

Mental Health and Construction

Canadian Construction Association
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Today's Objectives

1. Provide overview of mental health and the impact on working adults in construction.
2. Build awareness, knowledge and skills in addressing mental health at work.
3. Encourage investment in a mental health agenda at your organization.



What is Mental Health?

“A state of **well-being** in which the individual realizes his or her own **potential**, can **cope** with the normal stresses of life, can **work productively** and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to her or his own **community**.”



Factors Affecting Mental Health at Work



Societal

Attitudes
Legislation
Resources



Organizational

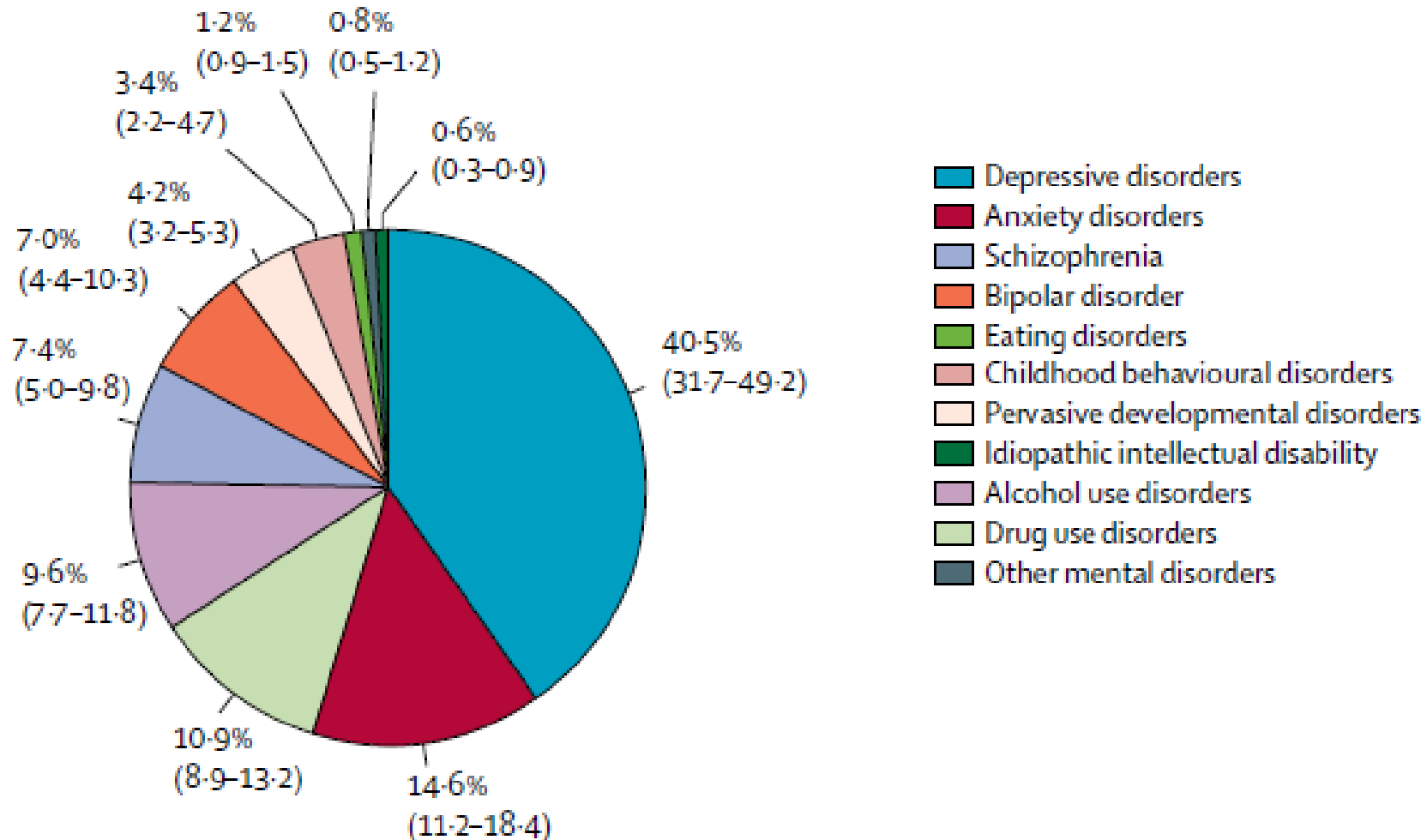
Policy
Practice
Resources



Individual

Attitudes
Recognition
Resources

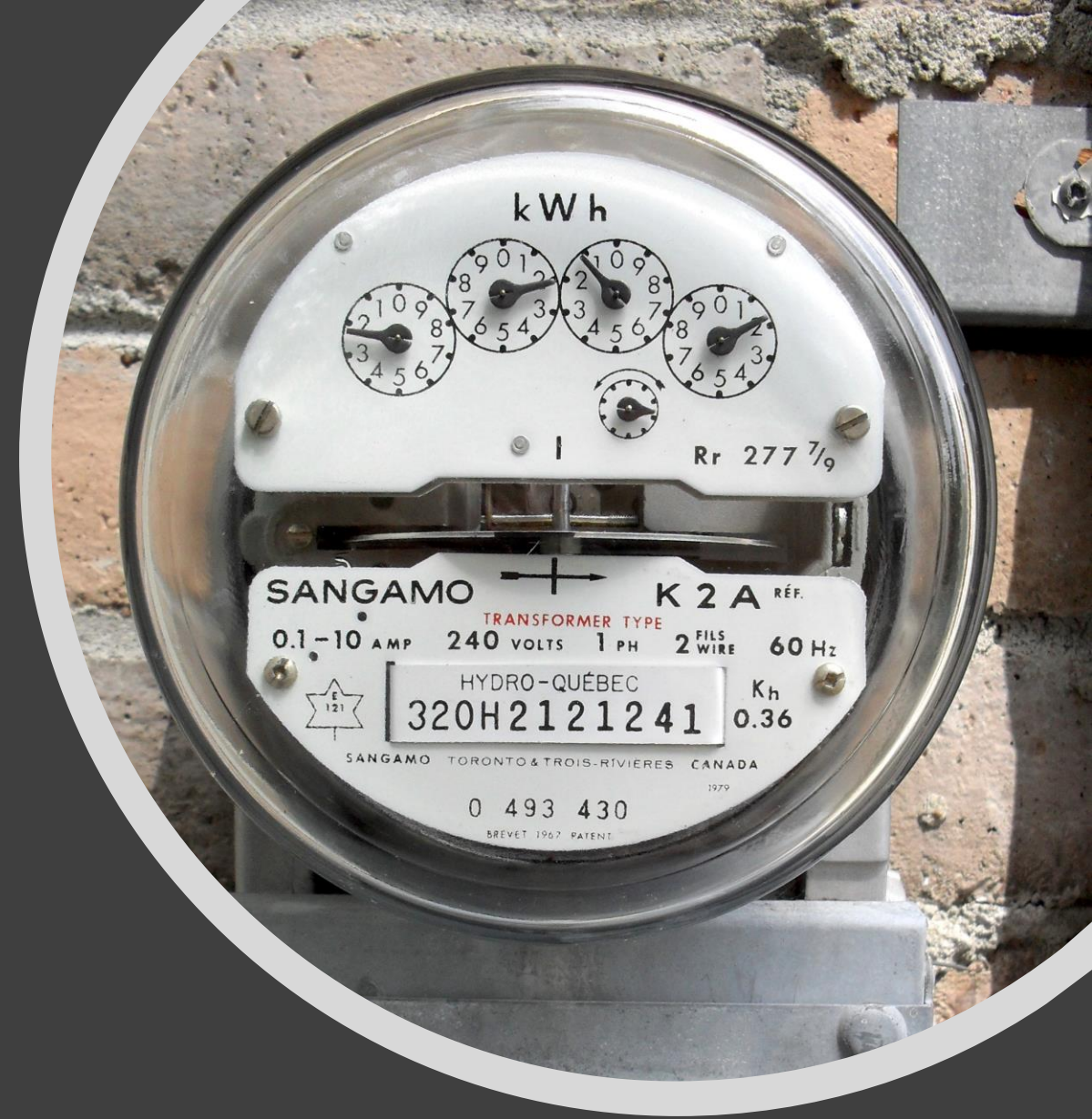
Global Burden of Disease



Whiteford, H. A., et al. (2013). Global burden of disease attributable to mental and substance use disorders: findings from the Global Burden of Disease Study 2010. *The Lancet*.

Higher rates in Construction

- Unstable employment
- Adverse working conditions
- Serious Injury
- Accidental death
- Addiction
- Gambling
- Violence
- Suicide (up to 3x)



Indicators of Dysfunction

- Grievances
- Injury claims
- Sick days/absenteeism
- Equipment/product damage
- Low or high EAP utilization
- Staff turnover
- Human Rights complaints
- Workplace fatality



Who is Xavier's Saviour?

Xavier has been a full-time foreman for 8 years without prior performance issues.

While on site, his new apprentice is seriously injured from being crushed. Xavier provides first aid and hears the next day the apprentice won't ever be returning.

Over the coming months, Xavier is "not his usual self" and missing shifts.



An Initial Meeting.

