

Psychological Health & Safety (PH&S) Program [2023-2028]

WorkSafe Saskatchewan has moved toward having one overarching provincial strategy on addressing serious injuries and fatalities, which involves partners in safety and compliance, compliance and enforcement and prevention and learning.

The [2023-2028 Fatalities and Serious Injuries Strategy](#) focuses on three priority industries and areas of focus that benefit a large majority of Saskatchewan businesses.

Stakeholders have acknowledged the challenges with tackling health and safety issues and the need to ensure integration of psychological health and safety as part of future approaches, particularly given emerging issues related to COVID-19, workload overwhelm and burnout, and violence. These issues

have translated into a growing prevalence of psychological injury claims.

There is recognition of the physical and psychological impacts that fatalities and serious injuries can have on workers, teams and the broader organization.

The PH&S program will help stakeholders build capacity for PH&S assessment, as well as action planning, through the prevention and learning stream.



Introduction

Key outcomes of WorkSafe Saskatchewan’s first PH&S strategy

Our understanding of the importance of psychological health and safety in the workplace has grown exponentially over the past decade. In 2013, the Canadian Standards Association (CSA) released The National Standard of Canada for Psychological Health & Safety in the Workplace (CSAZ1003), a pioneering and innovative best practice framework. The standard, which is the first of its kind in the world,

is a set of voluntary guidelines, tools and resources which are intended to guide organizations in promoting mental health and preventing psychological harm at work. The standard has garnered interest not only across Canada, but internationally and has informed the development of the global ISO45003 standard which was released in the summer of 2021.

WorkSafe Saskatchewan is proud

to be a national leader in terms of investing dedicated resources to grow internal and external capacity with respect to PH&S. To this end, in 2018 WorkSafe Saskatchewan launched its first provincial psychological health & safety strategy, to address PH&S in Saskatchewan workplaces. This strategy focused on awareness and breaking down stigma around PH&S, education and an annual three-year learning event.

This PH&S strategy resulted in a number of key highlights and accomplishments:



- **5,751 workers** completed Psychological Health and Safety Awareness, 2,375 workers completed Reducing Mental Health Stigma in the Workplace and 2,446 workers completed Being a Mindful Employee: An Orientation to Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace e-learning training modules through our partnership with the Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety.
- **3,623 workers** completed online training modules (Enhancing Workplace Resiliency, Certificate in Managing Psychological Health Issues at Work and Advanced Certificate in Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace) through our partnership with the University of Fredericton.
- **1,584 workers** participated in the three annual learning events.

¹ Canadian Standards Association. (2013). Psychological health and safety in the workplace.

² International Organization for Standardization. (2021). Occupational health and safety management — Psychological health and safety at work — Guidelines for managing psychosocial risks (ISO standard 45003).

Appendix C

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Building the foundation to move from awareness to implementation

A strong foundation of resources, videos, toolkits and practical templates have been developed from 2020 to 2023 to support employers to move from awareness to implementation:

	<p>The launch of WorkSafe Saskatchewan's Psychological Health & Safety Resource Centre</p>	<p>The launch of the WorkSafe Saskatchewan Psychological Health & Safety Resource Centre. The resource centre provides a comprehensive portal of resources that helps employers and employees navigate through the key principles and best practices associated with PH&S. The resource centre contains a wide variety of resources - from articles, videos, and action plans to a directory of mental health resources.</p>
	<p>The creation of a series of toolkits for employers, with the advisory input of the Association of Workers' Compensation Boards of Canada (AWCBC)</p>	<p>The creation of a series of toolkits for employers, with the advisory input of the Association of Workers' Compensation Boards of Canada (AWCBC): a PH&S Roadmap (which provides an overview and guidance of steps to take when starting on your organization's PH&S journey), a Small Business PH&S Toolkit (which provides suggestions and practical advice for small employers with limited resources) and a Return-to-Work Toolkit (which provides specific guidance on unique mental health considerations when supporting return to work)</p>
	<p>Development of a PH&S Information Resource Group toolkit for internal use by Saskatchewan Workers' Compensation Board employees.</p>	<p>Development of a PH&S Information Resource Group toolkit for internal use by Saskatchewan Workers' Compensation Board employees. This toolkit will help support staff who provide a triage and resource support function to employees, people leaders and organizations/employers on PH&S through their various roles, including those internal to WCB, as well as to external organizations and employers.</p>
	<p>Creation of an electronic newsletter for executive leaders</p>	<p>Creation of an electronic newsletter for executive leaders, where monthly information on PH&S was disseminated, along with suggested action steps and an opportunity to share organizational experiences and challenges.</p>

