

Join us in celebrating a decade of advancing workplace mental health

Key research findings about the trend towards psychological health and safety

10 YEARS 2007-2017

Great-West Life Centre for Mental Health in the Workplace

Advancing Workplace Mental Health

Over the past 10 years, the Great-West Life Centre for Mental Health in the Workplace has had the privilege of working with likeminded organizations, individual leaders and pioneers to improve workplace mental health for all Canadians.

To see more about the Centre's anniversary and more of what we've learned through new research and a national survey, visit our website at *www.workplacestrategiesformentalhealth.com*.

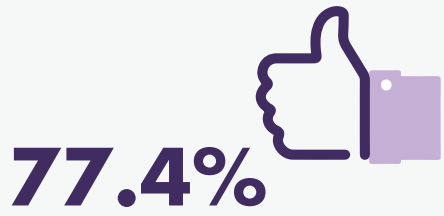
We've come a long way

The Evolution of Workplace Mental Health in Canada: Research Report

The focus of the *Evolution of Workplace Mental Health in Canada: Research Report (2007-2017)* was to examine the evolution of Canadian workplace mental health policies and strategies over the past ten years.

Developments were examined across several key thematic domains, including: Legal and Standards; Business; and, Sector-Specific Evolution. Significant developments were observed across each thematic area.

This project was commissioned by the Great-West Life Centre for Mental Health in the Workplace to support research through the University of Fredericton, led by Dr. Joti Samra, R.Psych.



77.4%

Indicate attitudes toward workplace mental health issues across four worker groups (executives/leaders, human resources staff, managers/supervisors and general employees) have improved since 2007.



26.3% of unionized and **23.2%** of non-unionized

Respondents say their organization was actively involved in implementing the Standard or involved in ongoing efforts to maintain and improve key elements of the Standard.



64.7%

Say employees with mental health issues are treated better at work since 2007.



73.3%

Reported use of non-stigmatizing language regarding workplace mental health issues has improved since 2007.



87.2%

Report improvements in media coverage of workplace mental health issues since 2007; 83.3% see celebrities and media personalities as having an important role in contributing to increased awareness.

81%



Seek information about mental health issues now compared to 2007 (38%); 83% say the Internet is a source of their information.

Note: Developments in additional domains are examined in: *Samra, J. (2017). The Evolution of Workplace Mental Health in Canada: Research Report (2007-2017).*

The Evolving Legal & Standards Landscape

- One of the most significant developments over the past decade has been the release of the National Standard of Canada for Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace* (the Standard), which provides a comprehensive framework that employers can utilize to assess, respond to, and evaluate workplace psychological health and safety.

  **The Standard was developed by the Canadian Standards Association (CSA) Group and Bureau de normalization du Quebec (BNQ) and is championed by the Mental Health Commission of Canada.*

- Legislation has been enacted in several Canadian jurisdictions that provides additional protection for accommodation of mental health issues, as well as expanded compensability for mental health issues under workers' compensation systems, particularly in relation to bullying, harassment, and post-traumatic stress disorder.

- Canada has been identified as a leader within the international community for the Standard, and to this end, the CSA Group has submitted to the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) a proposal for the development of an international ISO standard on psychological health and safety.

The Evolving Business Landscape

- There have been significant attitudinal shifts in the business community – particularly among leaders – with respect to workplace mental health, including increased awareness, understanding, value, and prioritization of the importance of addressing psychological health and safety issues.

- Significant behavioural shifts have occurred for organizations, and individuals within those organizations, particularly with respect to the development and utilization of resources and supports for leaders, managers, and supervisors within organizations.

- Objective value – as demonstrated through emerging awards that recognize employers with good practices – is now placed on the importance of considering the psychological health and safety of the work environment as being a core business consideration, which is essential to employee recruitment, engagement, and retention.

Evolution by Sector

- The framework for psychological health and safety issues in the workplace has been recognized to be universal, impacting all sectors and industries.

- There has been increased awareness that worker mental health is influenced by specific job factor conditions, resulting in select work sectors where psychological safety issues are significant, having emerged as leaders.

- There is recognition that a one-size-fits-all approach to workplace mental health is ineffective, and that tailored approaches may be required for different settings. This is reflected by the establishment of the first CSA Group Technical Committee to create a tailored standard for psychological health and safety in the workplace for paramedics. Once completed, this will be the first standard to provide sector-specific guidance with respect to workplace mental health issues.