Xavier reports he has been under tremendous “stress” due to worries about his apprentice and meeting even tighter deadlines.

He is unusually angry and insists he would fine if there were “some real changes” at work.

What do you do?



Recommendation #1

Combat stigma.



History shapes our Attitudes

1800s	Asylum Care
1900s	Psychology and Psychoanalysis
	Radical Treatments (insulin shock therapy)
1950s	Psychopharmacology (chlorpromazine)
	Deinstitutionalisation (peak of 66,000 in Canada)
1960-75	Psychiatric beds drop from 50,000 to 15,000
1996	WHO study of disability and mental disorders
2000	14.5 M scripts of antidepressants in Canada
2000s	CANBIND (genetics project)
	rTMS (transcranial magnetic stimulation therapy)
2013	National Guidelines for Psychological Safety
	Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM-5)
2014+	Human Rights Code update for mental health



Combating Stigma at Work

1. Designate a Mental Health Champion to take lead with Awareness and Anti-stigma programs.
2. Follow policy and challenge any discriminatory attitudes, practices or behaviours.
3. Enhance access to confidential mental health services in the workplace.
4. Standardizing accommodation and disability management practices so that physical and mental disorders are treated equally.



Recommendation #2

Reduce risk for
psychological injury.



Sources of Psychological Injury

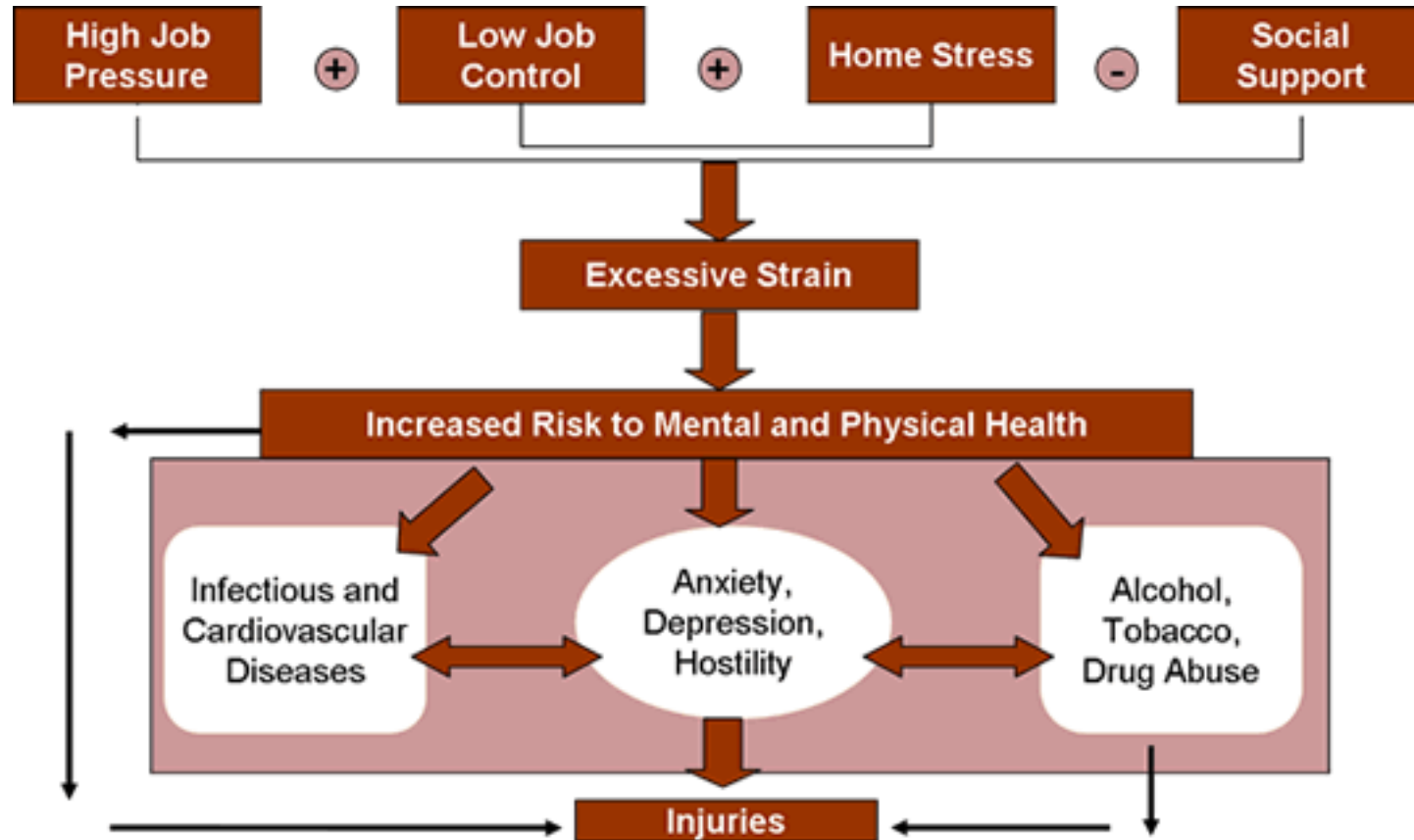
Non-occupational stressors

Excessive job strain

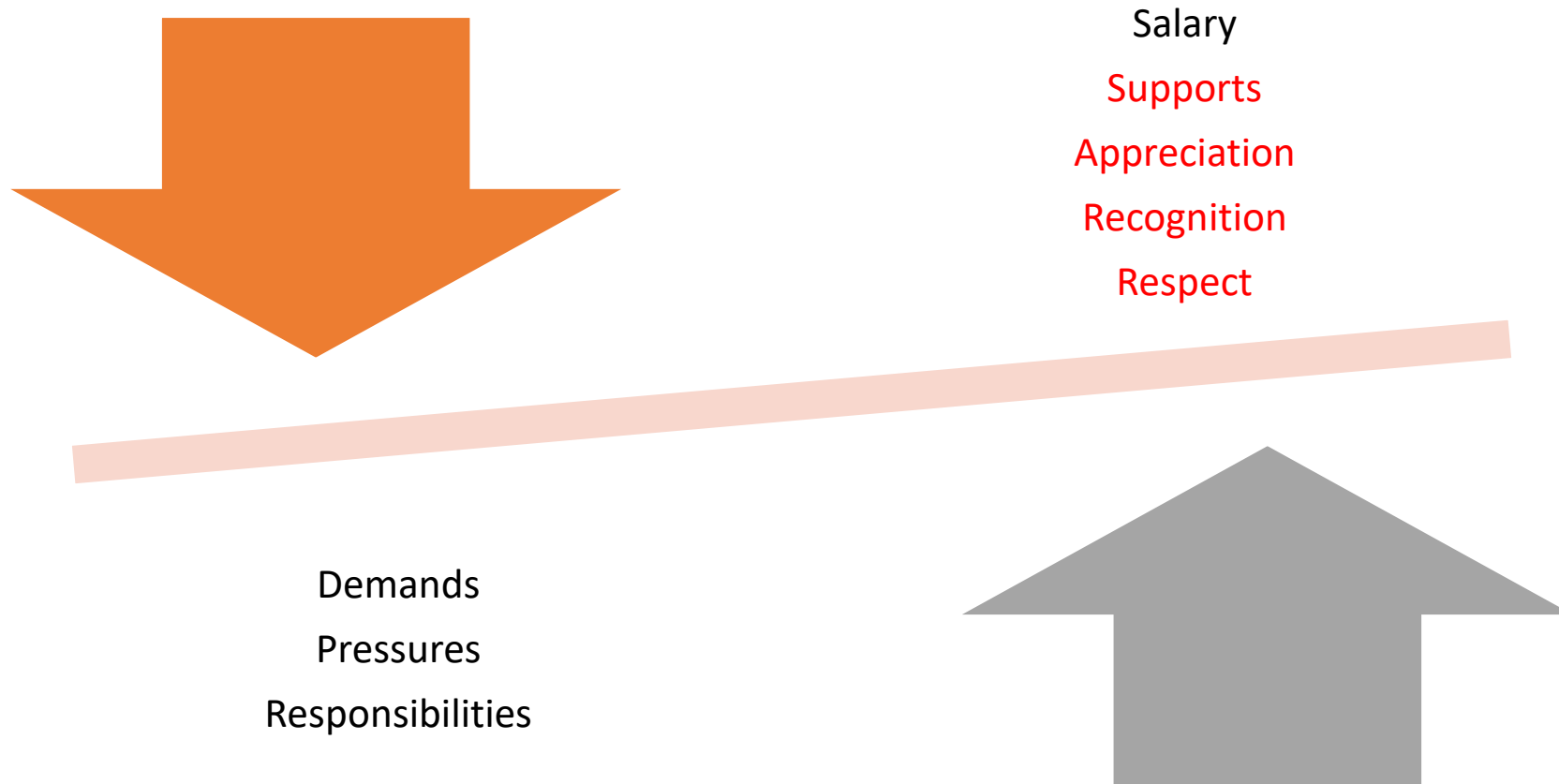
Critical Incident Exposure



Demand-Control-Support Model



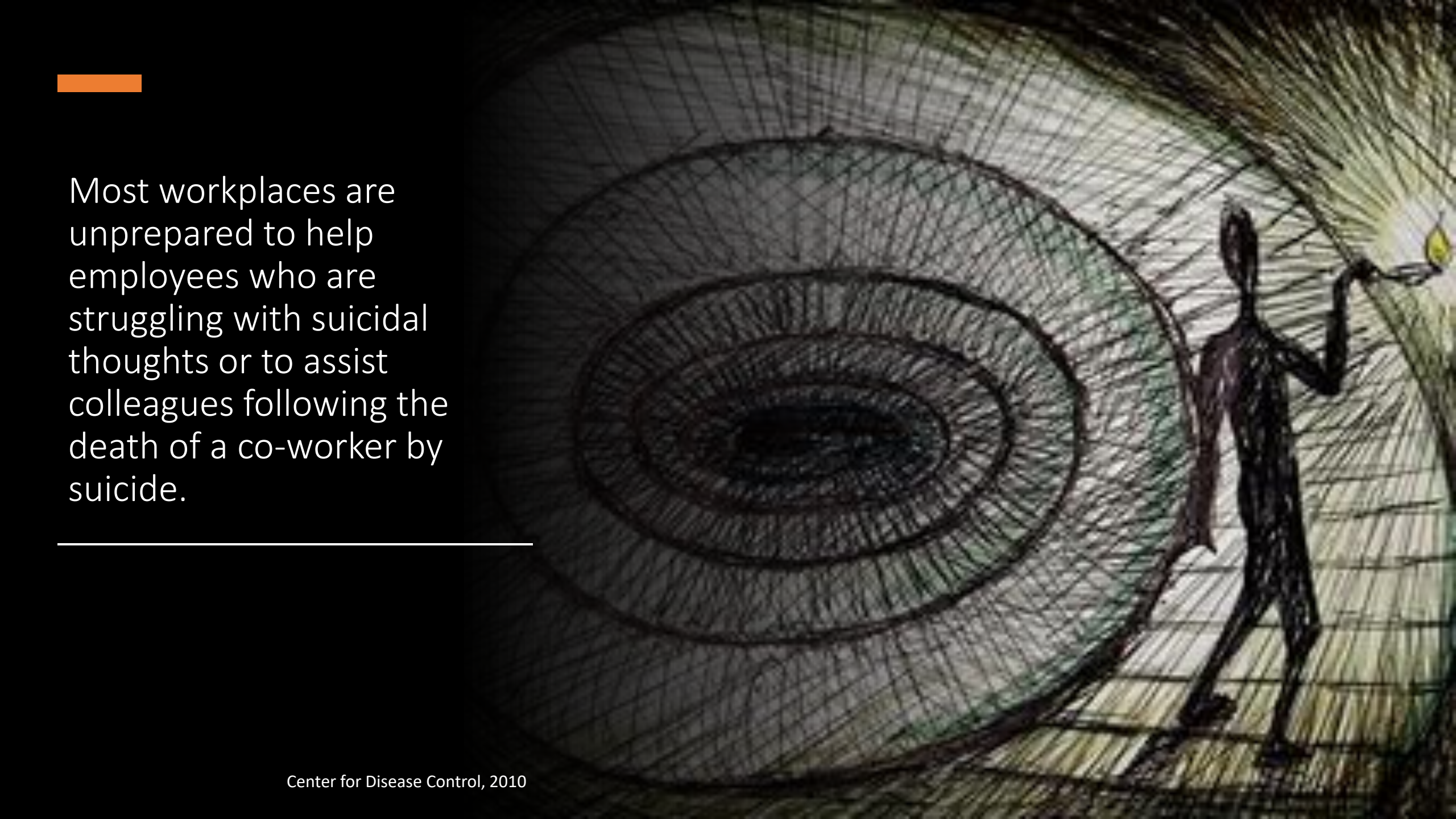
Effort-Reward Imbalance Model



Workplace Bullying and Harassment

- **Workplace bullying** involves multiple, repeated, intentional acts of aggression, hostility, social isolation, or disrespect.
- Between **15-19%** of working adults are victims of workplace bullying.
- Perpetrators are usually **male** (70%) and in **supervisory** positions (61%), while **60% of targets are women**.





Most workplaces are unprepared to help employees who are struggling with suicidal thoughts or to assist colleagues following the death of a co-worker by suicide.



#FIRSTRESPONDERSFIRST

PTSD Resource Toolkit

First responders are at least twice as likely to suffer from PTSD. There's no need to suffer in silence. The help you need is here. This website offers resources and services for the First Responder community to understand the various steps of a PTSD program from managing a crisis through to implementing best practices into an existing program.

Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) is a mental health condition caused by witnessing or experiencing actual or threatened death, serious injury or violence. Being affected by these types of events is normal, however if the thoughts or memories of these events start to seriously affect the life of the person long after the event, that person could be experiencing PTSD. Signs that someone may be experiencing PTSD include nightmares, uncontrollable memories, persistent fear and severe anxiety.

This site is designed to help employers establish a PTSD Prevention Plan and Program. The PTSD Toolkit of resources is launched by the Public Services Health and Safety Association and will serve as the leading Ontario resource for providing information on PTSD through existing channels tailored to the needs of each first responder sector. This site will include tools to help identify when a first responder might have a problem, where to seek help, best practices for employers and a source for ongoing news and events related to PTSD and mental wellness. Tools will be selected and made available for both employers and workers.

IMPORTANT NUMBERS

For Immediate Access

I'm in crisis call 911

I Need to Talk

Connect me with a crisis centre

Self-Assessment:
Do I have PTSD?



Download

Recommendation #3

Train your staff.



Who knows Mental Health First Aid?

Psychological First Aid (PFA) is accepted standard for 1st responders.

- Contact and engagement
- Safety and comfort
- Stabilization
- Information gathering
- Practical assistance
- Connection with social supports
- Information on coping
- Linkage with collaborative services



The “Good” Supervisor

- Understands the “business” case for intervening.
- Identifies and documents performance issues and engages in supportive dialogue about how mental health issues are interfering with their work.
- Utilizes constructive ways to confront the “troubled” employees early and encourage help-seeking while maintaining roles and confidentiality.
- Knowledge of resources for employees, supervisors, and work teams and gain permission for resources to contact them.



Workplace Peer Support

- Coworkers can provide a bridge between an employee with a problem and the people who can help them
- Formal workplace peer-support programs for mental health require resources and training
 - Effective communication skills
 - Capacity for Self-awareness
 - Maintenance of confidentiality and boundaries



Time to Heal?

Xavier's is contacted again the next week and agrees to reach out to the Peer Support team and EAP to get some ideas on his coping.

His manager is quite concerned that he may have health issues affecting work and requests that he see his Family Doctor for medical clearance.

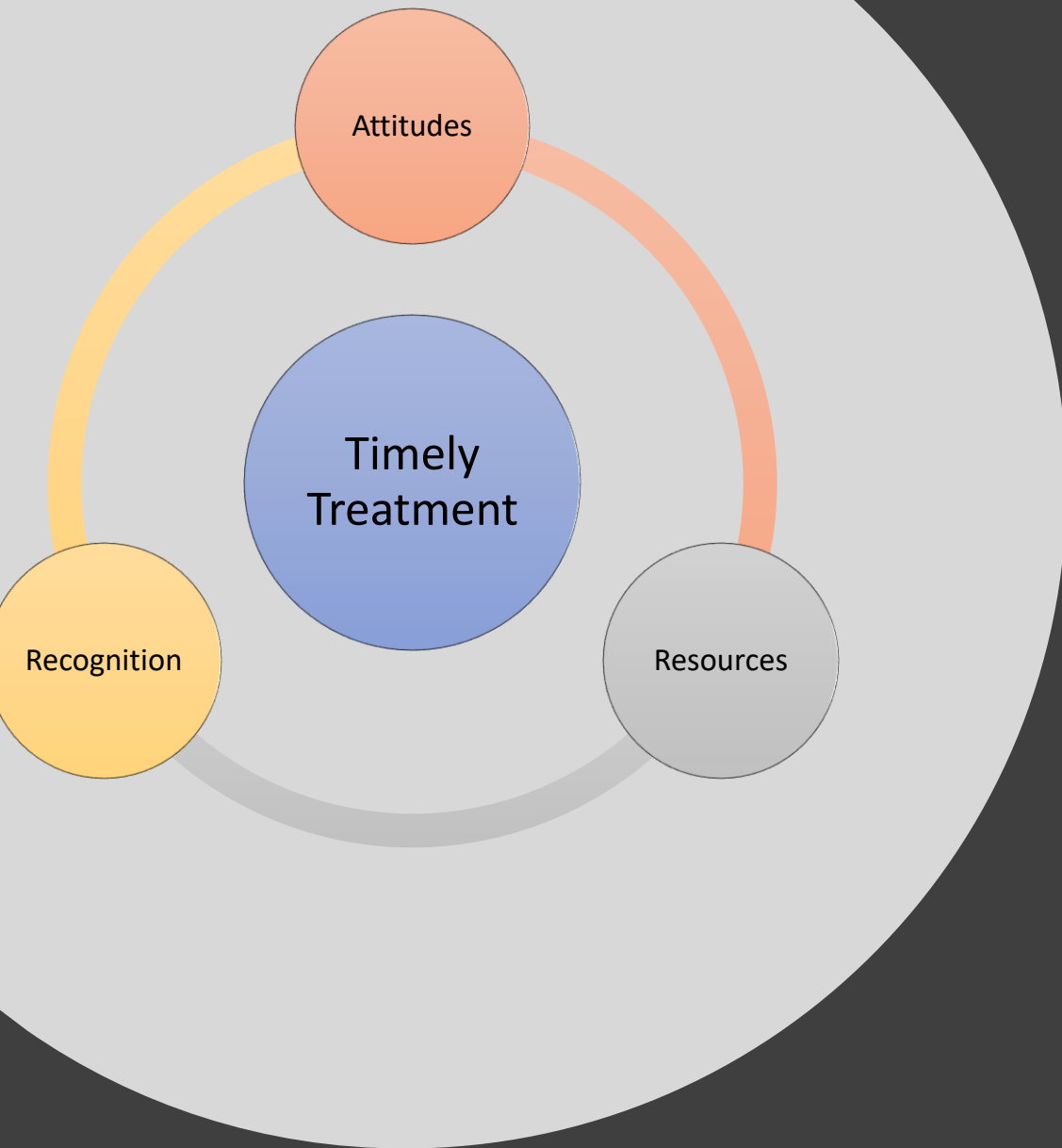
What's going to happen now?