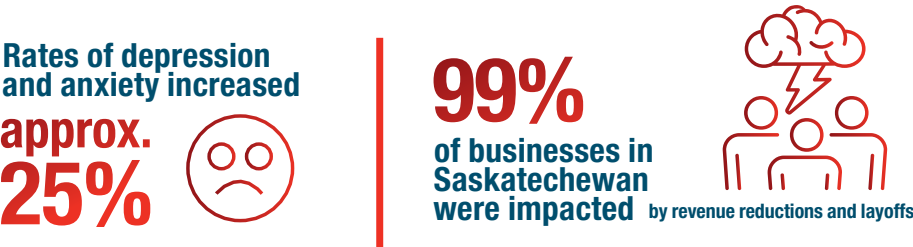
PH&S and the modern-day work environment

The spring of 2020 brought a myriad of unexpected, unforeseen, and unpredictable challenges to the personal and working lives of most all of us, not just in Saskatchewan or Canada, but across the globe. There

is no question that all of our lives, and most of our work environments, have changed since March 2020. While the impacts have varied in magnitude and scope, they have collectively had a dramatic impact on

our personal mental health, and by extension our work lives.

By 2017, the World Health Organization (WHO) had already declared depression (a proxy for mental health issues more broadly) the leading cause of worldwide disability. The COVID-19 pandemic saw an amplification of this, with rates of depression and anxiety increasing by 25 per cent . Rates of burnout (which the WHO identifies as an occupational phenomenon) have increased . The work from home (WFH)/hybrid work environment brought new challenges to finding work-life harmony, such as increased social isolation and family conflicts. Of course, certain sectors had greater impacts than others, with those in customer facing and health care roles being disproportionately impacted. We also had a massive redefinition of who a frontline worker is, which contributed to new considerations around those work environments and roles considered high-risk. And of course small businesses - which comprise 99 per cent of businesses in Saskatchewan - who were most impacted by revenue reductions and being forced to reduce hours/lay off workers⁷.



³ JAMA. 2017 Apr 18;317(15):1517. doi: 10.1001/jama.2017.3826. Depression Is the Leading Cause of Disability Around the World

⁴ World Health Organization. 2022 Mar. COVID-19 pandemic triggers 25% increase in prevalence of anxiety and depression worldwide. <https://www.who.int/news/item/02-03-2022-covid-19-pandemic-triggers-25-increase-in-prevalence-of-anxiety-and-depression-worldwide>

⁵ Threlkeld, K. 2021 Mar. Employee Burnout Report: COVID-19's Impact and 3 Strategies to Curb It. <https://uk.indeed.com/lead/preventing-employee-burnout-report>

⁶ Kong X, Zhang A, Xiao X, Das S, Zhang Y. Work from home in the post-COVID world. Case Stud Transp Policy. 2022 Jun;10(2):1118-1131. doi: 10.1016/j.cstp.2022.04.002. Epub 2022 Apr 6. PMID: 35399610; PMCID: PMC8985448.

⁷ Statistics Canada. 2020 June. COVID-19 and job displacement: Thinking about the longer term. <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/45-28-0001/2020001/article/00030-eng.htm>

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Looking to PH&S and the future

Over the last several years, most employers and employees alike have found ways to adjust and adapt to the range of approaches needed to ensure good physical health and safety through the pandemic. However, as we know from the statistics, a significant percentage of us, at all levels within an organization, are struggling with maintaining optimal mental health.

If there is one lesson we have learned (of the many that have come

our way) these past few years, it is that our organizations are far more than just bricks and mortar, they are comprised of individuals. Healthy, resilient and thriving organizations are comprised of healthy, resilient and thriving workers, both physically, and psychologically.

