WorkSafe™
SASKATCHEWAN
Work to live.

Psychological Health & Safety (PH&S) Roadmap

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Psychological Health & Safety Roadmap

WorkSafe SASKATCHEWAN
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This resource helps organizations take actionable steps to assess and enhance the psychological health and safety (PH&S) of their organization.

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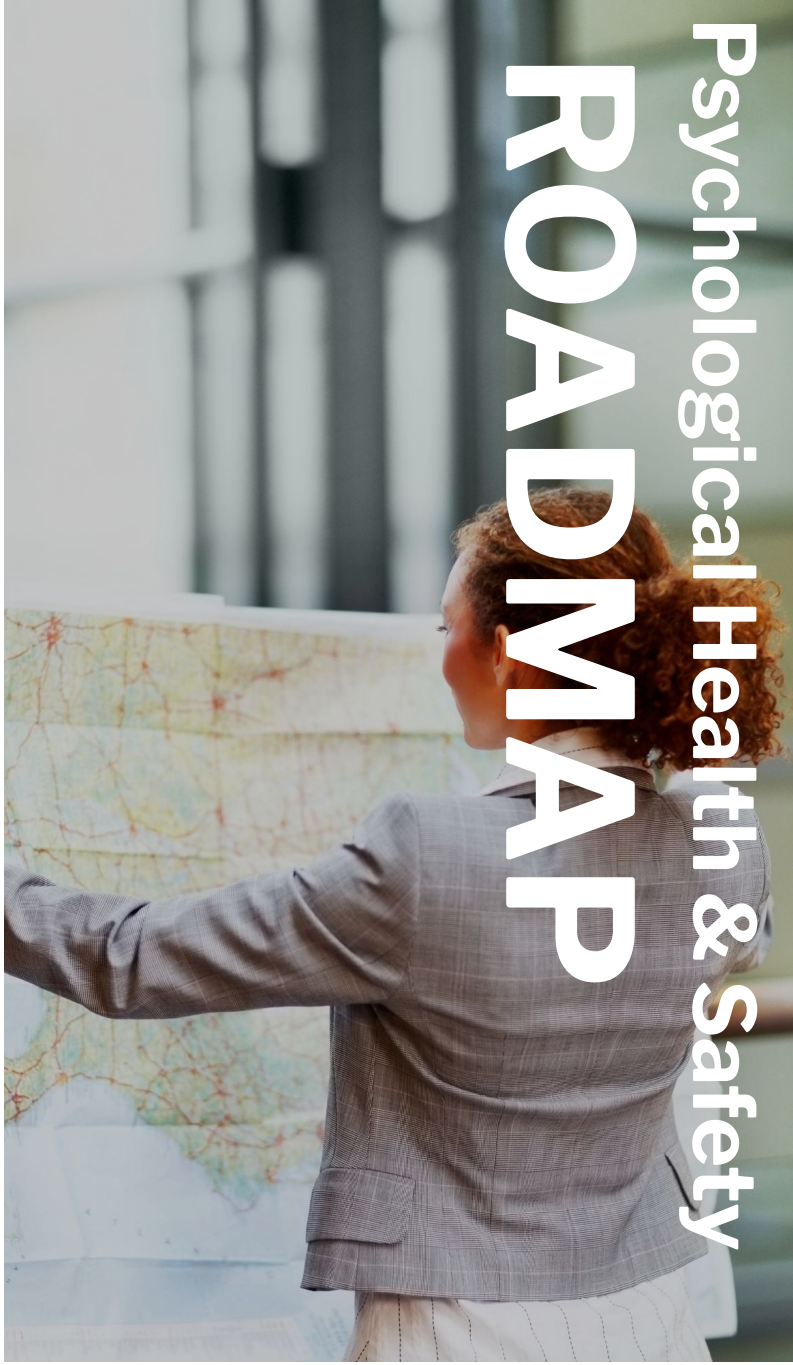
See also: Small Business PH&S Toolkit; Return-to-Work Toolkit



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Section One

Background

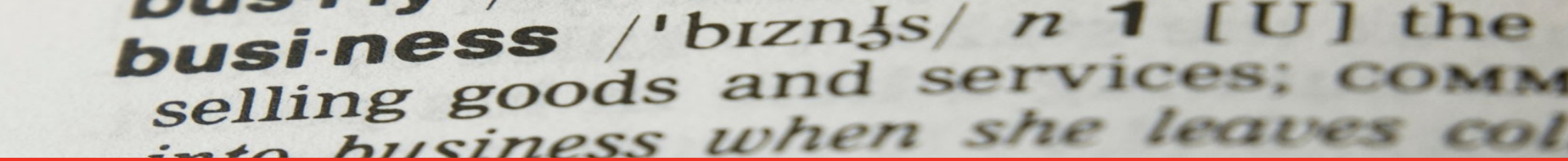
What is a Psychologically Healthy & Safe (PH&S) Workplace?

