Integrating Psychological Health & Safety into the Workplace

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March 8, 2018

Learning Objectives

- Provide context for why this discussion is important
- Change our language around mental health in the workplace
- Inspire change in yourself so you can be a role model
- Failing that, what are the external drivers for change
- How do we integrate psychological health and safety into our workplaces
News Headlines

- Yezlin: George Gosbee's death a devastating reminder of mental health effects
- This brilliant Ottawa tech pioneer had wealth and a wonderful family. His suicide shocked everyone.
- Chris Cornell's Death (Sound Garden) : Mental Health Experts Talk Depression, Suicide & Ativan
- Why mental health in the workplace is often misunderstood and stigmatized
- Councillors shocked one fifth of city employees report harassment at work
- Flood of workplace bullying, harassment complaints filed against Calgary Police Service
- Let's Walk The Talk On Mental Health This Year - Bell Lets Talk
- Sharing My Mental Health Story Was Tougher Than Olympic Competition

It’s Happening...
Fact or Fiction?

• It is more important to take care of your physical health than your mental health.
• Almost 50% of people will develop a mental illness in their lifetime.
• People with a mental illness are violent and dangerous.
• One of the main causes of mental illness is personal weakness.
• Most workers living with a mental illness receive treatment for it.
• 1 in 10 workplace disability claims is related to mental illness.
• The longer a person with a mental illness is away from work, the easier it is to return.

Psychological Health: Key Statistics

• 1 in 5 Canadians experience a mental health challenge or illness each year.
• 51% of Canadians experience high job stress.
• On average, Albertans spend approximately 60% of their waking hours working.
• Physical activity is important for positive mental health and is a factor in building resilience.
• Over 15% of Canadian health care expenditures can be attributed to mental disorders, but less than 4% of research funding is dedicated to mental health.
• Until May of 2012, Canada was the only G8 nation without a national mental health strategy.
• More than half of people with a psychological health condition do not receive a diagnosis, and of those diagnosed, less than half receive treatment that meets the expected standards of practice.
• A 1998 study estimated the annual cost of mental health problems to the Canadian economy at $14.8 billion; more recent estimates put the cost as high as $50 billion.
• 1/3 of these costs related to the provision of public health services; the remaining 2/3 were borne by employers.
• Mental health problems are expected to be the source of more than 50% of all disability claims administered over the next five years, exceeding even heart disease.
The Physical Injuries

Mental Health (WHO)

- “Mental health is not just the absence of a mental disorder. It is defined as a state of well-being in which every individual realizes his or her potential, can cope with the normal stressors of life, can work productively and fruitfully and is able to make a contribution to his or her community.”
Definitions

- Mental health and illness are reflected in how we think, feel, and act.
  - **Good mental health** – reflects a positive approach to life, stressful events can be challenges, not difficulties. Helps determine relationships and choices.
  - **Declining or poor mental health** – mental health starts to decline but it is not a diagnosable illness.
  - **Mental illness** – difficulties in thinking, mood, and/or behaviour associated with substantial distress and general dysfunction.

- Resilience - [Bouncing Back](#)

Risk Factors

- **Biological**
  - Biochemistry
  - Hormonal

- **Psychological**
  - Stress
  - Attitudes/Beliefs
  - Negative/distorted thinking patterns

- **Historical**
  - Childhood
  - Family History
  - Trauma

- **Social**
  - Lack of social support
  - Recent negative life event
  - Workplace & Relationships
Mental Health Continuum Model

Stress is stress...
Stress and Mental Illness

- Cognitive Reactions
  - Memory concentration and judgement suffer
  - Inability to concentrate
  - Confusion
  - Racing thoughts
  - Anger and resentment
  - Sense of being overwhelmed
  - Lack of confidence
  - Desire to escape and run away

- Stress and the workplace
  - Highly demanding jobs
  - Jobs that require considerable effort but offer little reward
  - An accumulation of home and work stress

What’s so funny?
Why Psychological Health & Safety Matters

- The Health Case
- Workplace Prevalence
- The Legal Case
- The Business Case
- Business Drivers
- Calculating the Costs
Creating a Cultural Shift

- The National Standard of Canada for Psychological Health & Safety in the Workplace was released January 2013
- Culmination of a number of projects and initiatives catalyzed by the launch of Guarding Minds @ Work (GM@W): A Workplace Guide to Psychological Health & Safety
- Championed by the Mental Health Commission of Canada and developed by the Canadian Standards Association (CSA Group)
- A voluntary set of guidelines, tools, and resources focused on promoting employees’ psychological health and preventing psychological harm due to workplace factors
- The Standard identifies 13 factors that contribute to workplace psychological health and safety
- It is a first of its kind in the world
- Establishes as a best practice threshold for employer practices

A New Standard of Conduct

Ensuring psychological safety calls for a new standard of conduct at work. This standard requires that people treat one another with fairness, civility and respect regardless of their power or status within the organization.

