

Treating depression improves productivity

OUTREACH INTERVENTION PROVES BETTER FOR PATIENTS AND EMPLOYERS

Employees seeking treatment for depression who participated in a program that included a telephone outreach intervention had fewer symptoms, worked more hours, and had greater job retention than participants receiving usual care.

These are some of the conclusions of a study funded by the National Institutes of Health's National Institute of Mental Health.

Depression results in U.S. economic costs of tens of billions of dollars due largely to productivity losses. Comparative studies show that depression is among the most costly of all health problems to employers. Despite evidence that there are effective treatments, many depressed workers are untreated or inadequately treated.

Researchers found that depression severity was significantly lower in a group of clinically depressed individuals who participated in an intervention that included telephone support and their choice of telephone psychotherapy, in-person psychotherapy, or antidepressant medication than in the group

receiving usual care. In addition, patients in the intervention group were more likely to experience recovery (26.2 percent vs. 17.7 percent).

Hours worked were significantly higher in the intervention than the usual care group. The data indicated that workers in the intervention group worked an average of two more hours per week than workers in the usual care group, which is equivalent to an annualized effect of more than two weeks of work. This overall effect was due to a higher rate of job retention (92.6 percent vs. 88.0 percent) and significantly more hours worked among employed respondents.

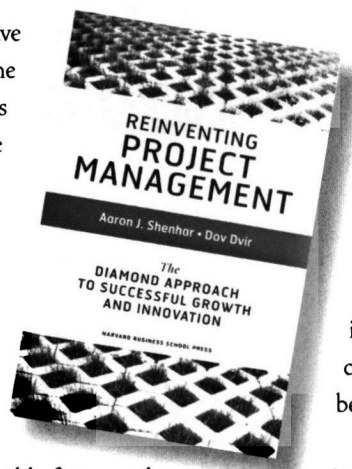
"The results suggest that enhanced depression care of workers has benefits not only on clinical outcomes but also on workplace outcomes," the authors write. "The financial value of the latter to employers in terms of recovered hiring, training, and salary costs suggests that many employers would experience a positive return on investment from outreach and enhanced treatment of depressed workers."

BOOK OF THE MONTH

Project management jewel

For 15 years, Aaron Shenhar and Dov Dvir have collected data on more than 600 projects in the business, government, and nonprofit sectors around the world. While 85 percent of these projects failed to meet time and budget goals, the fact remains that the number of projects in most organizations is expanding.

In their book *Reinventing Project Management: The Diamond Approach to Successful Growth and Innovation*, Shenhar and Dvir present a new model for assessing and planning projects. Their adaptive "diamond approach" is based on a success-focused, flexible framework that assumes projects should be treated as business activities



expected to deliver business results.

The method is designed to help managers and project teams make the right assessment before presenting their project proposals to top management, shows executives how to ask the right questions and foresee danger before they make a commitment, and guides project teams in adapting their project management style to the circumstances, environment, and task for better business results.

Reinventing Project Management: The Diamond Approach to Successful Growth and Innovation is published by Harvard Business School Press (\$35).

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FAKING IT

Product counterfeiting accounts for 5 percent to 7 percent of world trade, worth an estimated

a year.