Well@Work Podcast
Season 4 Episode 7
Creating Effective Organizational Change Toward Being Secondary Traumatic Stress Informed

"Days like this make me rethink my career choices", Sophia sighed to herself as she watched another employee walk out the door of her child welfare agency for the last time. This was the tenth employee to quit or be terminated this month. In the past, workers would leave the agency due to relocation, changes in their family structure or to advance their careers. Now, they were leaving because of the stress of the work. Today was a watershed moment for Sophia, as she realized that the future of her agency and her own willingness to continue in this field as a director was evaporating. Absenteeism and job vacancies resulted in inconsistent services to clients who desperately needed them, and the time wasted hiring, training, and managing these issues was exhausting the rest of the workforce. The heaviness of the responsibility to fix this cast a dispiriting shadow across the agency. Something had to change! Sophia knew her agency could do more to address indirect trauma exposure and STS and build resiliency in the workforce, but didn't know where to start.

Sophia was right. There are organizational strategies that have been proven effective at addressing secondary traumatic stress and all the organizational consequences of a beleaguered workforce. In fact, research shows that organizational efforts at being more STS informed can improve the way workers feel; their STS and burnout decreases, as does their turnover intentions. But not just any strategy will work, efforts toward organizational well-being are most effective when they are data driven and tailored to the needs of the workforce. So if you are a manager like Sophia who wants to make positive changes to keep your employees functioning at their best, here are some tips to get started.

1. Understand your organizational profile. There are organizational assessments, like the Secondary Traumatic Stress Informed Organizational Assessment you can use to determine how STS informed your agency is, areas of strength and opportunities for growth. A link to this free assessment tool is in the podcast description.
2. Create a STS-informed champions team. An important factor in making effective organizational change is assembling a group of early adopters who are passionate about the topic and can spearhead the efforts. Research shows that effective champions are good problem solvers, spread innovations throughout the organization and educate others about how to be STS informed.
3. Join a Secondary Traumatic Stress Breakthrough Series Collaborative- these structured change processes allow teams of champions and like-minded professionals to come together for a common purpose, to prevent and address secondary traumatic stress. These intensive change sessions are guided by implementation savvy coaches and consultants and can help you interpret your organization's data and create meaningful action plans. To
4. find a breakthrough series collaborative near you, click on the link in the podcast description below.

Remember these steps are just the beginning. Becoming STS informed is a journey and you don't have to take that trip alone. Thank you listening to this podcast on creating effective organizational change. For more information check out our website and remember to stay well at work.