Furthermore, the pandemic underscored the importance of attending to PH&S given its strong ties to enhanced recruitment, retention and engagement .

Never before has the imperative for workplace psychological health and safety been as strong as it is today. As such, our PH&S program for 2023-2028 is focusing on building capacity for PH&S assessment and action planning.

A requisite to taking effective action involves having a strong understanding of work environment risks, as they pertain to the 13 psychosocial factors identified by CSA Z1003 as being fundamental in improving workplace PH&S:

A requisite to taking effective action involves having a strong understanding of work environment risks, as they pertain to the 13 psychosocial factors identified by CSA Z1003 as being fundamental in improving workplace PH&S:

- 1. Organizational culture
- 2. Psychological and social support
- 3. Clear leadership and expectations
- 4. Civility and respect
- 5. Psychological demands
- 6. Growth and development
- 7. Recognition and reward
- 8. Involvement and influence
- 9. Workload management
- 10. Engagement
- 11. Balance
- 12. Psychological protection
- 13. Protection of physical safety

⁸ Ramkissoon, A., Smith, P., & Oudyk, J. (2019). Dissecting the effect of workplace exposures on workers' rating of psychological health and safety. American Journal of Industrial Medicine, 62(5), 412–421. <https://doi.org/10.1002/ajim.22964>

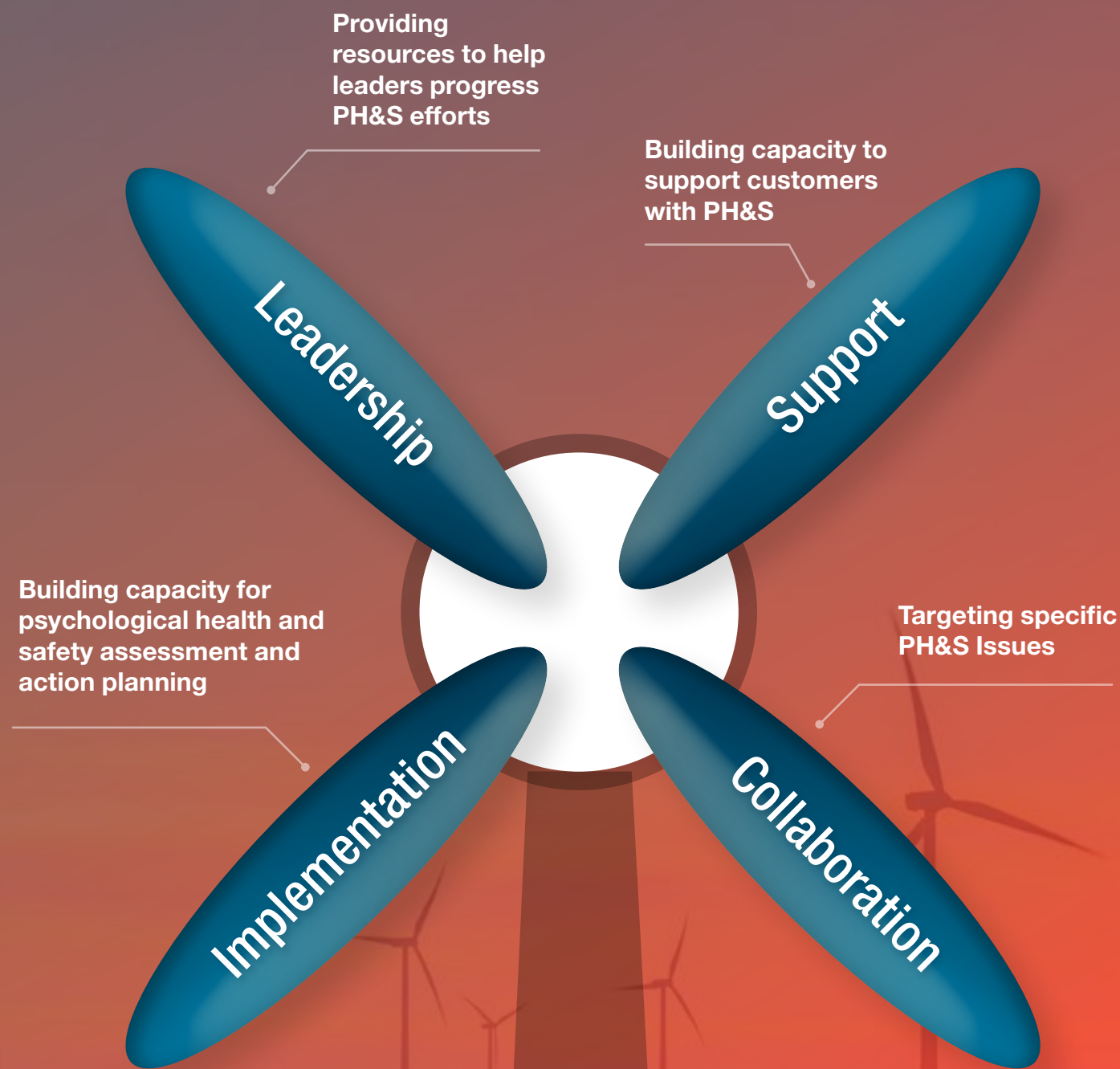
2023-2028: Moving from knowledge to implementation