A workplace that **promotes workers' psychological well-being** and actively works to **prevent harm to worker psychological health** including in negligent, reckless, or intentional ways.

Embedding PH&S in all Stages of the Employment Life Cycle

Psychological health and safety - like occupational health and safety (OH&S) - is not about a one-off webinar presentation, or a first-quarter priority. Rather, best practices require embedding of PH&S principles across every stage of the employment life cycle, from recruitment and hiring, to exit and termination. This takes dedicated time and attention - but does not have to be overwhelming. While it's important to start taking action, know that you don't have to do it all overnight. It's just important to start somewhere.

ACTION: Download and read the CSA *Z1003 National Standard of Canada for Psychological Health & Safety in the Workplace*.



Key Definitions

The Standard (CAN/CSA-Z1003-13/BNQ 9700-803/2013) — The National Standard of Canada for Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace is a voluntary standard that specifies requirements for a documented and systematic approach to develop and sustain a psychologically healthy & safe workplace.[1]

Psychologically healthy and safe (PH&S) work environment — A workplace that promotes workers' psychological well-being and actively works to prevent harm to worker psychological health including in negligent, reckless, or intentional ways.

Psychologically safe leadership — Leadership which prevents psychological harm, promotes the psychological health of workers and addresses problems related to psychological health and safety. Psychologically safe leadership comprises effective skills, strategies and approaches within these five key domains: (1) communication and collaboration, (2) social intelligence, (3) problem solving and conflict management, (4) security and safety, and (5) fairness and integrity.

Psychological health — A state of well-being in which an individual realizes their own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to their community.

Work environment factors — Psychosocial factors within a work environment, unit or team that can impact the psychological health and safety of employees.

Worker — a person employed by an organization or a person under the day-to-day control of the organization, whether paid or unpaid, which includes employees, supervisors, managers, leaders, contractors, service providers, volunteers, students, or other stakeholders actively engaged in undertaking activities for benefit to the organization.

Bullying & Harassment — Comments or actions that would knowingly embarrass, upset, or cause distress to another person. These actions are unwanted and result in harm to physical, mental or emotional wellbeing.

Diversity — Diversity is about the individual. It is about the variety of unique dimensions, qualities and characteristics we all possess.[2]

Inclusion — Inclusion is about the collective. It is about creating a culture that strives for equity and embraces, respects, accepts and values differences.[2]

Diversity & Inclusion — Diversity and inclusion is about capturing the uniqueness of individuals, and creating environments that value and respect individuals for their talents, skills and abilities to the benefit of the collective.[2]

[1] Canadian Standards Association. (2013). National Standard: Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace (CSA-Z1003-13/BNQ 9700-803/2013).
[2] Canadian Centre for Diversity and Inclusion (CCDI). (2021). Diversity defined.

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13 Work Environment Factors that Contribute to PH&S

A comprehensive psychological health and safety management system (PHSMS) involves the identification and elimination of psychosocial hazards within the work environment that pose a risk of psychological harm to workers; the control of risks associated with hazards that cannot be eliminated; and, structures and practices that support and promote workplace PH&S.

Best practices identify 13 key psychosocial hazards in the work environment that employers need to be aware of.

What are Psychosocial Hazards?

Psychosocial hazards relate to how work is organized, social factors at work, and aspects of the work environment, equipment and hazardous tasks (including work tasks, equipment and employment arrangements).

ACTION: Familiarize yourself with each of the 13 work environment factors. Review videos, action plans and FAQs and read blog articles.

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Making the Case for a Psychologically Healthy & Safe Workplace

Psychological health and safety is new to many people. Often, before we are able to take action, we need to convince others (senior executive, our direct boss, our team members) of the reasons why we should invest time and resources toward PH&S.

