

# Mental Health in the Workplace

**COST TO CANADIANS**  
\$ **50** BILLION  
• health care • lost time • work disruptions

**21.4%**  
...of the working population in CANADA currently experience mental health problems and illnesses

**30%**  
of all Short and Long Term Disability Claims

## Why should employers be concerned about mental health?

Including mental health, along with physical health and safety, in your business model is important to an overall healthy workplace. Poor mental health not only hurts the individual, it also reduces corporate profits and impacts your organization's ability to thrive. It's important that all levels of the workplace - including the Board of Directors, management, finance, and human resources departments - get involved to incorporate positive mental health at your workplace.

For people who do have a mental health problem, having the support of their workplace can make a world of difference.

There is no one "right way" to create a mentally healthy workplace. Every workplace is different - from the people doing the work, to the work that needs to be done, to the leaders running the organization, the size of the organization, the external environment that influences the community, and the external resources the company draws. All of these factors play a role in employee mental health.

### WORKPLACE BENEFITS



There is also a legislative requirement for employers to protect the mental and physical health of their employees. Many provincial occupational health and safety acts have been expanded to include harm to psychological well-being in the definition of harassment. In jurisdictions that do not have explicit legislation dealing with psychological health in the workplace, the general duty clause would apply.

There is a national, voluntary Standard for psychological health and safety in Canadian workplaces. Unveiled by the Mental Health Commission of Canada in consultation with the CSA Group and BNQ in January 2013, the standard is a framework to help organizations integrate psychological health and safety into existing programs. By providing tools, resources, and comprehensive and systematic guidelines, the standard helps promote psychological health and protect against psychological harm.

## What is a psychologically healthy and safe workplace?

A psychologically safe and healthy workplace is one that promotes workers' mental well-being and does not harm employee mental health through negligent, reckless or intentional workplace practices. Basically, an organization's commitment has to start at the top. For example, clear leadership directives that are considerate of all workplace participants is an essential element for a psychologically safe workplace.

To start the journey toward a psychologically safe workplace, employers could create and implement a Comprehensive Workplace Health and Safety (CWHHS) Program. This program is a series of strategies and

related activities, initiatives and policies developed by the employer, in consultation with employees and union representatives, to continually improve or maintain the quality of working life, health, and workforce well-being. These activities are developed as part of a continual improvement process to improve the work environment (physical, psychosocial, organizational, economic), and to increase personal empowerment and personal growth.

Did you know?

only **23%**

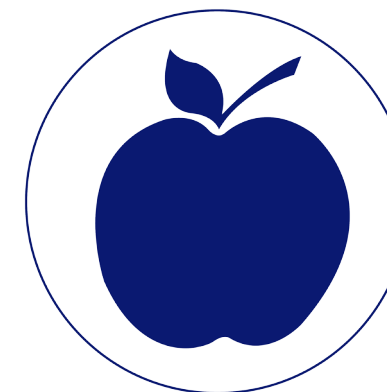
of Canadians feel comfortable talking to their employer about their mental illness for fear of facing discrimination or dismissal.

## What can employers do to help?

- Encourage active employee participation and decision making
- Clearly define employees' duties and responsibilities
- Promote work-life balance
- Encourage respectful and non-derogatory behaviours
- Manage workloads
- Allow continuous learning
- Have conflict resolution practices in place
- Recognize employees' contributions effectively

## 10 healthy habits for mental fitness

1. Schedule "me-time" daily.
2. Reward yourself.
3. Play to your strengths.
4. Ask for help and offer to help.
5. De-stress your diet.
6. Choose a positive attitude.
7. Practice relaxation techniques and get enough sleep.
8. Set goals and stay on target with a journal.
9. Get regular physical activity.
10. Press pause once in a while. Downtime is good!



## Resources

### Guides

Workplace Health and Wellness

### E-Courses

Mental Health: Awareness  
Mental Health: Communication Strategies  
Mental Health: Health and Wellness Strategies  
Mental Health: Psychologically Healthy Workplaces  
Mental Health: Signs, Symptoms and Solutions  
Stress in the Workplace

### Posters and Promotion Tools

10 Healthy Habits for Mental Fitness poster  
Healthy Minds at Work poster  
Mental or Physical, Illness is Illness poster

Work-Life Balance infographic  
Mental Health in the Canadian Workplace infographic

Factors of Psychologically Safe Workplaces Fast Facts card  
Mental Fitness Fast Facts card

### Online Resources

Healthy Minds at Work - [ccohs.ca/healthyminds/](http://ccohs.ca/healthyminds/)  
Guarding Minds at Work survey and resources - [guardingmindsatwork.ca/](http://guardingmindsatwork.ca/)  
StressAssess personal and workplace surveys - [stressassess.ca/](http://stressassess.ca/)



For more resources, visit  
[www.ccohs.ca/topics/wellness/mentalhealth/](http://www.ccohs.ca/topics/wellness/mentalhealth/)

