CASE STUDIES & RESEARCH

How a Health Authority Reduced Absenteeism by 10% in Less Than Six Months

With Starling Minds, one of Canada's largest regional health authorities were able to transform their disability and absence management programs and remove their greatest barriers to evidence-based mental healthcare within their workforce. By coupling our digital platform with their existing face-to-face therapy programs, their disability and absence management teams were able to provide employees immediate access to effective mental health support to circumvent long referrals and wait times.

The Background

Absence and disability teams help manage significant risks for organizations. They are critical in helping people navigate the healthcare system while also advocating for needed accommodations. On average, case managers handle between 30 – 100+ files leading to a significant amount of administrative tasks and paperwork; a critical problem as case managers tend to spend more time on paperwork than getting employees the help and support they need.

Given that mental health, comorbidity, and workplace stressors are driving up disability costs, employees often lack the resources and support they need to help them manage stress, anxiety,

or depression. In most circumstances, having effective case management helps expedite access to effective mental healthcare.

Despite society's growing openness to talk about mental health, many employees still lack the education and language they need to assess their own mental and emotional state. As a result, case managers need to determine the right programs and support needed to put the employee on the right path to recovery.

The Challenge

As part of the disability management team, Sarah is responsible for measuring and reporting on the costs of absenteeism at work. Based on her findings, their disability costs have risen yearly as 41% of their employee population self-admit to suffering from poor mental health, and 40% of their disability costs have a primary mental health diagnosis. Despite signs of burnout, PTSD, and depression, fewer than 50% of their employees seek any form of treatment due to stigma, costs, lack of education around mental health, and access to evidence-based mental healthcare. To make matters more challenging, their current referral and claims management process and available resources made it difficult to get employees the help they need at the right time. In some cases, they are denied access altogether by the benefits provider.

Sarah and her team needed a solution that removed the barriers to timely, effective mental healthcare, while claimants waited for access to face-to-face therapy sessions or have no means to access therapy altogether due to physical limitations. With growing digital mental health solutions, it was difficult for Sarah and her team to determine which solution would work best for their organization. They needed a solution that was education-based to help employees develop tools and strategies to manage their mental health anytime, anywhere while developing a shared language internally to talk about mental health diagnoses. To keep open, consistent communication with employees on disability, they were also looking for solutions that generated standardized and frequent progress reports for them to follow up with claimants on.

The Solution

With Starling's Return-to-Health program and advisory services, the organization was able to remove their greatest barriers to employee mental health by offering an affordable, scientifically-proven platform with a confidential online community, alongside a digital delivery model that gives employees immediate access to an evidence-based program to manage their mental health.

Starling's Return-to-Health program includes:

- Program training services to transform case managers into coaches who can guide employees to specific modules that will help them through their current off-work situation
- Onboarding disability and absence management team members and providing full access to demystify the platform experience and referral process
- Full awareness campaigns with Marketing toolkits to educate employees on the benefits of prioritizing their mental health

The Results: Why Disability Managers Love Starling Minds

For Sarah and her team, she loved that Starling's Return-to-Health program resolve her greatest challenges:

- The referral process is shortened significantly through an easy 2-step online portal
- Automated emails and reports that provide updates on employee progress to keep communications with employee on-leave through follow-ups and check-ins
- Shared language around mental health to generate more productive conversations during check-ins and follow-ups
- Delivers evidence-based mental health support while employees wait for in-person treatment or if treatment is unavailable

"The team and partnership we have with Starling is like no other and why we recommend them to peer organizations. They have a great product and we fully believe in their mission to eradicate barriers to mental healthcare. Our project was a tough enterprise implementation that cuts across many departments. We consistently said to each other 'Thank goodness we chose Starling!" — Disability and Absence Management Leader

READ ANOTHER CASE STUDY: How a Healthcare Worker Returned to Work More Confident with a Digital Solution

ABOUT STARLING MINDS

Starling Minds™ is a leading digital mental health platform that empowers organizations to cost-effectively support the wellbeing of their most important asset – their workforce. By using personalized and digitally-delivered Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (CBT) available on-demand, Starling helps to overcome barriers that prevent most people from seeking mental health support – cost, access, and stigma.