WorkSafe Saskatchewan has developed a psychological health and safety program (2023-2028) as a follow-up to the first strategy to address psychological health and safety in Saskatchewan workplaces. The PH&S program will build on the first strategy, with the aim to provide guidance to assist leaders and managers to create and maintain psychologically safe workplaces. Organizations can be at different places in their journey towards a psychologically safe workplace and the primary areas of focus provide the flexibility needed to meet customers where they are at.

The goal of the program is to engage leaders to develop action plans towards psychological health and safety.

Creating and sustaining psychologically safe workplaces requires ongoing awareness about psychosocial factors and their impact on people, providing training and skill building for leaders, people managers and workers to create a healthy environment, as well as continuous risk assessment and action planning to prioritize and address work factors that impact wellbeing most.

The program has four objectives:



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Leadership

Why:

- Psychological health and safety is about how we relate and communicate with each other in an organizational setting. Organizational leadership, from senior executives as well as all people leaders and managers within an organization, is critical to the success of PH&S-related initiatives. Leaders should model by example, which involves self-assessing and enhancing personal leadership skills (such as psychologically safe and emotionally intelligent leadership).
- The National Standard of Canada for Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace outlines how an organization can meet requirements in orientation, training and supports for employees and those in leadership roles (such as supervisors and managers) to prevent psychological harm, promote psychological health and address problems related to psychological health and safety.

Approach:

- Enhance understanding among senior leaders of the organizational responsibility for PH&S, which is now recognized by global best practices as an extension of occupational health and safety. Provide supports to leaders so that they are confident in verbalizing and demonstrating commitment to PH&S in a proactive manner.
- Expand knowledge and dissemination among Saskatchewan employers of existing resources, leadership assessment tools and training programs.
- Provide tools on the WorkSafe Saskatchewan Psychological Health and Safety Resource Centre to help leaders facilitate social dialogue in their workplaces around PH&S (for example, safety talks, safety moments around the 13 psychosocial factors, reflection questions along with short didactic videos).

Tactic:

- The PH&S learning pathway (Appendix 1) provides the steps towards building a healthy workplace culture and developing competencies in leaders, managers and employees. Regardless of where an organization is at in their journey, the guide provides a visual of how to progress psychological health and safety efforts.



Providing resources to help leaders progress PH&S efforts

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Support

Why:

- There is recognition that PH&S is a very new topic for most employers and teams, and most small businesses won't have the resources (financial, staff) to dedicate to PH&S. As such, it is important to expand the PH&S triage supports provided to Saskatchewan workplaces.

Approach:

- Expand internal capacity among WCB staff by convening a PH&S Information Resource group, members of which gain familiarity with the PH&S Information Resource Group toolkit and the breadth of resources on WorkSafe Saskatchewan's PH&S Resource Centre, and are equipped with the knowledge and skills to provide effective PH&S triage supports to employers.
- Expand dissemination and knowledge of the range of resources on the PH&S Resource Centre to employers throughout Saskatchewan, and determine additional needs they may have.

