THE BIGGER PICTURE

MENTAL HEALTH AND OTHER FOUNDATIONAL FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE WORK READINESS

WHAT WE KNOW

Worktopia aims to learn more about Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and employment. Job preferences and work skills focus on employment, but they are only part of a larger picture related to job readiness. Other foundational factors like mental health, well-being, and self-esteem are also important, and are essential for workplace success.

Mental health is a significant concern in Canada with approximately 20% of us experiencing a mental illness or addiction in a given year; 50% in our lifetime\(^1\). For adults with ASD, rates of mental health issues are even higher\(^2\).

WHAT WE ARE LEARNING

On the Worktopia application form, participants were asked about their potential experience related to 10 mental health concerns. Figure 1 below lists the specific mental health concerns probed, and illustrates the percentage of participants who endorsed each item.

![Figure 1: Potential Experience with Mental Health Concerns](image)

44% Endorsed 3+ mental health concerns

Of the 163 participants who completed the program, 72 individuals endorsed 3 or more mental health concerns and their scores were significantly lower on measures of self-esteem and well-being compared to those who endorsed less than 3 items.

IDEA EXCHANGE

We remain interested in what happens to participants’ mental health, well-being and self-esteem when the program concludes.

What we want to continue to learn:

- To what extent do participants access community supports, particularly those related to mental health and well-being?
- What ongoing or other resources would be helpful?
- Do participants stay connected?
- Is momentum on the employment pathway maintained or advanced with better mental health?

If you are interested in sharing more about your post program experiences, please call 1.888.733.7976 or e-mail info@worktopia.ca.

TIDBIT #6

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LINKS

1. [http://evidencenetwork.ca/mental-health](http://evidencenetwork.ca/mental-health)