



Executive Roundtable:

# Key Factors in Business Continuity



**Dr. Mark Attridge**  
President and CEO  
  
ATTRIDGE CONSULTING, INC.



**Andrew Wynn-Williams**  
Divisional Vice President  
  
CANADIAN MANUFACTURERS AND EXPORTERS (CME)



**Jayson Myers**  
CEO  
  
NGEN (NEXT GENERATION MANUFACTURING CANADA)

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**Dr. Mark Attridge**  
President  
  
ATTRIDGE CONSULTING, INC.

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# Key Factors in Business Continuity: Mental Health Impacts

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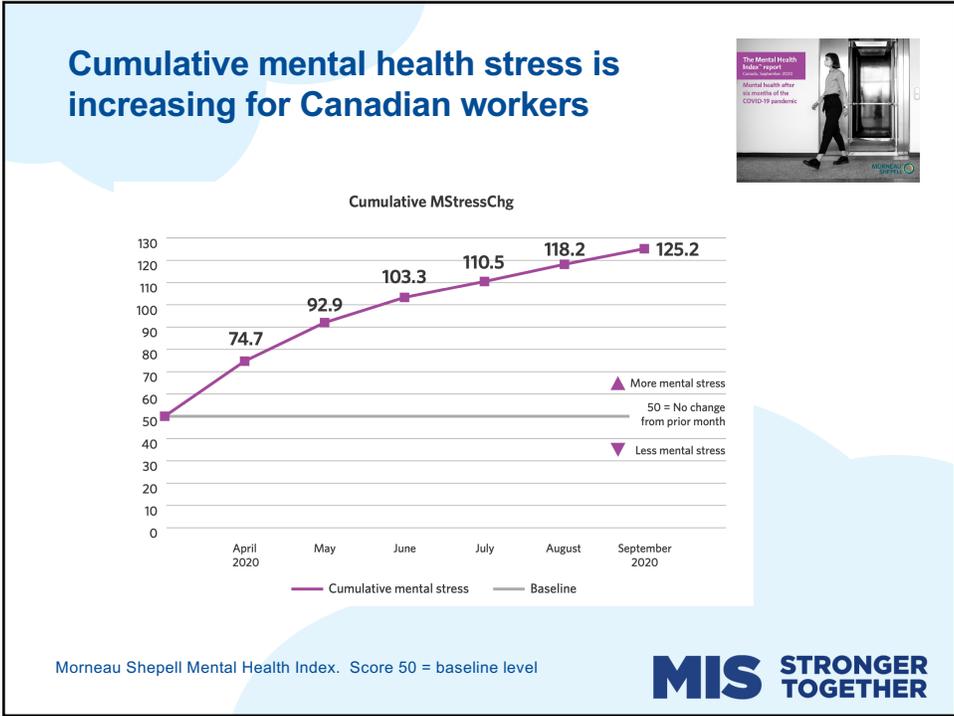
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## PART 1

**Current state of mental distress for  
Canadian workers in COVID-19 context:  
Highlights of national survey trend data  
and ten recommendations for businesses**



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- ## Managing through the pandemic: 10 key actions for supporting workplace mental health
- 
- 1 – **Communicate** Talk about mental health frequently and recognize how the pandemic has increased mental health risks for all people. This helps remove stigma and builds awareness for managing mental health and supporting others.
  - 2 – **Train** Educate managers on the need for increased recognition of issues during difficult times; be flexibility with respect to how work is done; and how to respond to signs of burnout.
  - 3 – **EAP** Offer access to live counselors such as Employee Assistance Programs, and in particular the digital resources to reduce barriers to care.
  - 4 – **Internet iCBT** Consider no-counselor technology-based tools, like internet-based Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (iCBT), which helps build skills for self-care.
  - 5 – **Financial support** Provide resources that support financial well-being – such as emergency savings, debt management, credit counseling (from EAPs)
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## Managing through the pandemic: 10 key actions for supporting workplace mental health



6 – **Survey employees** Collect data to determine needs and challenges of your people, including isolation, and to measure the impact of company efforts to help.

7 – **Back at worksite** Pay attention to those who have recently transitioned back to the worksite, ask about health concerns and personal re-adjustment.

8 – **At-risk groups** Some groups that are more at risk, including parents, younger employees, lower income employees, non-White employees and those who identify as female or other. Listening sessions and targeted education sessions provide practical value and show empathy.

9 – **Financial insecurity** Employees who have had their salary or hours reduced have a level of uncertainty and would benefit from additional attention to ensure that they remain connected, informed, and valued through this time.

10 – **Be consistent** Ensure that your organization is consistent in your efforts to support mental health among employees.