Examples of conduct that contravene this standard and may result in mental injury are: bullying; harassment; discrimination; and the imposition of unreasonable work demands coupled with refusing employees minimal levels of control over workload and work pace.
Workplace Prevalence

- 21.4% of the workplace population (aged 20-64 years) currently, is experiencing a psychological health issues or disorder
- There is a peak prevalence among those in their early and prime working years (aged 20-29 years)
- Conservatively, the productivity cost of psychological health issues is estimated to cost Canadian employers $6.3 billion per annum
- Most (80%) of Canadian employers rate mental health difficulties as being of the top 3 drivers of short and long-term disability claims
- Projections indicate that workplace costs for psychological health issues will almost triple by 2041
- More people feel physically safe (20% reporting concerns) than psychologically safe (33% reporting concerns) in their workplace

Applying it to Construction (April 2017/UK Data)

- 55% of respondents have experienced mental health issues
- 42% had experienced mental health issues at their current workplace
- Nearly a third had taken time off due to stress and mental health issues
- Of these nearly three fifths did not tell their supervisor it was for mental health reasons
- Among those that had suffered mental health issues, only 41% received appropriate support from employers
- Barely a quarter knew their rights
- 72% knew colleagues who had experienced mental health issues
- 1 in 4 considered taking their own life
- 15% have lost a colleague to suicide
- Among those who answered yes to the last two questions, 90% did not turn to their employer
The Health Case

Establishing Baseline Costs

- Stress-related illnesses
- Absenteeism
- Presenteeism
- Turnover
- Short-term Disability
- Long-Term Disability
- Workplaces grievances
- Workplace conflict
- Health and safety infractions
- Human rights violations
- Other incidents/adverse events
The Business Case

Financial Costs (monetary costs of an unhealthy workplace, cost/benefit of creating a healthy workplace)

Organizational Profile (becoming an employer of choice, demonstrating corporate social responsibility, creating added value for shareholders & stakeholders)

Legal Case (demonstrating due diligence to employers, customers, internal/external stakeholders)

The Negative Effects

- **Financial.** Mental health conditions such as depression and anxiety are rapidly becoming the main cause of disability.

- **Productivity.** In addition to absenteeism, psychological ill-health is a significant contributor to ‘presenteeism’, decreases in performance due to illness or injury while an employee is still at work.

- **Safety.** Reduced psychological health and safety contributes to accidents, incidents and injuries. Most jobs require employees to have good concentration, social skills and the ability to solve problems effectively.

- **Workplace morale.** Reduced psychological health and safety contributes to conflict and grievances. If one member of a team is struggling, the whole team is compromised.
Employers and supervisors will be required to take measures to prevent harassment and violence in the workplace. Workers will be prohibited from engaging in harassing, bullying or violent behaviours.

- Harassment related sick leave could become a reportable injury under provincial law.
- Employers will be required to develop policies to investigate and punish harassment, and the law will allow for negligent employers to be taken to court.

A recent Supreme Court rules an employees can allege workplace harassment against people from other companies - According to the ruling, "the code is not limited to protecting employees solely from discriminatory harassment by their superiors in the workplace....This may include discrimination by their co-workers, even when those co-workers have a different employer."
Here in Alberta the OHS Act – Enhancing the Language

- Promotion and maintenance of physical, psychological and social well-being of workers
- Prevent workplace incidents, injuries, illness and disease
- Protect workers from conditions adverse to their health and safety
- Protect of worker rights to:
  - Know about health and safety hazards
  - Participate in OHS
  - Refuse dangerous work, and
  - Exercise their OHS rights or fulfill their duties without fear of reprisal (discriminatory action)

OHS Definitions – Harassment & Violence

"Harassment" means any single incident or repeated incidents of objectionable or unwelcome conduct, comment, bullying or action that causes offence or humiliation to a worker, or adversely affects the worker's health and safety, and includes:
- conduct, comment, bullying or action because of race, religious beliefs, colour, physical disability, mental disability, age, ancestry, place of origin, marital status, source of income, family status, gender, gender identity, gender expression, and sexual orientation, and
- sexual solicitations or advance,
- but excludes any reasonable conduct of an employer or supervisor in respect of their management of the workers or a work site.
- "violence" threatened, attempted or actual conduct of a person that
- causes or is likely to cause physical or psychological injury or harm,
- and includes domestic or sexual violence.
OHS Responsibilities of Workplace Parties

**Supervisors** - Ensure workers are not subjected to or participate in harassment or violence

**Employees** - Refrain from causing or participating in harassment or violence

**Prime Contractors** - Co-ordinate, organize and oversee work to ensure health and safety of workers and others

**Contractors / Service Providers / Staffing Agencies / Self-Employed Persons** – cooperate with those exercising duty under legislation

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WCB Changes

- Coverage for psychological injuries, including Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), will be **extended to all occupations**. Coverage of PTSD for first responders remains the same. To get coverage, **workers will need to provide**:
  - a **qualified diagnosis** from a psychologist or physician for a psychological injury
  - **evidence of exposure to a traumatic event or events at work**.