Recommendation #4

Improve access to effective care.

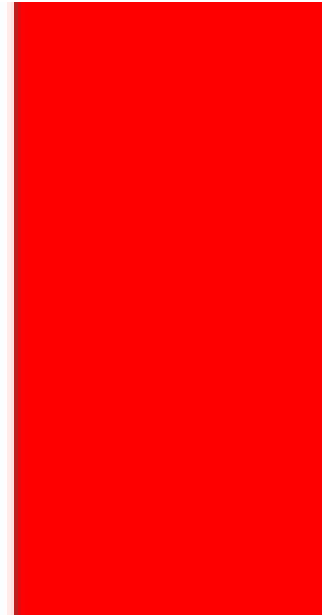




Address barriers to accessing Mental Health Services

Evidence-based Screening

- APRAND Programme targeted more than 140,000 employees at French Power Company
- For 9743 employees on sick leave
 - **Screening** for anxiety and depressive disorders with the MINI
 - **Psychoeducation** about illness
 - **Strong recommendations for treatment** by occupational physician
 - No direct treatment provided
- Improvements in symptoms severity and remission rates observed at one year with an inexpensive intervention



Web-based Health Screening

- Highly accessible for most
- Preferred modality for young and computer-literate
- Offered as portal from health education sites
- Brief and easy to read with option for audio
- Low risk
- Facilitates disclosure to health care provider

Canadian anonymous screening at:

<https://www.heretohelp.bc.ca/screening-self-tests>



Do your benefits address the needs?

- ✓ EAP for short-term solution-focussed counselling.
- ✓ Enhanced psychological benefits to cover a full course of treatment.
- ✓ Comprehensive medication formulary that covers effective medications.
- ✓ Coverage for residential addictions/mental health services and aftercare.
- ✓ Rehab-focussed STD and LTD insurance carriers.





Ready to Return?

Xavier's is away from work for almost 3 months when his psychologist and family doctor recommended a gradual return to work.

He has stayed in touch with some of his coworkers and has concerns about the many changes since he has been away.

His manager is unsure of his accommodation needs and how best to integrate him back into the crew.

What is needed?

Recommendation #5

Supportive and flexible return to work approaches.



Seven Principles for Successful Return to Work

1. The workplace has a strong commitment to health and safety, which is demonstrated by the behaviours of the workplace parties.
2. The employer makes an offer of modified work (also known as work accommodation) to injured/ill workers so they can return early and safely to work activities suitable to their abilities.
3. RTW planners ensure that the plan supports the returning worker without disadvantaging co-workers and supervisors.
4. Supervisors are trained in work disability prevention and included in RTW planning.
5. The employer makes early and considerate contact with injured/ill workers.
6. Someone has the responsibility to coordinate RTW.
7. Employers and health-care providers communicate with each other about the workplace demands as needed, and with the worker's consent.

Embrace Just Approaches to Challenging Situations



Recommendation #6

Evaluate and improve.




Where's your Data ?

Direct

- Job demands analysis
- Rates of absenteeism/turnover
- RTW and accommodation data
- STD/LTD rates/costs and relapse
- EFAP utilization/effectiveness
- Benefits utilization rates
- Health Risk Assessment data
- Workers Compensation data
- Organizational Audits

Indirect

- Employee Engagement
- Job satisfaction
- Team effectiveness
- Morale
- Complaints/incident reports/investigations
- Retention rates
- Competitive hiring
- Industry standards/best practices



There are risks and costs to
a program of action. But
they are far less than the
long-range risks and costs
of comfortable inaction.