1 **The Legal Case**

2 **The Health Case**

3 **The Business Case**

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1 The Legal Case

There's increasing recognition in Canadian law that employers must minimize their contribution to workers developing mental health problems from workplaces with high psychosocial risk. An unhealthy workplace will have more accidents and may open itself to more litigation.

An illustrative example of this is the case of Nancy Sulz versus the RCMP, where the Supreme Court of British Columbia ruled that an employee's mental health was severely impacted by a psychologically unhealthy and unsafe work environment. Sulz was awarded nearly $1 million in damages.[3]

[3] HR Reporter. (2006). Former RCMP officer awarded $950,000.
[4] ISO. (2021). ISO 45003:2021 Occupational health and safety management — Psychological health and safety at work — Guidelines for managing psychosocial risks.

What best practices, standards and legislation exist on PH&S?

Canada has a National Standard (CAN/CSA-Z1003-13/BNQ 9700-803/2013 – *Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace*[1]) that specifies requirements for a documented and systematic approach to develop and sustain a psychologically healthy & safe workplace. This is the first standard of its kind in the world, and has informed the development of the ISO 45003 international standard.

In 2021, an international standard on PH&S was released (ISO 45003[4]). This provides guidance on the management of psychosocial risks at work, which are seen as part of a comprehensive occupational health and safety management system.

There is also a growing body of case law, as well as provincial legislation that addresses PH&S.

ACTION: Read more about the legal case for PH&S and the evolution of workplace mental health in Canada.

2 The Health Case

1 in 5 Canadians
experience mental illness
in any given year.[5]

63%

of physicians say
depression, anxiety, and stress
are the fastest growing health issues
over the past 3 years.[6]

Mental illness is the
leading cause of disability
across the world.[7]

The economic burden on
MENTAL ILLNESS
in Canada is currently estimated at
$88 billion per year
and includes health care costs, lost productivity, and reductions in quality of life.[5]

What is health?

Physical and mental health is the result of a complex interplay between a range of individual and environmental factors, including but not limited to:

- Family history of illness and disease;
- Health behaviours such as smoking, exercise, or substance use;
- Health risks such as exposure to harmful chemicals;
- Genetics;
- Personal life events, circumstances and history; and
- Access to supports such as timely healthcare or social supports.

How can the workplace contribute to health?

Work can contribute to psychological health problems in many ways. An unhealthy workplace may contribute directly to psychological distress, such as demoralization, depressed mood, anxiety, or burnout. Workplace factors may increase the likelihood of a mental disorder, make an existing disorder worse, or impede effective treatment and rehabilitation. Work-related stress encourages unhealthy lifestyle practices, which can impact the health of workers.

[5] Smetanin et al. (2011). The life and economic impact of major mental illnesses in Canada: 2011-2041. Prepared for the Mental Health Commission of Canada. Toronto: RiskAnalytica
[6] Morneau Shepell. (2016). Workplace Mental Health Priorities: 2016.
[7] WHO. (2019). Mental Disorders.

3 The Business Case

An unhealthy workplace means increased costs across the board. An unhealthy workplace can result in:

- increased turnover, absenteeism, and presenteeism;
- reduced productivity, job satisfaction, engagement, and commitment.

What can this cost an employer?

On average, **mental health problems** can cost businesses up to **$1,500** per employee per year.[8]

On the other hand, a business **with a commitment to psychological health and safety** will see a reduction in:

- conflict,
- turnover,
- disability,
- grievances,
- accommodations, and
- injuries.

These businesses will benefit from gains in recruitment, retention, employee engagement and morale, productivity, creativity, innovation, performance, and...PROFITS!

In any given week, **500,000** employed Canadians are **unable to work** due to **mental health challenges**.[6]

In organizations with a **psychologically unhealthy and unsafe workplace,** employees experiencing **mental health challenges** missed **nearly twice as many work days.**[9]

Employees who received appropriate **mental health** care had **fewer short-term disability days**, and for 100 employees, it translated into **$50,000 savings.**[10]

[8] Ontario Chamber of Commerce. (2017). Working Towards Mental Health.
[9] Ipsos Reid. (2017). Workplaces that are implementing the National Standard of Canada for Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace Described by Employees as Psychologically-Safer Environments.
[10] Dewa CS, Hoch JS, Carmen G, Guscott R, Anderson C. (2009). Cost, effectiveness, and cost-effectiveness of a collaborative mental health care program for people receiving short-term disability benefits for psychiatric disorders. Canadian Journal of Psychiatry, 54(6):379 - 388.

