



MENTAL HEALTH COMMISSION OF CANADA

WORKFORCE ADVISORY COMMITTEE: Improving Mental Health in the Workplace Project

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Deadline for full proposal: **May 25, 2009**

Information on RFP content matters may be obtained from:

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bbourget@persona.ca

Information on administrative matters may be obtained from:

Susan Lynn Hardie

(403) 385-4025

shardie@mentalhealthcommission.ca

This Request for Proposals is intended to seek individuals or teams who can collect, review and synthesize information to assist the MHCC in advancing “promising practices” in mental health, and mental health care, where and when needed for the citizens of Canada.

1. Context

Out of the Shadows at Last (Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, 2006), the major Senate report on mental health, first identified the need for this research. The report states that:

When compared to all other diseases, mental illness and addiction rank first and second in terms of causing disability in Canada. [They are] concentrated among men and women in their prime working years.

Employers and co-workers may fear people living with a mental health disorder; they may think of persons with mental illness as unskilled, unproductive, unreliable, even potentially violent. These unwarranted assumptions may contribute to a reluctance to hire someone with a history of mental illness, or to limit that individual's career advancement if a previously undisclosed mental illness is revealed. Job loss is also a possible danger for those with the courage to "come out of the closet" at work.

There are many important gaps in the research into mental health and the workplace. Little is known regarding best practices in managing the disability associated with the most prevalent mental disorders. ...disability management programs are relatively new to the mental health field and are too little studied to determine their effectiveness.

The lack of mental health literacy among employees, managers and supervisors reduces the likelihood of speedy identification and resolution of mental health and addiction problems in the workplace. A further challenge stems from the fact that the health care system and the workplace are very different, with differing cultures, languages, practices and priorities. Creating common goals, a shared understanding and a common language that will allow information to be shared and knowledge to be conveyed across different systems is essential.

(Out of the Shadows at Last, 2006, p. 173-183)

The Workforce Advisory Committee, Mental Health Commission of Canada, has placed a high priority on developing a greater understanding of "promising practices" and incentives to supporting employment for persons in the workplace living with mental health problems and illnesses. These are individuals who are or have been gainfully employed, but who need additional support to continue working or to return to work.

Specifically, the Workforce Advisory Committee wants to identify models inclusive of collaborative care approaches for improving mental health in the workplace, and to undertake a critical analysis of these models. The successful investigator or team is expected to draw upon the broad spectrum of stakeholders (e.g. employers, employees, occupational and mental health professionals). This research will further inform Canadian employers about the strengths and limitations of current models. In addition, this project will identify “promising practices” that will enhance the capacity of employers to identify, prevent, manage and resolve mental health problems and illnesses in the workplace, and to re-integrate employees living with mental health problems and illnesses into the workplace.

2. Objective

The objectives of this RFP are to hire qualified researcher(s) to:

- (i) Systematically identify current models for improving mental health in the workplace;
- ii) Complete a critical analysis of the current workplace models.
- iii) Based on the critical analysis and subsequent interviews/focus groups identify “promising practices” that better enable employers to detect, prevent, intervene early and manage mental health problems and illnesses in the workplace and by so doing, to support their employees in continuing to work or in returning to work;
- (iii) Develop a plan to disseminate the information to employers across Canada, in the form of an Employer’s Guide to Mental Health in the Workplace.
- (iv) Link the work and products of this project with other Mental Health Commission of Canada initiatives including the Workforce Committee projects, such as the Workplace Leadership and Policies Project..

The research protocols are to be inclusive and employ an equity lens to capture the particular experience/narratives of women and diverse communities.

3. Description of Work

The researcher(s) will conduct a systematic search in the peer-reviewed and grey (i.e. organizational reports and internet sites) literature for related empirical research as well as “promising practices” that describe in detail *which* workplace practices could be implemented and *how* existing practices could be enhanced in order to facilitate support to and retention of employees living with mental health

problems and illnesses. These employees are recognized as a heterogeneous group, with members who vary on characteristic including age, gender, disability, sexual orientation, race, and ethno-cultural identity and community.