Tactic:

- Provide PH&S support for general inquiries through the Employer Resource Centre (including navigating the WCB system, locating resources and training, triaging support to help with completing psychological injury reports, as well as broader support to assess PH&S and action planning).
- Expand on offerings already existing through the WorkSafe website of resources. Consider specifically expanding digital and asynchronous training resources on PH&S, given their cost-efficiency and practicality given the expanding work from home/hybrid work environment. Consider other gap areas that may exist (such as substance use/abuse) and expand resources accordingly.

Building capacity to support customers with PH&S

Implementation

Building capacity for psychological health and safety assessment and action planning

Why:

- Psychologically safe workplaces involve a process of improvement to continually monitor, evaluate and develop action plans to address the work factors that impact well-being most. The Psychological Health and Safety Roadmap enables organizations to assess and evaluate their current state, prioritize and develop an action plan, implement, evaluate and improve.

Approach:

- Implement the PH&S Roadmap with employers to help deepen the understanding of employer needs regarding PH&S.
- Identify and troubleshoot challenges and barriers that arise with respect to PH&S assessment and action planning, and help inform WCB on the additional range of PH&S supports required.

- Implement a pilot with a minimum of four organizations and provide up to a year of consultative and triage support on PH&S assessment action planning. This would include using the breadth of resources provided on the PH&S Resource Centre. Implementation groups would be supported by monthly meetings and matched with a PH&S Information Resource Group member.
- Understand the needs, challenges and barriers pilot organizations have to PH&S assessment and action planning, and work to troubleshoot these challenges.
- Use the outcome of the initial implementation pilot to confirm broader implementation and the approach used to assist employers to build capacity for PH&S assessment and action planning.

The Psychological Health and Safety Roadmap



Tactic:

- Expand PH&S Roadmap
- Implementation to customers in all Saskatchewan industries.

Collaboration

Why:

- Understanding the 13 psychosocial factors and implementing systematic change across an organization is an activity that will continue beyond the initial scope of this plan. However, targeting specific PH&S issues such as burn-out, self-harm and substance use is also a necessary step in creating a healthier workforce and society.

Approach:

- Building on the knowledge and expertise gained from the PH&S Roadmap implementation, begin tackling specific PH&S issues such as self-harm and substance use amongst the Saskatchewan worker.
- Utilizing expertise from within and beyond the province, this group will utilize systematic problem solving to reduce the impact of specific mental health issues within the provincial workforce.
- Actions will be determined using current data and employee experience and tested within the learning collaborative membership before delivering a solution to the province as a whole.
- Metrics will be established to determine outcomes and determine if actions are improving the targeted mental health concern.

Tactic:

- Establish a PH&S learning collaborative made up of workers, employers, and other appropriate expertise to address specific PH&S issues.

Targeting specific
PH&S issues

Reporting progress

The progress of the PH&S program and efficiently sharing those results with stakeholders will be essential. Appropriate metrics will be developed and shared with all stakeholders at key milestones throughout the life of the program.	This will ensure stakeholders are kept informed of the progress and results and support the continuous improvement mindset by allowing the PH&S program to flex and change based on the progress and results seen.	Progress will be reported in alignment with the provincial Fatalities and Serious Injuries Strategy reporting cycle.
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Reference: key persuasive statistics

- **At least one in five Canadians will experience a mental health problem or illness annually. Half will experience a mental health problem or illness by the age of 40.**

Source: Smetanin et al. (2011). The life and economic impact of major mental illnesses in Canada: 2011-2014. Prepared for the Mental Health Commission of Canada. Toronto: RiskAnalytica.