Milestones in the Evolution of Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace

Note: A complete list of 21 Milestones in Canadian Workplace Mental Health is available in: *Samra, J. (2017). The Evolution of Workplace Mental Health in Canada: Research Report (2007-2017).*

1998

Launch of the Global Business and Economic Roundtable on Mental Health and Addiction, drawing business leadership attention to issues relating to mental health

2004

Quebec amends its Act Respecting Labour Standards to include a workplace bullying deterrent – the first of its kind in North America

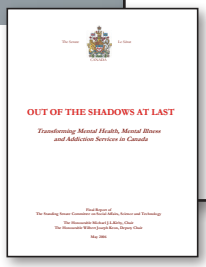
Every employee has the right to a work environment free from psychological harassment and employers must take reasonable action to prevent and stop psychological harassment

2005

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 enacted, to proactively remove workplace barriers for people with disabilities including mental disabilities

2006

Release of *Out of the Shadows at Last: Transforming Mental Health, Mental Illness and Addiction Services in Canada*, the first-ever national study of mental health, mental illness, and addiction


OUT OF THE SHADOWS AT LAST

Transforming Mental Health, Mental Illness and Addiction Services in Canada

2007

The Mental Health Commission of Canada is established, providing an ongoing national focus for mental health issues

Mental Health Commission of Canada

Commission de la santé mentale du Canada

2007

The Great-West Life Centre for Mental Health in the Workplace is established, providing publicly available workplace mental health resources

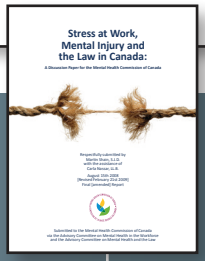
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2008

Launch of Prevention, Promotion and Organizational Practices Contributing to Health in the Workplace (La norme *Entreprise en santé*), by Bureau de normalisation du Québec (BNQ)

2009

Release of *Stress at Work, Mental Injury and the Law in Canada: A Discussion Paper for the Mental Health Commission of Canada*, the first in a series of reports authored by Dr. Martin Shain



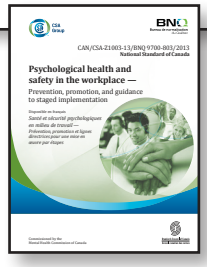
2009

Launch of *Guarding Minds @ Work: A Workplace Guide to Psychological Health and Safety*, a free, comprehensive set of tools for assessing and addressing workplace psychological health and safety

GuardingMinds @ WORK

2013

Launch of the *National Standard of Canada for Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace*, the first standard on psychological health and safety of its kind in the world.



2014

Workers Compensation Amendment Act, 2011, enacted in BC, establishing a duty by employers to prevent harassment

2016

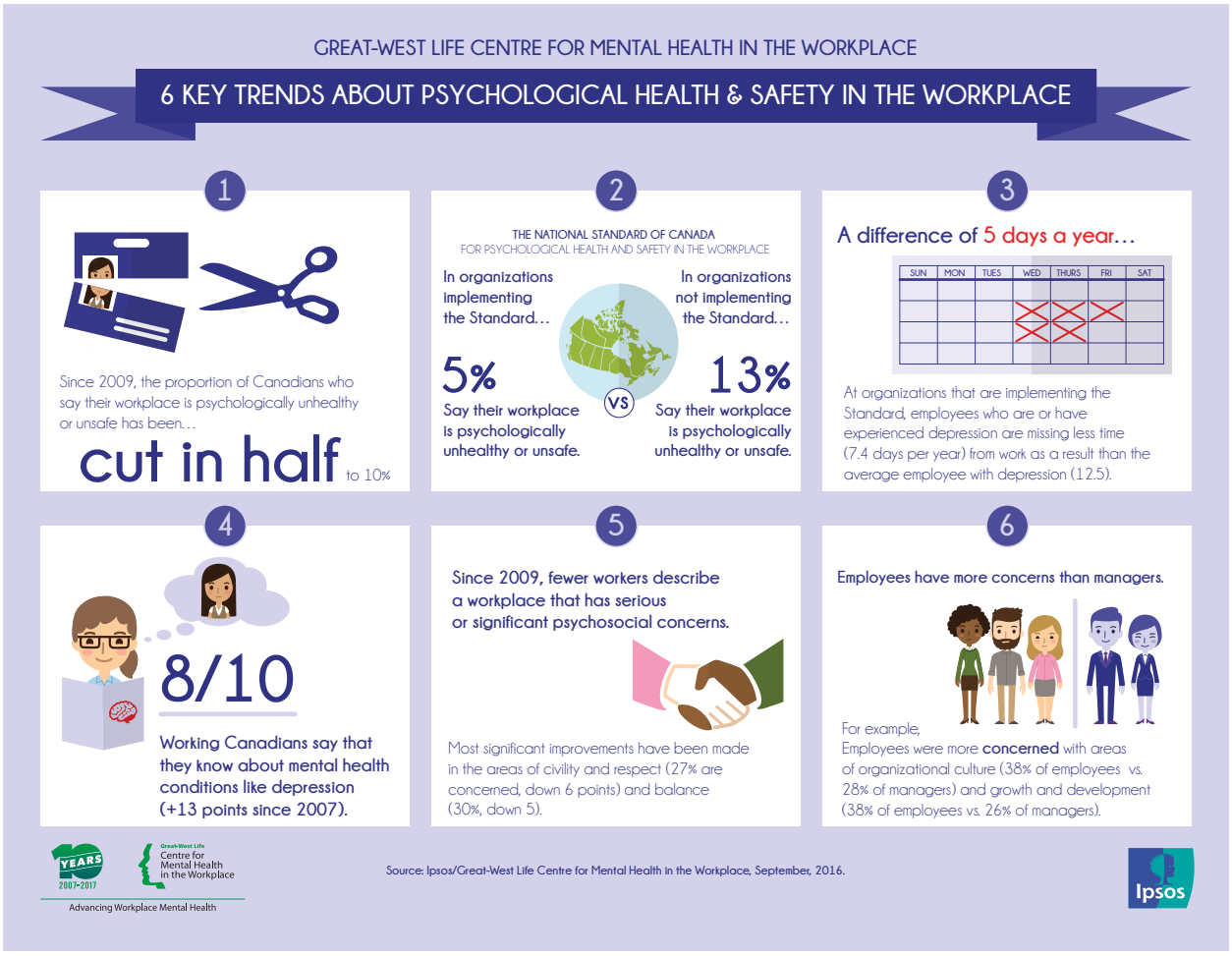
The Workers Compensation Amendment Act (Presumption Re Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and Other Amendments), enacted in Manitoba