This will include:

- A literature review including national and international and “grey” literature reviews for workplace models that support employees living with mental health problems and illnesses and identify associated “promising practices” for the workplace.
- Prepare and vet a set of criteria for evaluation of models, programs and related materials.
- Complete a critical analysis that includes attention to the strengths, weaknesses, relevance and appropriateness of the models with respect to implementation of such models in Canada
- Complete key stakeholder consultations with organizations implementing the most promising models. Such consultations are essential in revealing “promising practices” associated with each model.
- A report and recommendations to the Mental Health Commission on “promising practices” for Canadian employers. The report will include specific reference to challenges and barriers that could influence uptake of the “promising practices” informed by each model by employers (e.g. challenges and barriers that are unique to women employees; employees from diverse communities, etc.). It will also identify strategies to overcome these challenges and barriers.
- Development (including drafting and vetting) an Employers’ Guide to Improving Mental Health Care in the Workplace.
- Development of a knowledge translation and exchange strategy to disseminate key findings, including a plan to raise awareness of and widely disseminate the Employer’s Guide.

4. Deliverables

- A report to MHCC which will include:
 - A review of relevant literature
 - Assessment of the relevance of established models, practices and related materials for early detection, prevention, management and return to work based on critical analysis and consultations with key stakeholders.

- A report and recommendations to the Commission on “promising practices” in this area.
- A draft Employer’s Guide to Improving Mental Health Care in the Workplace. If deemed feasible, to enhance workplace acceptance this Guide should be presented in a format that reflects current practice such as Occupational Health and Safety Assessment Series (OHSAS) 18000 or International Organization for Standardization (ISO 14000).
- Recommendations for dissemination key findings, including a plan to launch and disseminate the Employer’s Guide.

5. Budget

The cost of this 18 month project ending January 2011 shall not exceed the available budget of \$150,000 (including applicable GST or HST). Bidders must submit a detailed statement of their estimated costs associated with the submission, including the per diem rates of any other researchers involved in the analysis.

6. Submission Process

Please forward written or electronic proposals to the MHCC no later than **May 25, 2009**. Proposals should include: (i) resumes for the proposed project team outlining their qualifications including related experience; (ii) approach and methods for carrying out of the research and developing policy recommendations; (iii) work plan, timelines, and detailed budget; and, (iv) a demonstrated ability to implement a research initiative of national scope. Please include contact information for two references knowledgeable about your or your teams’ experience with related projects.

Proposals are to be single-space, 12pt font, and not exceed 10 pages in length. Researcher(s) background information, references and proposed budgets can be included as appendices.

Proposals must be electronically submitted by to:

Mental Health Commission of Canada (MHCC)

Suite 800, 10301 Southport Lane S.W.

Calgary, Alberta T2W 1S7

shardie@mentalhealthcommission.ca

MHCC Contact: Susan Lynn Hardie, Associate Research Officer II

1-403-385-4025

Proposals will be accepted until: May 25, 2009

7. Contract Matters

This RFP is not a legal offer, but only an invitation for proponents to submit a proposal to MHCC and shall not be construed as an agreement by MHCC to purchase any goods or services. MHCC shall not be bound to accept any proposal, or to enter into an agreement with any proponent submitting a proposal.

It is the proponent's responsibility to inform itself of all aspects of the project's requirements and the goods and services to be provided. No claim will be considered at any time for reimbursement for any expense incurred as a result of any misunderstanding in regard to the conditions or scope of the goods or services required.

Each proponent shall be responsible for any costs incurred during, or consequent upon, the preparation of its proposal, or the negotiation of any agreement with MHCC arising from their selection to provide any goods or services to MHCC.