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Section Two

The Road to Psychological Health & Safety (PH&S)

The Road to PH&S: 7 Steps

Breaking Down the 7 Steps

1 Problem Recognition

Assess your workplace by evaluating the 13 work environment factors that contribute to psychological health and safety.
Identify areas of strengths and recognize any problem areas.

2 Policy Statement & Commitment

Let your team know that you're committed to making changes that will benefit the psychological health of everyone in your organization.
Hold an all-team meeting and put up written statements or posters on the office bulletin or intranet.

3 Workplace Participation

Get your employees involved.
Hold brief “huddle talks” once a month to discuss mental health.
Select a respected employee that can champion psychological health & safety at work.
Consider creating a PH&S committee.

4 Planning & Assessing Needs

Make a plan to better understand and address the areas of concern.
Assess the psychological health and safety of your organization by: **using online assessment tools** (eg. Guarding Minds at Work), **hiring an independent consultant,** and/or **collecting existing data** (eg. absenteeism, payroll, incidents, stress leaves, employee turnover, etc.).

ACTION: Review the Guarding Minds at Work PH&S Action Plan.

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5

Implementation

Communicate your PH&S goals and action plans to your staff. This will help increase participation from all team members.
Start small - choose just one goal and action plan to begin with.

6

Evaluation & Corrective Action

Evaluate your progress by: asking your staff for feedback, tracking incidents, and using a staff suggestion box to further support employee participation.

7

Management Review

Meet with your management team or PH&S committee to discuss suggestions, incidents, and feedback.
Commit to an action plan with annual review based on meeting results.

Case Examples

Scenario A:

Anita is the CEO and Founder of a tech startup. She started her company out of her home with only one employee, but recent growth has allowed her to hire 8 additional employees, including 2 part-time contractors. Anita understands the importance of mental wellness at work and wants to start off on the right foot. She plans to embed psychological health and safety (PH&S) in all aspects of her business, so she follows the guidelines provided in the Canadian Standard (CAN/CSA-Z1003-13/BNQ 9700-803/2013) — Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace.

Scenario B:

Casey has owned an independent grocery store for nearly 20 years and currently employs 35 people. Casey plans to pass his family business to his daughter, Helena, in the next few years. Helena has noticed problems among the staff, including decreased engagement, increased conflict, and low morale. She feels that something should be done to improve the psychological working environment of their grocery store. Together, Casey and Helena set out to restructure their workplace practices to ensure their grocery store is psychologically healthy and safe. They follow the guidelines provided in the Canadian Standard (CAN/CSA-Z1003-13/BNQ 9700-803/2013) — Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace.

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Problem Recognition

Examples

Scenario A:

- Anita recognizes the importance of PH&S and plans to embed psychologically safe practices as she build her business up.
- Anita holds a meeting with her newly hired employees to discuss her plans to put dedicated attention on PH&S at work.
- Anita encourages feedback and discussion from her employees, asking them to each provide a specific 'wish list' item they would like to see when it comes to workplace mental health.

Scenario B:

- Helena convinces her father, Casey, to restructure their work practices to ensure PH&S in their grocery store.
- A team meeting is held with all 35 staff members. Casey and Helena announce their plan to make necessary changes to ensure psychological wellness at work.
- Staff members are asked to complete an anonymous Survey Monkey poll identifying the top 3 stressors they experience at work. Responses are then reviewed at a management team meeting.

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Policy Statement & Commitment

Examples

Scenario A:

- Anita conveys to her team that she is committed to PH&S in her organization in the following statement:
  - "Welcome to the team! We are currently developing policies that will embed psychological health and safety in our workplace. We are committed to ensuring your mental health while at work. We value your opinion, so we would appreciate the help of any volunteers who would like to assist in creating our PH&S policies."

Scenario B:

- Helena and Casey tell their staff about their commitment to PH&S. They hang up posters in staff areas with clear statements, such as:
  - "Casey's Independent Grocer is committed to supporting a mentally healthy workplace. We place a strong value on civility and respect in all interactions, including with customers, clients and the public."

