



## Salveo Study on mental health in the workplace

Insights into creating a healthy, productive and successful work environment



**Salveo:** Latin verb meaning  
“to be well” or “in good health”.

It's no secret. Stress is directly related to mental health issues<sup>1</sup>. If your employees are under sustained stress, they're at higher risk of developing a mental illness and going on disability leave, which can significantly impact your company's productivity and bottom line.

This interesting fact is the cornerstone of the **Salveo Study**, one of the most comprehensive research studies on mental health in the workplace ever conducted in Canada.

### MORE ABOUT THE SALVEO STUDY

**Salveo is Latin for "to be well" or "in good health".**

It's also the name of the study conducted jointly by the Université de Montréal, Université Laval and Concordia University, under the supervision of professors Alain Marchand and Pierre Durand of the School of Industrial Relations at the Université de Montréal, in partnership with Manulife.

**The goal of the Salveo Study** was to help identify the risk factors that trigger major mental health disorders: psychological distress<sup>2</sup>, depression<sup>3</sup> and burnout<sup>4</sup> and provide some answers on how employers can take action to reduce the effects of mental illnesses within the workplace.

### THE SALVEO STUDY BY THE NUMBERS



2,100+ employees participated



49% women



41: average employee age



401 employees had their saliva tested



75 human resources managers interviewed



63 workplaces of all sizes involved and management practices compared

### DID YOU KNOW?

Cortisol is a stress-related hormone found in saliva. High levels of cortisol may indicate **stress**<sup>5</sup>.

<sup>1</sup>Stansfeld, S., & Candy, B. (2006). Psychosocial work environment and mental health-a meta-analytic review. *Scandinavian Journal of Work, Environment and Health*, 32 (6, special issue), 443-462.

<sup>2</sup>Anxiety, irritability and some temporary cognitive impairments

<sup>3</sup>Major loss of interest or enjoyment, periods of major sadness and feelings of hopelessness

<sup>4</sup>Emotional fatigue, depersonalization or cynicism and loss of effectiveness at work; "burnout" refers to the medical term "workplace adjustment disorder"

<sup>5</sup>Chida, Y., Steptoe, A., 2009. Cortisol awakening response and psychosocial factors: a systematic review and meta-analysis. *Biol. Psychol.* 80, 265-278.



## What the Salveo Study revealed

### CUTTING-EDGE DATA COLLECTION

Between September 21, 2009 and May 31, 2012, researchers analyzed work life, home life and individual characteristics of employees that contribute to the development of psychological distress, depression and burnout. The study included a self-reporting questionnaire with nearly 300 questions and saliva tests to detect cortisol levels (stress-related hormone) – something never done before in the Canadian workplace.

### QUESTIONNAIRES CAN DETECT PSYCHOLOGICAL PROBLEMS

Results from the self-reporting questionnaires were matched with employees' biological indicators, including their cortisol level. This valuable analysis helped validate the questionnaire and the relevance of using such a method in the workplace to identify mental health disorders.

### TOP FINDINGS

In addition to studying the risk factors, researchers analyzed the impact of 63 management practices<sup>6</sup> (associated with stress, health and wellness) on mental health claim rates in organizations of various sizes.

#### ■ Finding #1:

**The combination of work and personal life issues plays a significant role in mental health disorders**

The study revealed that psychological distress, depression and burnout are linked to *both* personal and workplace issues, which may have an impact on absenteeism<sup>7</sup> and presenteeism<sup>8</sup>.

## SURPRISING DISCOVERIES

- 24% reported a recent episode of psychological distress
- 11% said they were professionally inefficient at least once a week
- Adults in their early and prime working years are among the hardest hit by mental health problems and illnesses

<sup>6</sup> Methods, techniques or initiatives developed and implemented that align with company objectives and culture to ensure success internally (employees) and externally (clients and partners)

<sup>7</sup> Repeated and regular non-attendance of an employee

<sup>8</sup> Physical presence of a non-productive employee



The following tables illustrate organizational and individual factors contributing to mental health disorders (psychological distress, depression and burnout), factors protecting against them and those with no significant effect.