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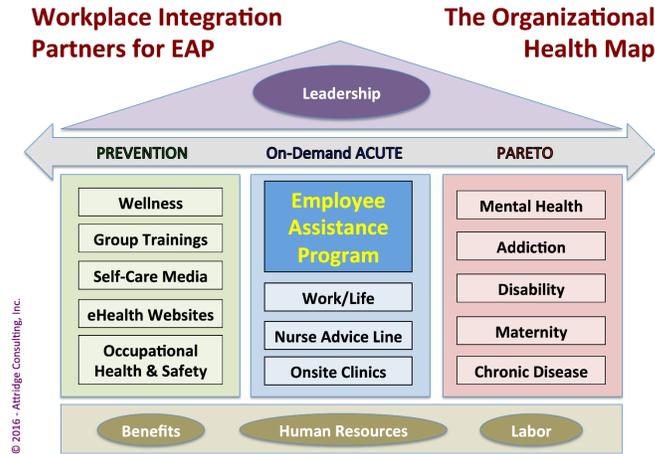
## PART 2

**Research-based best practices for more effective  
use of Employee and Family Assistance Programs  
and technology-based tools for mental health**

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## EAP is most effective when integrated into the work organization to promote greater awareness and use



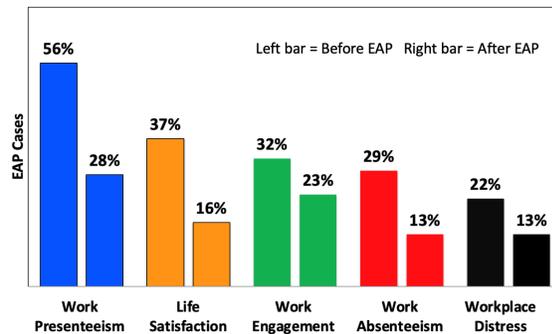
Attridge (2016) EAPA Conference keynote presentation, Chicago



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## Industry-wide research report: Global study of 10-years of data from over 30 EAPs finds counseling effective for reducing work risks

Percentage of Cases at Problem Status on WOS Measures  
at BEFORE and AFTER Use of EAP Counseling



N = 35,693 - Workplace Outcome Suite 2020 Annual Report



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## New techno-therapy resources for supporting mental health of employees: **Advantages**

- Live counselor clinical care is equally effective whether delivered in-person, telephone, internet video, text or even e-mail exchanges. It is the skill of the counselor and not the channel of access that is key.
- Internet and smart-phone access to therapeutic supports is more available (24/7) than reliance on in-person office visits to counselors.
- Newer computer-based tools to support specific mental health issues (anxiety, depression, sleep) can be as effective clinically as live counselor therapy approaches (if use tools full extent as designed).
- Privacy of access (user can be anonymous) helps offset the social stigma and related barriers to help-seeking with live counselors.
- Significantly lower cost than in-person services for techno tools.

Attridge (2020) Conference, South Africa

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## New techno-therapy resources for supporting mental health of employees: **Disadvantages**

- Personal preference of user for live or in-person support can limit actual use of technology-based mental health apps and websites.
- Some tech tools offer online community for peer to peer support and use advantages of social media preferences (ex. togetherall)
- Rigid iCBT approach and issue specific content may not fit goals of user and thus early drop-out in using machine-based structured programs with multiple lessons is very common.
- Use of initial risk screening component of iCBT tools is valuable as this can reach many more employees than typical EAP clinical use.
- Employers (purchasers) should require their EAP and other technology providers to collaborate better and cross-refer at-risk cases for prevention outreach and adjunctive treatment.

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## No cost publicly available resources for employers to support workplace mental health

Andersson, G. (2018). Internet interventions: Past, present and future. *Internet Interventions*, 12, 181-188. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6096319/>

BroMatters (resources for men at-risk for depression; Movember foundation)  
[www.bromatters.ca](http://www.bromatters.ca)

Employee Assistance Digital Archive (library of papers on COVID-19 and workplace mental health) <https://www.eaarchive.org>

Guarding Minds @ Work (employee survey tools, benchmarks & trainings)  
<https://www.guardingmindsatwork.ca>

National Standard for Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace  
<https://www.mentalhealthcommission.ca/English/media/4183>

The Mental Health Index Report: Canada, September 2020. Morneau Shepell.  
<https://www.morneaushepell.com/permafiles/93048/mental-health-index-report-canada-september-2020.pdf>

Workplace Strategies for Mental Health (Canada Life)  
<https://www.workplacestrategiesformentalhealth.com>

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## No cost resources by Dr. Attridge

**Attridge, M.** (2016, November). *Integrating employee assistance programs into other workplace programs: The Organizational Health Map*. Keynote address at the annual conference of the Employee Assistance Professionals Association, Chicago, IL. <http://hdl.handle.net/10713/7292>

**Attridge, M.** (2020). Internet-based cognitive-behavioral therapy for employees with anxiety, depression, social phobia or insomnia: Clinical and work outcomes. *Sage Open*, January-March, 1-17. <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/2158244020914398>

**Attridge, M.** (2020). *Workplace Outcome Suite (WOS) Annual Report 2020: Part 1 - Decade of Data on EAP Counseling Reveals Prominence of Presenteeism*. Toronto, ON: Morneau Shepell. <https://www.eapassn.org/WOS>

Farley, T., Marion, D., **Attridge, M.**, & Cyncenas, J. (2020, May). *Employee Assistance Programs (EAP) in COVID-19 era: Support for substance abuse*. Hazelden Betty Ford Foundation. Slides: <http://hdl.handle.net/10713/13158> Video: <https://youtu.be/E-HXdRRYXQA>

**Attridge, M.** (2020, June). *Mental health in the workplace during Coronavirus: 10 key points from the research on techno-therapy*. Online Seminar: Workplace Mental Health in the Workplace During COVID-19. Knowledge Resources, South Africa. Slides: <http://hdl.handle.net/10713/13162> Video: <https://lnkd.in/eMKU2aR>

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