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Workplace Participation

Example

Scenario A:

- Anita wants her team to participate in embedding PH&S in her company. She seeks out participation by:
  - Selecting a passionate, emotionally intelligent employee to champion mental health, support coworkers, and raise awareness about mental health.
  - Sending out monthly newsletters with information on psychological wellness.

Scenario B:

- Helena and Casey want to get their staff involved in the new changes. They seek out participation by:
  - Creating a mental health committee that consists of at least one senior executive, one frontline manager, and one employee. Specialized workshop training is provided to this committee so they are able to support coworkers when problems arise. These employees will champion mental health at work.
  - Hanging up posters in the staff room with information about mental health community resources.
  - Adding "employee mental health" as a running agenda item on monthly meetings.

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Planning & Assessing Needs

Example

Scenario A:

- Anita wants to assess the PH&S needs of her business, but she has very little data to go on due to how new her startup is. Anita might do the following:
  - Take time to learn about each of the 13 work environment factors by watching videos and blogs.
  - Provide a self-rating of "great", "good", "needs improvement" or "significant challenge" for each of the 13 factors.

Scenario B:

- Casey and Helena want to assess their PH&S needs, so they:
  - Use the free, online employee survey tool in Guarding Minds at Work.
  - Collect and review data on absenteeism, benefits utilization, incidents, stress leaves, and employee turnover to determine any trends.
- Once the unique needs of Casey's Independent Grocery are identified, Casey and Helena set realistic goals.
  - Example: Employees feel stressed when dealing with upset customers. Casey and Helena decide that additional training is needed to help employees handle disgruntled customers.

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Implementation

Example

Scenario A:

- Anita communicates to her team the results of her self-rating and proposes some actions to address anything that she identifies as “needs improvement” or “significant challenge”. She asks her team for feedback.
    - Example. Anita recognizes the need for recognition and reward for high-performers. She brainstorms ideas for non-monetary rewards, perks, and benefits.

Scenario B:

- Helena and Casey hold a team meeting to discuss the results of the Guarding Minds at work employee survey. They check in with their staff to gather feedback.
    - Example. Helena and Casey determine that work-life balance is lacking for several employees who consistently pick up extra shifts and stay late. They decide to reach out to their EFAP (employee family assistance program) provider to see what resources and training they may have to enhance employee work-life harmony.

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Evaluation & Corrective Action

Example

Scenario A:

- Anita holds regular team meetings to gather feedback and suggestions regarding PH&S.
- Anita meets with each of her team members 1:1 to ensure she has a strong understanding of their satisfaction with their role and to determine their individual growth and development needs.

Scenario B:

- Helena and Casey send out a follow-up Survey Monkey to their team to gather feedback on the work-life balance resources and supports that have been provided. They also keep track of absenteeism/sick time.
- Helena and Casey set up a staff suggestion box where staff can provide anonymous feedback and suggestions.

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Management Review

Example

Scenario A:

- Anita updates her goals and action plans based on staff feedback. As part of her team's annual business and strategy planning day, she dedicates times to specifically discuss PH&S goals.

Scenario B:

- Casey and Helena work with the mental health committee to develop a list of ongoing roles and responsibilities, and work together to develop an ongoing plan for areas of training they want to offer to all staff over the next 24 months.

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Section Three

Next Steps: It's Your Turn

PH&S Action Checklist

- ☐ **Read the National Standard of Canada for PH&S**
- ☐ **Review Assembling The Pieces: An Implementation Guide To The National Standard Of Canada**
- ☐ **Identify areas of strength and areas for improvement across the 13 work environment factors**
- ☐ **State your commitment to PH&S to your team**
- ☐ **Get your staff involved**
- ☐ **Assess your unique needs and set realistic goals and actions**
- ☐ **Implement your goals — start small with one simple, practical action**
- ☐ **Evaluate your progress**
- ☐ **Meet with your team to discuss suggestions, incidents, and feedback**

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Useful Resources

Dr. Joti Samra, R.Psych. & Associates and MyWorkplaceHealth have compiled a list of **FREE** helpful resources:

Download the Resilience Toolkit

Opt in to the newsletter offered by *Dr. Joti Samra, R.Psych. & Associates* and get the **Psychological Health & Resiliency Toolkit**.

The PH&R Toolkit contains evidence-based resources—all oriented around enhancing overall psychological health.

Join the newsletter, get the kit!