- The $98,700 annual cap on maximum insurable earnings – the net earnings of each worker – will be removed. Workers earning more than the cap would now be compensated for 90% of their earnings. This means injured workers will receive benefits more in line with their expected earnings.
Case Study

- Brian manages eight project managers and is often stressed. He always blames himself when deadlines are not met or his team turns in poor quality work. He often walks around the office muttering and cursing under his breath. While his anger and frustration are usually directed inward, his employees are edgy because they are unsure who he is angry with and they say he looks like he is going to have a heart attack any minute.
- Sometimes the tension bubbles over.
- Last week you heard that one of his staff curtly told Brian that if he didn't chill out he would soon be dead of a heart attack. Brian responded tersely that he would be calmer if his team could meet their project deadlines. Brian immediately regretted his remark and sent an email apology to the team. The team started gossiping about how hard it was to work under this anxiety ridden manager... you've noticed the atmosphere on this team worsening, it's impacting the field guys and Brian seems increasingly more angry and irritable not to mention the team's tension.

The Standard

- Overview
- History & Development
- Focus and approach taken
- Implications

So if a redhead goes crazy, is it called Ginger snaps?
### Areas Covered in the Standard

- Identification of psychological hazards in the workplace
- Assessment and control of risks in the workplace that are associated with hazards that cannot be eliminated (e.g., high job demands that may be associated with particular professions)
- Implementation of measurement and review systems that sever to evaluate and sustain a psychological health and safety strategy in the workplace
- Implementation of organizational practices focused on creating and promoting a culture that values workplaces psychological health and safety
- Vision
- Voluntary best practice

### Internal Responsibility System

- The protection of psychological health will require the same regulatory systems as the protection of physical health.
- This means, at a minimum, the adoption of the psychological health protection mandate by Joint OH&S committees and representatives where they exist (and by employer where they do not)
- This will involve routine surveillance of psychosocial risks and the development and implementation of plans for their abatement, up to a reasonable standard
- **Guarding Minds at Work** is the first Canadian, fully comprehensive framework for the identification and abatement of psychosocial risks, serving the needs of corporate governance, accountability and stewardship. A Best Practice to follow.
Key Definitions

- Psychologically healthy and safe workplaces
- Psychological health (or mental health)
- Psychological safety
- Mental Injury / Injurious Conduct
- Psychosocial factors

Psychosocial Factors

- Organizational / systemic in nature
- Are within the influence of the workplace
- Lead to positive impacts on worker mental health, psychological safety and participation when effectively addressed
- Contribute to improved productivity and bottom line results
- #havethattalk - workplace videos
13 Factors

• PF1: Organizational Culture
• PF2: Psychological and Social Support
• PF3: Clear Leadership & Expectations
• PF4: Civility & Respect
• PF5: Psychological Fit/Demands
• PF6: Growth & Development

• PF7: Recognition & Reward
• PF8: Involvement & Influence
• PF9: Workload Management
• PF10: Engagement
• PF11: Balance
• PF12: Psychological Protection
• PF13: Protection of Physical Safety

Implementing a PHS Strategy

• Features of a management system
• Key elements of a PHS Policy
• Where to start
  • A Realtime Example - UofC
  • Creating a Mental Health Strategy
Next Steps – Integrating the Standard

Hazard Identification

Appropriate Action

Risk Reduction

Guarding Minds @ Work

Assessment Tools
Organizational Review
Initial Scan
PF-13 Employee Survey

Action Strategies
Risk Report Card
Action Responses
Action Planning Worksheet

Evaluation Criteria
Evaluation Planning Worksheet
What is a psychologically safe leader?

• Psychologically safe leadership (PSL) is identified by the Standard as leadership that:
  • reinforces the development and sustainability of a psychologically healthy and safe workplace environment based on a foundation of ethics and stated values;
  • supports and reinforces all line management in the implementation of the Psychological Health and Safety Management System (PHSMS);
  • establishes key objectives toward continual improvement of psychological health and safety in the workplace;
  • leads and influences organizational culture in a positive way
  • ensures that psychological health and safety is part of organizational decision-making processes;
  • engages employees to:
    • be aware of the importance of psychological health and safety;
    • be aware of the implications of tolerating psychological health and safety hazards;
    • provide feedback to help the organization determine the effectiveness of the PHSMS implementation and operation; and
    • identify workplace needs regarding psychological health and safety.

