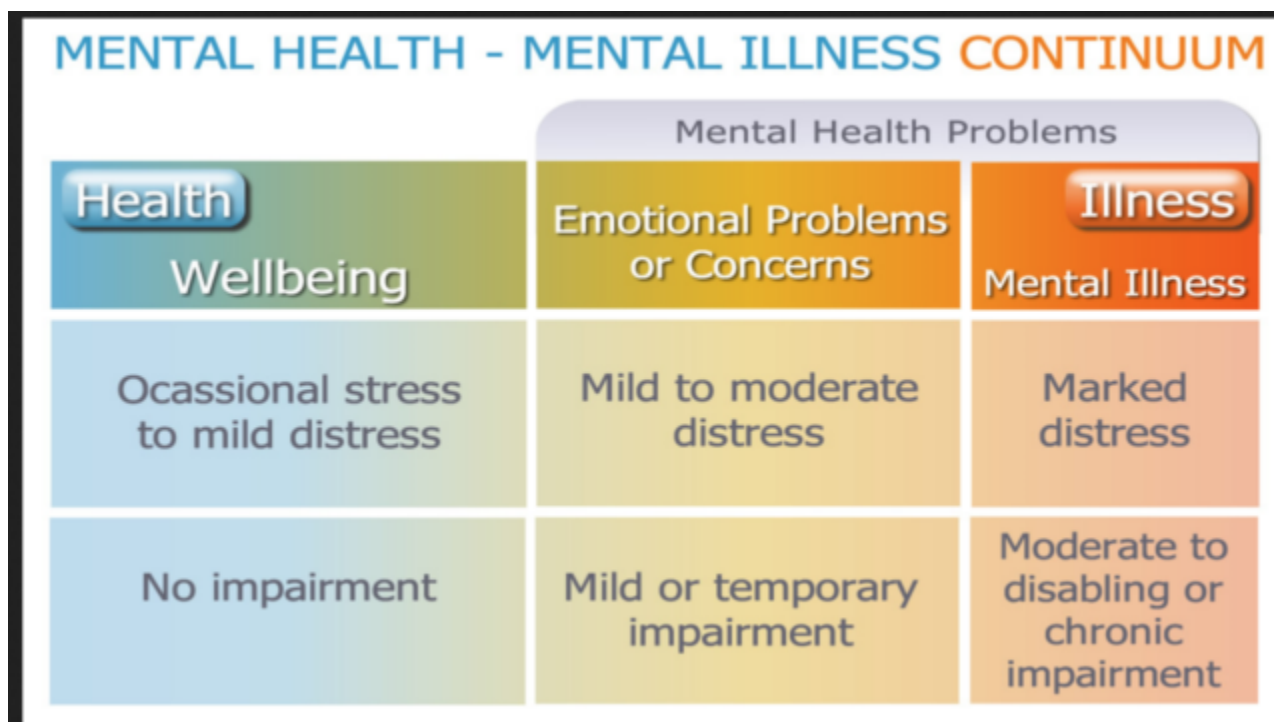


OSF Saint Anthony's Health Center's Luncheon Series Addresses Mental Health in the Workplace

May 28 2019 5:41 AM



ALTON - On Wednesday May 15th OSF Saint Anthony's Health Center held another in its series of Healthy Workplace Luncheons at the Alton campus. May is mental health month and the topic for the event was Great Minds at Work – Mental Health in the Workplace, the focus of the session was informing employers about the unique opportunity they have to help improve the overall Wellness of their Adult Employees.

Two highly qualified presenters illustrated for the audience on how job stress affects an employee's relationship with their family and could cause them to engage in unhealthy behaviors (such as drinking or crying regularly.)

The initial speaker was Susanne Ringhausen, MA, LCPC, CEAP, manager of Psychological Services for OSF Saint Anthony's. She described how a 21-month study that included over 17,000 employees across 19 industries determined that 81% of participants said that job stress affected their relationship with their family; while 63% responded that they believe stress from their job caused them to engage in unhealthy behavior. Ringhausen described how it's natural for one to move between well and unwell in the mental health continuum, but that, through a conscious effort, an employer can lessen stressors that negatively affect their employee's job satisfaction as well as their physical and mental health. According to [Mental Health America](#), 20% of people are affected by mental illness during their working lives.

Shannon Walker, PhD, Clinical Psychologist followed Ringhausen and explained that 10% of the employed population takes time off from work for depression and that anxiety causes 10 lost work days or reduced productivity days per month – costing \$4.1 billion in indirect costs.

Walker stressed that there's no longer a stigma around having mental health issues and described symptoms in the workplace as being tense and on edge, avoiding activities and staff meetings, being easily overwhelmed and upset and having difficulty making decisions. She also encouraged the audience to seek help when usual coping methods aren't working or negative patterns begin to develop.

She concluded her portion of the seminar by guiding the audience through the 'Dos' and 'Don'ts' of interacting with employees they suspect are having difficulty: Check in, don't pressure them to cheer up; suggest they see a doctor, don't suggest they get over it; show support, don't avoid them; encourage self-care, don't make light of their problem.

The seminar was well received and the lunch was healthy and delicious. Keep abreast of upcoming classes and events at OSF Saint Anthony's Health Center by [clicking here](#).

OSF HealthCare is an integrated health system owned and operated by The Sisters of the Third Order of St. Francis, headquartered in Peoria, Illinois. OSF HealthCare employees nearly 21,000 Mission Partners (employees) in 126 locations, including 13 hospitals – 9 acute care, 4 critical access – and two colleges of nursing throughout Illinois and Michigan. Its physician network employs more than 1,200 primary care, specialist physicians, and advanced practice providers. OSF HealthCare operates an extensive network of home health services; owns OSF Saint Francis, Inc., comprised of health care-related businesses; and OSF HealthCare Foundation, the philanthropic arm for the organization. More at <https://www.osfhealthcare.org>

Mental Health America: <https://www.mentalhealthamerica.net/workplace-wellness>