Enables the Workers Compensation Board to presume that if any worker is exposed to certain types of traumatic events, diagnosed PTSD is caused by the worker's employment unless the contrary is proven

Psychological Health and Safety 2016: Survey

Ipsos Public Affairs was commissioned by the Great-West Life Centre for Mental Health in the Workplace (the Centre) to conduct a national public opinion research survey related to psychological health and safety in the workplace. This is the third such survey Ipsos has conducted on behalf of the Centre, following earlier waves in 2009 and 2012.

Similar to the 2009 and 2012 surveys, this iteration asks employees to report on those factors that impact psychological health and safety in Canadian workplaces. These snapshots in time help the Centre and like-minded organizations to track the progress of workplace mental health efforts.



Infographic courtesy of Ipsos.

Psychological Health and Safety 2016: Survey

- Fewer Canadians today than in 2009 describe their workplace as being psychologically unhealthy and unsafe, according to the new research (10% versus 20%).
- Many Canadian workplaces are now following the country's first national set of best practices, with a framework provided by the National Standard of Canada for Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace (the Standard).
- Employees whose workplaces are implementing the Standard are much more likely to describe their workplace as psychologically healthy and safe; are more compassionate in their attitudes towards mental health conditions; and are more likely to know their own role in the workplace regarding identifying and supporting those with mental health conditions.
- Employees whose workplaces are implementing the Standard are much less likely than those in workplaces without the Standard to express concerns over psychological support in the workplace (10% versus 37%).
- Eight in ten Canadians (79%) say they know about mental health conditions like depression – up significantly from 2007 (+13 points).
- Employees were more likely than managers to describe their workplace as concerning; this result was most pronounced for "organizational culture questions" (38% of employees v. 28% of managers).
- Nine of 10 managers (89%, -3% since 2012) agree it's important for them to keep improving their skills in managing distressed workers and 8 in 10 (78%, +13% since 2012) say they could do their job more effectively if they found ways to do this more easily.
- Despite the marked progress, the survey results suggest the continuing need for improvement and that more workplaces need to implement the Standard and its principles as this may be a contributing factor to progress toward achieving psychologically healthy and safe workplaces.

About the Centre

The Great-West Life Centre for Mental Health in the Workplace (the Centre) was established in 2007 and has three main objectives:

1. Increase knowledge and awareness of workplace psychological health and safety
2. Improve the ability to respond to mental health issues at work
3. Turn knowledge into action through free, practical strategies and tools for all employers

The Centre works to achieve these objectives by:

- Funding and sponsoring research and initiatives aimed at improving the understanding, prevention and management of mental health issues, particularly as they impact the workplace
- Promoting and facilitating knowledge exchange through the sharing of research, resources and survey results
- Supporting the development of programs and resources aimed at improving psychological health and safety in the workplace

The *Workplace Strategies for Mental Health* website, ***www.workplacestrategiesformentalhealth.com***, is the primary vehicle through which the Centre makes these resources available.

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