

**ISATAP FOUNDATION MEETING
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'AT for Occupational WH&S in High Risk Industries : Mining, Oil, Gas and Police in Australia'

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Mental Illness in general population (Australia)



- ❖ 1 in 5 will suffer mental illness in 2012
- ❖ mental illness: third leading cause of non-fatal disease and injury
- ❖ depressive symptoms: jobs with high psych. demand, long work hours and low levels of social and environmental support

Black Dog Institute

- ❖ 76% of suicides by men. Ave age 44yr

Aust. Bureau of Statistics

Why AT for High-Risk Industries?

High Risk Industries: high stakes, high demand

- ❖ higher stress
- ❖ higher rates of substance abuse
- ❖ higher rates of mental illness: Depression, Anxiety, PTSD etc.
- ❖ higher rates of suicide
- ❖ higher incidents of work place accidents/fatalities
- ❖ higher incidents of work place injury

Mining/Oil/Gas:

Stressors

- ❖ environmental hardship
- ❖ extreme weather conditions
- ❖ geographical isolation
- ❖ lack of support, separated from loved ones
- ❖ FIFO (fly-in-fly-out)
- ❖ boredom
- ❖ 14 hour shifts, two weeks straight
- ❖ high risk work requiring constant attention

Miners' Work Hazards: the cost

- ❖ fatigue
 - ❖ relationship problems
 - ❖ loneliness
 - ❖ substance abuse
 - ❖ sexually transmitted diseases
 - ❖ obesity
 - ❖ anger and violence
 - ❖ depression
 - ❖ sleeping difficulties
 - ❖ cardiovascular, musculoskeletal
- leads to increase in work accidents and fatalities**

Work Place Autogenic Training : Organisational Obstacles

- ❖ WH&S laws to make employer personally responsible
- ❖ 'zero harm' rhetoric
- but.....**
- ❖ 'macho' male environment
- ❖ lack of understanding of mental health
- ❖ lack of commitment to mental health
- ❖ non-involved executive management
- ❖ fitness instructors in charge of Work, Health and Safety
- ❖ reinventing the wheel, Return On Investment paralysis
- ❖ psych injury hidden by workers comp classification system
- ❖ companies 'fudging' psych injury stats in annual report
- ❖ inflexible rosters

leads to under funding, poor programme choice

Reasons targeted resources sector

- ❖ mining boom in Australia
- ❖ uptake of 10s of thousands of workers attracted by jobs and money
- ❖ higher incidents of accidents, fatalities, suicide, mental illness, divorce etc
- ❖ researched psych injury in industry: the 'hidden' injury
- ❖ WH&S: lack of understanding and commitment to address mental health
- ❖ frustrated with lack of duty of care and knew AT could assist miners

Method of increasing AT profile

- ❖ became a mental health advocate for the industry
- ❖ wanted to increase exposure of AT (the 'perfect fit')
- ❖ media and professional industry exposure (reports, articles, conferences)
- ❖ advocated Autogenic Training workshops for work sites (in groups, cost effective, intensive but sustainable results)
- ❖ advocated prevention focus (unlike EAP)

The Challenge of Marketing AT

- ❖ How to get message through to industry?
- ❖ How to 'market' AT?
- ❖ How to 'sell' benefits?
- ❖ How to differentiate it?
- ❖ How to prove bureaucratic ROI criteria?
- ❖ A stress management technique?
- ❖ A resilience building technique?
- ❖ One size fits all technique?
- ❖ How to fit in with inflexible rosters?
- ❖ Slogans: 'A skill for life', 'AT helps your workforce to feel well, think well and work well.'

Demographic of a Miner

- ❖ male
- ❖ English and non English speaking background, Indigenous
- ❖ poor communication skills
- ❖ mind-body disconnect
- ❖ learning difficulties
- ❖ illiteracy
- ❖ limited computer skills if at all
- ❖ poor skills at self-reflection and theory of mind
- ❖ 'macho'
- ❖ Aussie mateship culture bonding through alcohol
- ❖ think discussing problems a weakness

Why AT Standard Exercises for this demographic?

- ❖ appealing to males
- ❖ scientific so can trust, not scared
- ❖ appeals to logic
- ❖ like the idea of 'exercises'
- ❖ feel a bond with the work of astronauts (NASA's AT)
- ❖ doesn't require much language
- ❖ no need to talk about feelings
- ❖ doesn't require cognitive self-reflection or 'theory of mind' (unlike CBT)
- ❖ body feedback 'success' vs life of perceived failures
- ❖ short term therapy but a skill for life
- ❖ one-in one or in groups (cost-effective workshops)

Autogenic Training for NSW Police Force



- ❖ Autogenic Therapy for Police, 1994-2006
- ❖ treatment/EAP, short term and long term clients
- ❖ flexible AT, Standard and more advanced Autogenic Therapy
- ❖ adapted to client
- ❖ funded by NSW Police, Police Union, NSW Police and Workers Compensation
- ❖ for police with a variety of presenting psychological and physical problems
- ❖ pre and post psych assessments (structured interview and psychometric testing)
- ❖ objective(direct): to assist/treat police mental health problems
- ❖ objective (indirect): return to normal functioning including return to work if appropriate

Demographic of Police Clients

New recruits

- ❖ male and female
- ❖ university educated

Old recruits

- ❖ mostly male, 'old school' thinking
- ❖ no tertiary education

Presentation

- ❖ Clinical Depression, PTSD, other Anxiety Disorders etc.
- ❖ Not fit for duty

Police Stressors



- ❖ dangerous people and situations
- ❖ critical incidents and other crime
- ❖ public animosity
- ❖ death on job
- ❖ breaking bad news, dealing with others' grief
- ❖ shift work

Police Stressors



- ❖ internal complaints system
- ❖ internal affairs
- ❖ promotions system
- ❖ royal commissions
- ❖ gender vilification/discrimination

Autogenic Therapy Results



- ❖ significant symptom reduction
- ❖ shift to asymptomatic
- ❖ positive shifts in morale and thinking
- ❖ better decision making (even without CBT)
- ❖ in less enduring cases speedy return to work

Contact Details



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