Read Our Top Blog Articles

7 blogs on Suicide

Burnout Prevention & Recovery

Balance at Work

What is Psychological Health & Safety?

Create Balance & Good Habits Working from Home

Parents: Positive Discipline Tips

Watch Our Short Videos

What is a Psychologist?

Benefits of Online Counselling

What is CBT?

Anxiety & Stress: 4-Stage Breathing

What is Psychological Health?

Our Series on LGBTQ+ education

Our Series on better sleep

Get the Tips Brochure

Download the shareable brochure featuring 10 Tips to Enhance Psychological Health, Wellness & Resilience produced by *Dr. Joti Samra, R.Psych. & Associates.*

Check Out Full Webinars

Get access to or share 2, full-length webinars presented by Dr. Joti Samra.

Enhancing Psychological Health, Wellness & Resilience in the Era of COVID-19 (47:55 mins)

Tips to Enhance Sleep Quality and Duration (66:25 mins)

Check Out Our Websites

Dr. Joti Samra, R.Psych. & Associates

MyWorkplaceHealth

WorkSafe Saskatchewan in partnership with Dr. Samra have developed a comprehensive PH&S Resource Centre with informational resources, videos & action sheets & blogs.

Psychologically Safe Leadership

Workplace Psychological Health and Safety

[Videos] 13 Work Environment Factors

- Organizational Culture (3:22 mins)
- Psychological & Social Support (3:53 mins)
- Clear Leadership & Expectations (4:39 mins)
- Civility & Respect (4:00 mins)
- Psychological Demands (4:23 mins)
- Growth & Development (3:06 mins)
- Recognition & Rewards (3:13 mins)
- Involvement & Influence (2:58 mins)
- Workload Management (4:15 mins)
- Engagement (4:23 mins)
- Balance (4:23 mins)
- Psychological Protection (3:37 mins)
- Protection of Physical Safety (4:08 mins)

[Videos] 5 Domains of Psychologically Safe Leadership

- Communication & Collaboration (4:30 mins)
- Social Intelligence (4:31 mins)
- Problem Solving & Conflict Management (4:23 mins)
- Security & Safety (3:59 mins)
- Fairness & Integrity (5:01 mins)

About

WorkSafe Saskatchewan
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WorkSafe Saskatchewan is a partnership between the Ministry of Labour Relations and Workplace Safety and the Saskatchewan Workers' Compensation Board, created to reduce the incidence of occupational illness and injury.

The WorkSafe Saskatchewan partnership was formed in 2002 when Saskatchewan's occupational injury rate sat at a twenty-year record high of 4.95 per cent. WorkSafe Saskatchewan reflected the partners' belief that public education combined with targeted workplace and industry programming could reverse the trend.

WorkSafe Saskatchewan programming includes social marketing campaigns, a community relations program and targeted workplace and industry interventions.

MyWorkplaceHealth
Dr. Joti Samra, R.Psych., CEO & Founder
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Dr. Joti Samra, R.Psych. is a national thought leader on issues relating to psychological health, wellness and resilience. She is the CEO and Founder of MyWorkplaceHealth, a full-suite national workplace consulting firm and Clinic Director of *Dr. Joti Samra & Associates* - a clinical and coaching practice.

Dr. Samra is a highly-regarded expert in psychological health and safety (PH&S). Over the past two decades, she has been involved in numerous national initiatives that have contributed to policy change in Canada, and is a Founding & Ongoing Member of the CSA Technical Committee that developed the National Standard of Canada for Psychological Health & Safety in the Workplace. This Standard is the first of its kind in the world, and has shaped policy development for workplace PH&S at the international Organization for Standardization (ISO) level.

Dr. Samra is the lead Research Scientist who created Guarding Minds at Work: A Workplace Guide to Psychological Health & Safety, in which the psychosocial factor frame adopted by the Standard was developed. She is also the developer of the Emotional Intelligence Self-Assessment, and the Psychologically Safe Leader Assessment, assessment and action planning resources that align leaders' skills with the requirements of the Standard. Dr. Samra and her team have extensive expertise in helping organizations implement initiatives related to workplace PH&S including implementation of the CSA Standard; providing leadership development, training and coaching services across a broad range of areas, including emotional intelligence, psychologically safe leadership and mental health awareness; and, providing a breadth of services to enhance employee psychological health, wellness and resilience.