Leaders need to lead...

• Link - Ted Talk on Leadership
Dealing with stressed out, angry or emotional employees can be challenging whether you are a manager, union rep or co-worker.

Emotional intelligence can help reduce stress while positively impacting well-being and effectiveness.

Personal Development - Activities and exercises for individuals who want to improve their own emotional intelligence.

Teambuilding - Helping teams improve resilience, coping strategies, problem solving skills and increase positive social support.

Emotional Intelligence Self Assessment – Gaining skills and tools for managing emotions and reactions in the workplace.

Leader Development - Improve emotional intelligence related to leading, managing or supporting employees.
Connecting with each other

Empathy

Case Study

Friendly reminder that "doing your best" does not mean working yourself to the point of a mental breakdown.

#PeacefulMindPeacefulLife
Case Study Group – 3 Years Later

Key findings include:

- Ninety-one per cent of the organizations implemented the Standard because it is "the right thing to do". Other reasons included “to protect the psychological health of employees” (84%) and “increase employee engagement” (72%).
- Seventy-eight per cent implemented respectful workplace policies and educational initiatives.
- Seventy per cent provided early intervention through employee and family assistance programs and services addressing mental health.
- Sixty-six per cent enhanced awareness of mental health among employees.
- Participating organizations achieved on average 72 per cent compliance with the five elements (commitment and policy, planning, implementation, evaluation and corrective action, management review) in the Standard, a remarkable improvement from 55 per cent compliance at the baseline stage.

Resources

Canadian Mental Health Commission
- The Working Mind
- R2MR
  - www.mentalhealthcommission.ca

Great West Life
- Psychological Health and Safety / Guarding Minds @ Work, which offers practical, user-friendly tools to help employers identify and act on organizational issues.
- Mental Health Awareness/Working Through It, a series of videos that speak directly to people struggling with mental health issues
  - www.workplacestrategiesformentalhealth.com

- Canadian Centre for Occupational Health & Safety
  - CCOHS

- University of Fredericton – Certificate in Psychological Health & Safety in the Workplace
  - Stressor App
Opening up...

Workplace Mental Health - CBC

• Questions?
• Thank You

Lesley Mackinnon
Health & Safety Strategist
JxJ Solutions Inc.
Extra Slides...

Breaking Down the 13 Factors

- **PF1: Organizational Culture** – is a mix of norms, values, beliefs, meanings, and expectations that group members hold in common and that they use as behavioral and problem-solving cues. Organizational culture could enhance the psychological health and safety of the workplace and the workforce when it is characterized by trust, honesty, respect, civility, and fairness or when it values, for example, psychological and social support, recognition, and reward.

- **PF2: Psychological and Social Support** – Psychological and social support comprises all supportive social interactions available at work, either with co-workers or supervisors. It refers also to the level of help and assistance provided by others when one is performing tasks.

- **PF3: Clear Leadership & Expectations** – Clear leadership and expectations is present in an environment in which leadership is effective and provides sufficient support that helps workers know what they need to do, explains how their work contributes to the organization, and discusses the nature and expected outcomes of impending changes.
Continued…

• **PF4: Civility & Respect** – Civility and respect is present in a work environment where workers are respectful and considerate in their interactions with one another, as well as with customers, clients, and the public. Civility and respect are based on showing esteem, care, and consideration for others, and acknowledging their dignity.

• **PF5: Psychological Demands** – Psychological demands of any given job are documented and assessed in conjunction with the physical demands of the job. Psychological demands of the job will allow organizations to determine whether any given activity of the job might be a hazard to the workers’ health and well being.

• **PF6: Growth & Development** – Growth and development is present in a work environment where workers receive encouragement and support in the development of their interpersonal, emotional, and job skills.

Continued…

• **PF7: Recognition & Reward** – Recognition and reward is present in a work environment where there is appropriate acknowledgement and appreciation of workers’ efforts in a fair and timely manner.

• **PF8: Involvement & Influence** – Involvement and influence is present in a work environment where workers are included in discussions about how work is done and how important decisions are made.

• **PF9: Workload Management** – Workload management is present in a work environment where assigned tasks and responsibilities can be accomplished successfully within the time available.

• **PF10: Engagement** – Engagement is present in a work environment where workers enjoy and feel connected to their work and where they feel motivated to do their job well.
• **PF11: Balance** – Balance is present in a work environment where there is acceptance of the need for a sense of harmony between the demands of personal life, family, and work.

• **PF12: Psychological Protection** – Psychological protection is present in a work environment where workers’ psychological safety is ensured.

• **PF13: Protection of Physical Safety** – Protection of physical safety is present when a workers’ psychological, as well as physical safety, is protected from hazards and risks related to the workers’ physical environment.