### Organizational factors

Factors	Distress	Depression	Burnout
<b>Task design</b>			
Use of skills		●	●
Decision-making authority			
<b>Demands</b>			
Physical demands	●	●	
Psychological demands		■	■
Number of working hours			
Irregular work schedule			
<b>Social relationships</b>			
Support of peers			
Support of supervisors			
Abusive behaviours <sup>9</sup>	■	■	■
Aggressive behaviours			■
Harassment			
<b>Rewards</b>			
Recognition			
Career opportunities			
Work insecurity	■		■

### Individual factors

Factors	Distress	Depression	Burnout
Living as a couple	●	●	
Presence of young children			●
Family income			
Marital stress	■	■	
Parental stress	■	■	
Family/work conflicts <sup>10</sup>			●
Work/family conflicts <sup>11</sup>	■	■	■
External support in the workplace		●	
Being a woman	■	■	■
Aging		●	●
Chronic health problems	■	■	■
Abusive alcohol consumption	■	■	■
Tobacco		■	
Physical activities	●	●	●
High self-esteem	●	●	●
Internal control centre	●	●	●
Childhood-related stressing events		■	

■ **Red:** Factors contributing to mental health disorders    ● **Green:** Factors protecting against mental health disorders    ○ **White:** Factors with no significant effect

ISSUES



<sup>9</sup> Subordinates' perceptions of the extent to which supervisors engage in the sustained display of hostile verbal and nonverbal behaviours, excluding physical contact

<sup>10</sup> When family matters encroach on work

<sup>11</sup> When work encroaches on family life

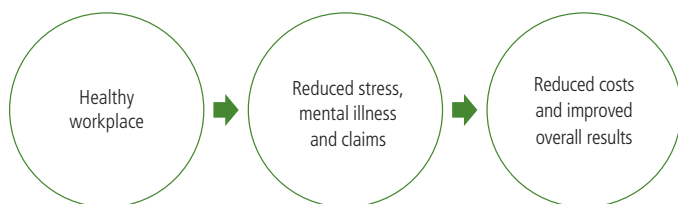
### ■ Finding #2:

#### Investing in management practices can make a significant difference

The study discovered companies are more likely to receive **fewer mental health-related claims** and **reduce costs** if they implement the following management practices:

Effective management practices	% more likely to reduce mental health claims
Job design <sup>12</sup>	87%
Work-life balance services <sup>13</sup>	77%
Rewards <sup>14</sup>	74%
Physical activities <sup>15</sup>	69%
Demands <sup>16</sup>	64%

Implementing multiple effective management practices can significantly prevent mental health issues.



### ■ Finding #3:

#### An integrated approach to management practices has a greater impact on reducing claim rates

What if your management practices targeted both stressful workplace conditions *and* employees? According to the study, you'd be almost 3X more likely than another company who didn't take this integrated approach to:

- Experience lower mental health claims and costs
- Prevent absenteeism due to mental health issues

### ■ Finding #4:

#### Implementing an integrated health and wellness strategy is also possible in a Small and Medium Enterprise (SME)

The case study validated that effective SMEs have put in place several management practices that address employees' needs, related to job design, work-life balance services, rewards, physical activities and demands – which explains their lower rate of mental health claims.

<sup>12</sup> Job tasks designed in correlation with employees' skills and interests

<sup>13</sup> Offer work/life balance opportunities

<sup>14</sup> Recognize employees' good work

<sup>15</sup> Offering and/or promoting adoption of physical activities, such as practicing a sport, jogging, walking, etc.

<sup>16</sup> Strategies designed to help employees maintain a reasonable workload/physical effort

