



Like Yourself Today" exercise that features colorful "mood buttons" expressing 24 different moods that employees can choose from to help spark conversation around mental health, and show support for mental health.

At the start of the activity, participants select a mood button or create their own. As a group or in pairs, they are asked to discuss the following:

- Have you had days where you work up and didn't feel like yourself?
- What did you do about it?
- Did you tell anyone and how helpful was their response?

Later, participants regroup to discuss the impact of mental health, learn important statistics, and discuss ways to collectively create a supportive work environment.

Not Myself Today campaign participants range from companies with few employees to Canada's largest employers, including several big hospitals and universities. Rolling out the program in the workplace varies based on the type of organization. For example, one of the participating companies is a public utility with 5,000 employees. 85 percent of the organization's workforce is male and three quarters of the employees do not have an office where they can view posters or attend regular activity sessions in an office conference room. However, employees can wear a metal mood button to work. In addition, the company has established communication through which they deliver HR related items. Using this structure, the mental health program leaders could communicate the conversation that each field team leader should have with their team. The program leaders also identified champions in the workplace to promote the program to their colleagues.

Convincing companies to sign on can also be a challenge. Public Inc. quickly discovered that many professional services firms, like law firms, were reluctant to be the first to publicly admit that they needed mental health services for their employees. To overcome this challenge, Public Inc. identified a very high profile firm to champion the issue in the national newspapers. Other companies would soon follow. "It is a way to show who is involved to let companies know that they are not alone. Nobody wants to be first or last to that party," notes Rosenthal.

When companies are publically and nationally acknowledged for their involvement in the program, senior management at those companies are more likely to champion the program as part of the organizational mission. Another key component of the program is CEO buy-in. Each organization is encouraged to have a CEO-level event to kick off the program.

One example of strong CEO involvement is the Not Myself Today program at Canadian energy company PowerStream Inc. PowerStream, a community-owned energy company with 505 employees, implemented the campaign over a four-week period with a different "main activity" each week. To kick-off the first week of the campaign, the CEO declared his support for employee mental health and the campaign through his weekly CEO Blog. During the second week, the CEO spoke at employee Town Halls on the importance of removing

the stigma and understanding mental health and mental illness.

## Results

Between 2013 and 2014, 241 companies have signed on to participate in Not Myself Today and a total of 485,000 employees have been touched by the program. Public Inc. uses an ongoing survey process to track program satisfaction. Overall, the feedback has been good. "We have employees requesting the program year after year because they find value in it," says Rosenthal.

Employers sign on to Not Myself Today to signal to employees that mental health is important. In addition, many companies hope to achieve a business outcome from participation in the program.

"Mental health is a bottom line issue," says Rosenthal. "The sooner you get the prevention, the better for employees who can get help they need." Rosenthal notes that if a company wanted to create a workplace mental health from scratch, it would cost far more than the investment companies currently make in the Not Myself Today toolkit.

Public Inc. conducts informal follow-up with companies to find out which strategies are most successful and understand key challenges. Each year the organization publishes a few case studies highlighting the efforts of select program participants.

Accenture Canada ran a campaign during early October 2014, coinciding with World Mental Health Day and Mental Illness Awareness Week. The company reported that the Not Myself Today initiative was particularly effective in getting people's attention, starting conversation and helping to normalize a "touchy" subject. According to the company, the response from employees was overwhelmingly positive with many expressing pride and appreciation for the initiative and the practical and engaging content. The campaign also served as a great platform for people to get more involved as a volunteer and/or champion within our organization.

## Next Steps

Rosenthal would like to see more organizations sign on to the program as well as an increased focus on Mental Health in the workplace. "Out of necessity we are going to have to change it enough so that it is different every year. We would love to see the program in 5,000 companies throughout Canada and reaching millions of people," he says.