~ John F. Kennedy (1917 - 1963)

Thank you...

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Workplace Resources

Mental Health Commission of Canada

www.mentalhealthcommission.ca

Guarding Minds at Work

<https://www.guardingmindsatwork.ca/>

Mental Health Works (CMHA)

www.mentalhealthworks.ca

National Partnership for Workplace Mental Health (APA)

www.workplacementalhealth.org

Workplace Strategies for Mental Health

www.workplacestrategiesformentalhealth.com





Discussion

What are the
challenges in the
Construction Industry?

COVID is a Stress Test

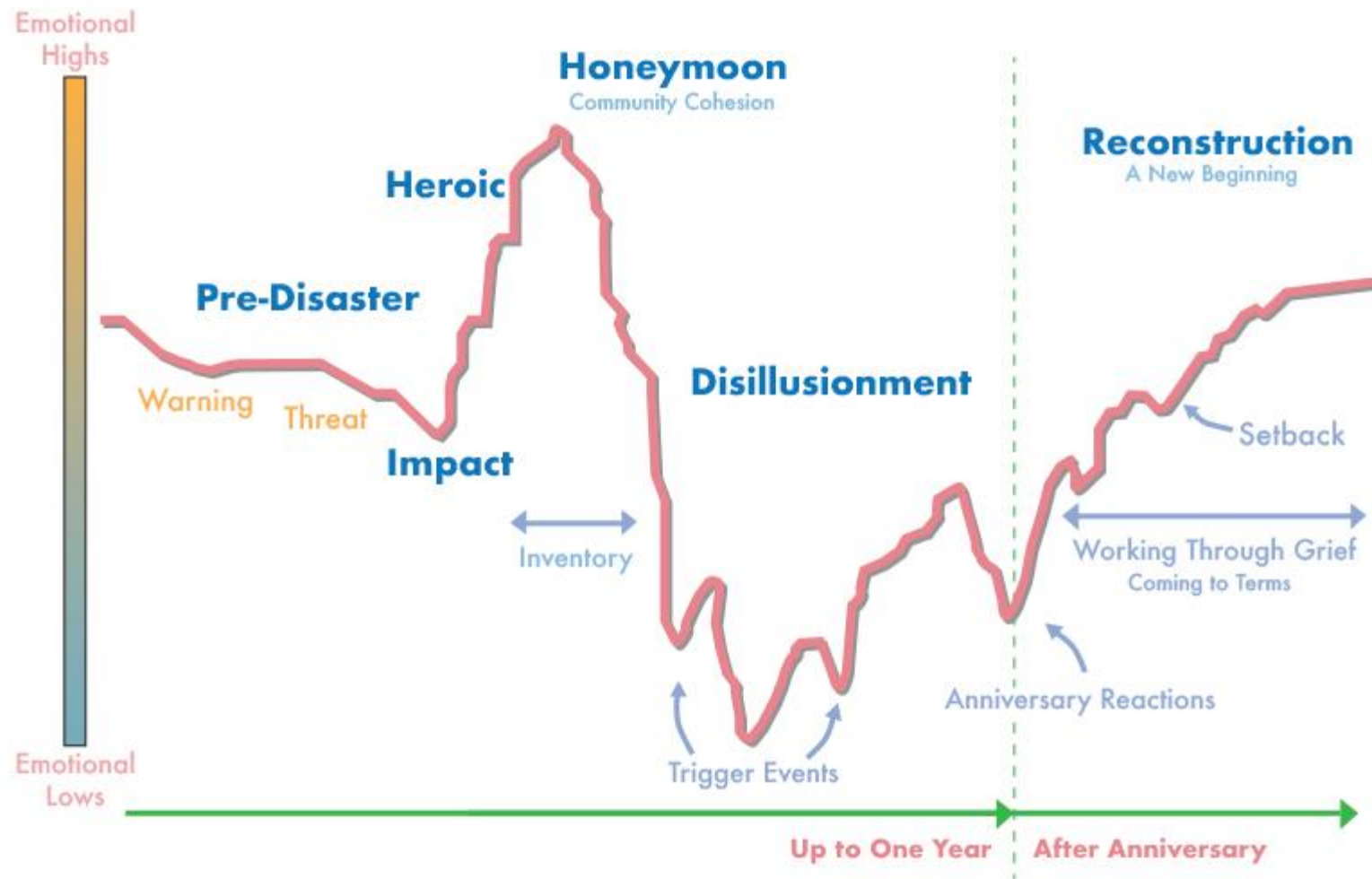
Individuals

Family

Organizations

Society





U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.