- **Employees who feel supported by their leadership are less stressed, more inclined to return to work after an injury, and perform their roles more effectively.**

Source: Kurtessis, J. N., Eisenberger, R., Ford, M. T., Buffardi, L. C., Stewart, K. A., & Adis, C. S. (2017). Perceived Organizational Support: A Meta-Analytic Evaluation of Organizational Support Theory. Journal of Management, 43(6), 1854–1884. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0149206315575554>

- **According to WHO experts, mental health issues are the leading cause of disability worldwide.**

Source: Pan American Health Organization, 2019. https://www3.paho.org/hq/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=15481:mental-health-problems-are-the-leading-cause-of-disability-worldwide-say-experts-at-paho-directing-council-side-event&Itemid=0&lang=en#gsc.tab=0

- **Prior to the pandemic, only 8 per cent of the workforce had flexible working options - this figure has increased to 62 per cent.**

Source: Owl Labs State of Remote Work Report, 2022. <https://owllabs.com/state-of-remote-work/2022>

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Psychological Health & Safety (PH&S) learning path

The Psychological Health and Safety learning path provides the steps towards building a healthy workplace culture and developing competencies in leaders, managers and employees.

The National Standard of Canada for Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace outlines how an organization can meet requirements in orientation, training, and supports for employees and

those in leadership roles (such as supervisors and managers) to prevent psychological harm, promote psychological health and address problems related to psychological health and safety.

	Introductory			Preparing to implement PH&S Roadmap		Implementation of PH&S Roadmap
	Start with these resources to begin introducing healthy workplaces to managers and employees.					
Learning path	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 3a	Step 3b	Step 4
	WorkSafe Saskatchewan Psychological Health and Safety Resource Centre	Psychological health and safety basics	Enhancing workplace resiliency	Preparing front line leaders for PH&S implementation	Preparing senior leaders and HR professionals for P&HS implementation	Implementing PH&S roadmap
Area of focus	Psychological health and safety in the workplace. Personal mental health			Organizational psychological health and safety in the workplace for people leaders	Psychological health and safety in the workplace for senior leaders to support PH&S implementation.	Implementing a PH&S management system in the workplace in alignment with the 13 psychosocial risk factors.
Objective	Review and understand the 13 workplace psychosocial risk factors as identified by The National Standard for PH&S in the Workplace found in the WorkSafe Psychological Health and Safety Resource Centre .	University of Fredericton’s online training, supported by WorkSafe Saskatchewan. Psychological Health and Safety Basics Provides the basic PH&S awareness for all members of the organization	University of Fredericton’s online training, supported by WorkSafe Saskatchewan. Enhancing Workplace Resiliency Teach effective resiliency skills, coping mechanisms and strategies.	University of Fredericton’s online training, supported by WorkSafe Saskatchewan. Two of the University of Fredericton’s online training courses, supported by WorkSafe Saskatchewan. Certificate in Managing Psychological Health Issues at Work Teach people leaders with the organization to understand and address PH&S issues in the workplace including in preparation for process and policy changes to implement the 13 factors in an organization.	Four of the University of Fredericton’s online training courses, supported by WorkSafe Saskatchewan. Advanced Certificate in Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace	Utilizing the PH&S Roadmap developed by WorkSafe Saskatchewan to build capacity for psychological health and safety assessment and action planning.
Basic concept	Understand how the 13 factors impact PH&S in the workplace and prepare for implementation of changes to increase psychological safety in the workplace	Supports learners in recognizing, developing and maintaining psychological resiliency: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Realistic thinkingBehavioural actionManage sleep, exercise and dietRelaxationStress managementPositive psychology	Supports learners in recognizing, developing and maintaining psychological resiliency: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Realistic thinkingBehavioural actionManage sleep, exercise and dietRelaxationStress managementPositive psychology	This online certificate program begins with an introductory course on psychological health and safety concepts. It is followed by two courses on managing the psychological health issues of individual employees. The course covers key principles and consideration, including how emotional intelligence plays a part in supporting emotionally distressed employees.	This online program provides participants with a solid knowledge base of the National Standard of Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace for planning, implementing and evaluating psychological health and safety programs.	By implementing the PH&S Roadmap, an organization will create a psychologically safe workplace that will improve PHS outcomes and prevent PH&S injuries from occurring.
Target audience	All employees	All employees	All employees	This certificate is suitable for people in management roles who support individual employees experiencing emotional distress or mental health issues/disorders.	Senior leaders and HR professionals responsible for the implementation of PH&S in their workplace. This is also valuable for those looking to gain more in-depth knowledge of the 13 factors.	All employees
Cost	None	\$55 per employee	\$30 per employee	\$155 per employee	\$257.50 per employee	None