1. **How to identify presenteeism**
   - Increased errors/accidents; lower quality work; changed personality/mood swings; doubts and lack of confidence in abilities; hyper-vigilance – compulsive checking of work.
   - Also watch out for changes in sickness policies whereby presenteeism may increase later.
   - Identify different patterns where presenteeism may occur for some people after a longer period of sickness (concerns about job security) and others it may be habitual practice.
   - Also watch for areas of short staffing/downsizing and heavy sickness absence where some people may be pressurised into attending work while sick.
   - Easier to identify presenteeism in jobs with set hours where people are highly visible. Harder to identify presenteeism in more flexible jobs, especially where people can work from home or elsewhere.

2. **What to do**
   - Emphasise that the costs of presenteeism are much greater than the costs of absenteeism.
   - Understand the sickness culture – are people “expected” or encouraged to come into work. Any bullying or harassment of people who are off sick?
   - Ask people why they feel obliged to come into work. Different jobs are likely to have different risk factors, but issues such as job insecurity and management pressure are likely to be relevant for all. Carers may be particularly likely to present. Older workers might be too.
   - Emphasise the duty of care to employees to discourage presenteeism.
   - Emphasise the risk of infectious disease to colleagues and service users/customers.
   - Highlight the damage done by presenteeism – target the type of work. Especially dangerous in safety critical work and also jobs where faulty decision making can have a serious impact on others. Also dangerous in physical work (see research with builders who do not get paid if off sick).
   - Organisations and employees might be prosecuted if they are not “fit for work” and errors occur. Research has been conducted on presenteeism in pharmacists and it increases prescription errors.
   - Highlight case studies where presenteeism has led to flawed decision making/danger.
   - The use of mediation/support such as EAPS and occupational health.

3. **Making changes**
   - Could be linked to HASAWA duty of care.
   - Open door policy/approachability of management.
   - Important for managers to follow their own policies as they are role models. If they attend work while unwell, presenteeism is unlikely to decrease.
   - Identify punitive sickness policies. How do we change the culture?
   - Not likely to be able to legislate as there are so many contributing factors.

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