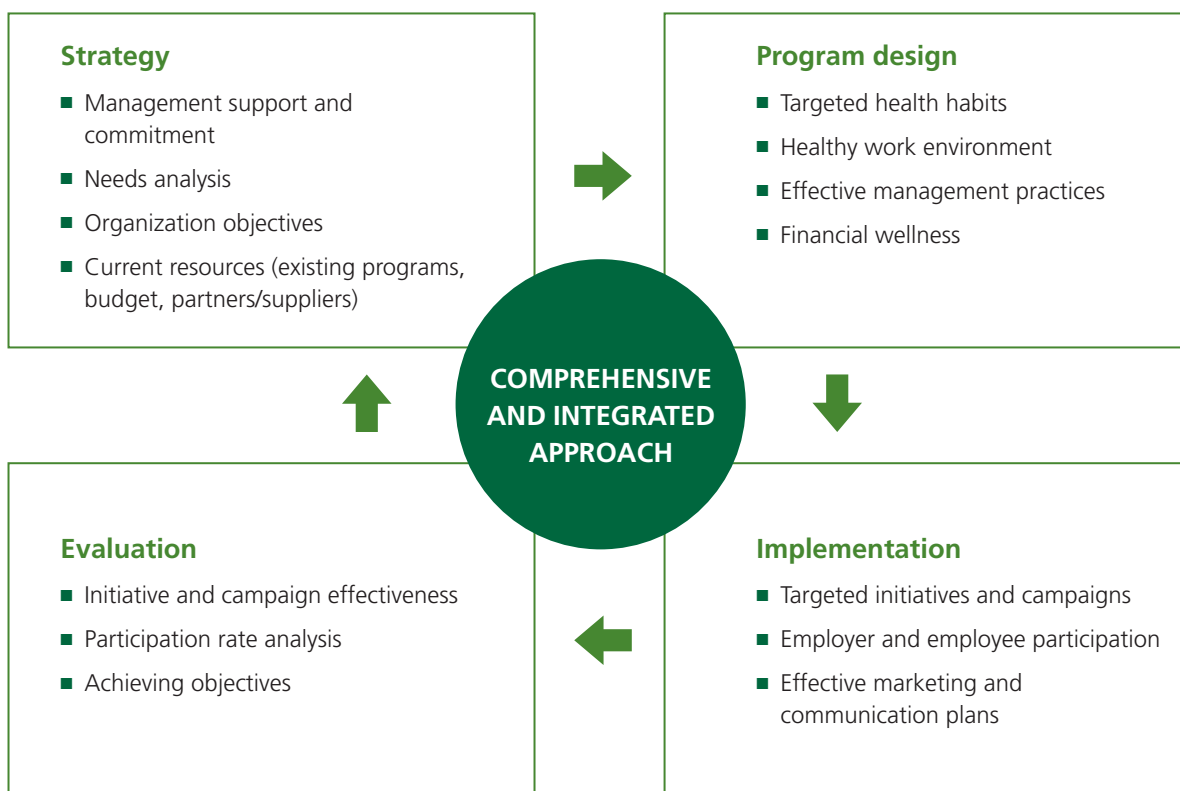
# Make the Salveo Study work for you

A key learning from the study is that implementing an integrated health and wellness program focused on preventing mental health issues can make a significant difference on claims, costs, and employee productivity.

## WHY OFFER A HEALTH AND WELLNESS PROGRAM?

Your employees' health has a direct impact on your company's results. That's why it's so important to offer more than just a group benefits plan. By implementing health and wellness initiatives for your employees and making adequate resources available for them, you're actually contributing to their well-being.

A comprehensive and integrated approach to health and wellness promotes real change through concrete measures. In addition to promoting a healthy work environment, it can have a positive effect on business results.





## THE BENEFITS



Motivate your employees to adopt and maintain a healthy lifestyle



Reduce absenteeism, presenteeism and disabilities



Attract and retain best talent






Increase the energy, productivity and engagement of your employees



Control health care and group benefits plan costs

A comprehensive health and wellness program is an effective solution that can help you reduce mental health issues and disabilities, while maintaining a motivated and engaged workforce.

## INITIATIVES TARGETING MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES

	 <b>Organizational level</b>	 <b>Manager level</b>	 <b>Employee level</b>
<b>Objective</b>	Create a positive environment and a culture focused on well-being	Support employees in preventing mental health issues by addressing them openly	Embrace the opportunities available to them and play an active role in their well-being
<b>How?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Put a recognition program in place</li> <li>■ Provide continuous training and professional development programs</li> <li>■ Develop work/life balance policies</li> <li>■ Implement policies for proactive disability management and efficient return-to-work and workplace accommodation programs</li> <li>■ Design anti-stigma campaigns</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Give employees flexibility in work organization (task design)</li> <li>■ Provide more latitude in schedule planning (demands)</li> <li>■ Highlight employees' accomplishments (rewards)</li> <li>■ Direct employees to appropriate resources; for example: their Employee and Family Assistance Program (EFAP)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Use personal awareness tools and resources</li> <li>■ Participate in physical health activities</li> <li>■ Learn about available Health and Wellness services, such as their EFAP, and take advantage of them</li> <li>■ Participate in continuous training and professional development opportunities</li> <li>■ Take advantage of work/life balance options</li> </ul>

Taking an active role in your employees' well-being through effective, integrated management practices and promoting your health and wellness program's initiatives can contribute to your company's success.

# Manulife can help

## Your company's success depends on the engagement and productivity of your employees.

Our health and wellness experts can introduce you to forward-thinking solutions that can help your employees bring their best to work every day – solutions supported by the Salveo Study.

Our experts will work in partnership with you to fully understand your specific workplace situation and help you reach your objectives. They'll recommend the most effective solutions and provide the support you need to either enhance your existing program or introduce a health and wellness program that will have a positive effect on your employees, your brand and your bottom line.

### Some wellness solutions that may interest you:

- Health Risk Assessment (HRA), including campaigns
- Integrated Health Data Analysis (IHDA)
- Employee and Family Assistance Program (EFAP)
- Workplace Solutions for Mental Health website
- Manager training on mental health
- And many more...





Contact your Manulife representative  
to learn more about Salveo and  
our wellness solutions.

