be productive in the workplace. Work stress may lead to absenteeism, higher health care costs, turnover and lost productivity, all of which impact a company's bottom line.

According to a 2000 poll by the American Psychological Association, two-thirds of both men and women say work has a significant impact on their stress level, and one in four has called in sick or taken a "mental health day" as a result of work stress. According to the Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine, health care expenditures are nearly 50% greater for workers who report high levels of stress.

An organization that recognizes these issues and strives to address them not only helps its employees but also helps itself. When workers can manage stress and balance their work and their life, their productivity is not compromised - it is improved. A psychologically healthy workplace increases workers' job satisfaction and loyalty to their employer.

The Psychologically Healthy Workplace Award recognizes organizations that make a commitment to programs and policies that enhance the quality of the whole work environment for their employees.

Promoting and implementing policies that create a psychologically healthy workplace pays off, both in an improved work environment and bottom-line savings. Data suggest that companies whose workers perceive that their employer is concerned about their well-being fared better in competing for and retaining outstanding employees. Companies that don't, also feel the impact.

Job stress is estimated to cost U.S. industry \$300 billion annually, as assessed by absenteeism, diminished productivity, employee turnover, direct medical, legal and insurance fees.

A Psychologically Healthy Workplace has many characteristics that a member of the American Psychological Association (APA) can identify and recognize.

What is the Psychologically Healthy Workplace Award?

The Psychologically Healthy Workplace Award is sponsored by state psychological associations and supported by the American Psychological Association. They recognize organizations that make a commitment to workplace well-being and creating a psychologically healthy work environment for employees. Awards may be given to large, small, for-profit and not-for profit organizations based on the following criteria:

- o Employee Involvement
- o Family Support
- o Employee Growth and Development
- o Health and Safety

If you know of any organization that is addressing any of the above issues, they are eligible to apply for the Psychologically Healthy Workplace Award. An application is available from the Montana Psychological Association Executive Director.

Why Should Organizations Apply?

Psychologically Healthy Workplace Award winners benefit from positive exposure. Winners may be:

- o Featured in the media
- o Promoted in company internal and/or external communications vehicles
- o Honored at special awards events
- o Recognized by community leaders