Notwithstanding any other provision contained herein, MHCC in its sole discretion and without obligation to provide any reason therefore, shall have the unfettered right to, at any time and from time to time, do any of the following: (i) accept or reject any proposal at any time, including without limitation, a proposal that is received by MHCC after the proposal submission deadline; (ii) accept or reject individual items in a proposal; (iii) request clarification or further information regarding any item in a proposal; (iv) consider any alternate goods, services, terms or conditions that may be offered, whether such offer is contained in a proposal or otherwise; (v) split this RFP or any agreement negotiated in connection with same, into multiple parts and accept proposals (or portions thereof) from more than one proponent; (vi) enter negotiations, at any time before or after the proposal submission deadline with anyone, in relation to the subject matter hereof; (vii) if applicable, reject any proponent's recommendation of any subcontractor or any other third party associated with the proposal and jointly, along with such proponent, determine alternate acceptable third parties; (viii) extend or otherwise vary the proposal submission deadline, or any other timeline set out herein; (ix) revise or vary this RFP; (x) withdraw or cancel this RFP in whole or in part, whether having received any response hereto or not; and (xi) waive any of the stated requirements set out in this RFP or request non-compliant proponents to rectify any non-compliance within such time as MHCC may require.

No extension, variation, revision, withdrawal or cancellation of this RFP or any provision hereof shall be valid or binding on MHCC unless it is in writing and issued by a duly authorized representative of MHCC.

MHCC shall not at any time have any obligation to deal exclusively with any proponent, including the successful proponent (s). MHCC expressly reserves its rights and discretion to seek a proposal regarding the subject matter hereof, from any person whomsoever and at any time.

The successful proponent(s) will be notified in writing by MHCC of their selection as a party with whom MHCC wishes to negotiate an agreement. MHCC may, in its sole discretion, determine to move forward to the negotiation stage with one or more proponents, or it may determine to cancel this RFP. If an agreement cannot be negotiated with the successful proponent(s) within a time period satisfactory to MHCC, MHCC may at its sole discretion, terminate negotiations with that proponent(s) and either enter into negotiations with another proponent, or terminate this RFP process and not enter into an agreement with any of the proponents.

There will be no valid or binding agreement between the proponent and MHCC, and no proponent will acquire any legal or equitable rights or privileges, relative to the goods or services to be provided or this RFP until the execution of a written agreement between MHCC and the proponent.

8. Information Matters

All information, including, without limitation, any specifications, instructions, notes and memoranda, provided at any time by MHCC or its agents or contractors, to the proponent, or to employees, agents or contractors of the proponent, in connection with the this request for proposals or project shall be and remain at all times the sole and absolute property of MHCC and its licensors and shall not be used by the proponent for any purpose other than its participation in this request for proposal process, without the express written consent of MHCC.

No publicity or discussions of the proponent's involvement or promotion of its relationship with MHCC shall be permitted until an agreement is fully executed by both parties and then only with the express written consent of MHCC. The failure of any proponent to do so shall be cause for the immediate rejection the proponent's proposal and the removal of the proponent from MHCC's approved vendor lists.

By submitting a proposal, proponents are acknowledging that their proposals may be shared with third parties as part of MHCC's evaluation and analysis process and hereby consent to same. Furthermore, proponents understand and agree that unless any option, scenario, opportunity, idea or process ("Idea") included in its proposal, is clearly identified in writing as proprietary to the proponent and meets the criteria that give rise to trade secret protection under applicable law, proponents will not be entitled to claim any compensation of any nature if said Idea is later used or implemented by or on behalf of MHCC, in whole or in part, whether pursuant to the contract contemplated by this request for proposals otherwise. No compensation will be due if MHCC developed the Idea itself without reference to the proposal, had prior knowledge of the Idea,

holds or otherwise acquires proprietary rights to the Idea, or has not committed any fault or negligence with respect to its use of the Idea.

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THIS REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS IS being provided to you for the sole purpose of your review of this Project and to enable you to respond to the Request for Proposal. You may not copy, distribute or use these materials for any other purpose without THE MENTAL HEALTH COMMISSION OF CANADA'S PRIOR written permission.

References

Canadian Government Document. Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology. (2006). *Out of the Shadows at Last: Transforming mental health, mental illness and addiction services in Canada*. Retrieved December 3, 2007, from <http://www.parl.gc.ca/39/1/parlbus/commbus/senate/com-e/soci-e/rep-e/rep02may06-e.htm>.