

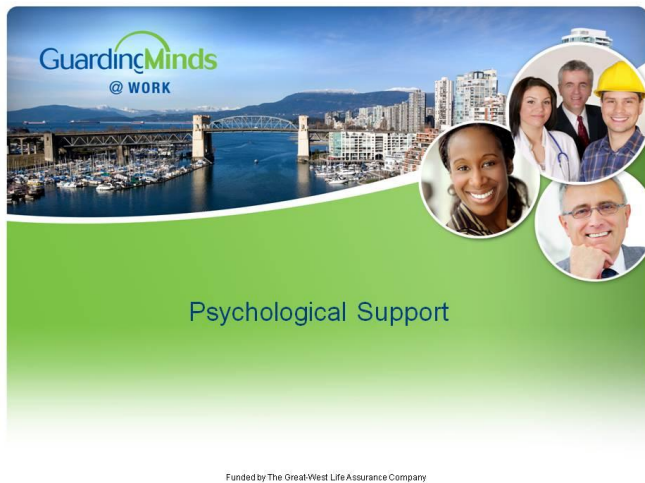
On the **Agenda**



Facilitator's Guide

Psychological Support

Psychological Support



Slide # 1

For this slide, you want to ensure that you have already introduced:

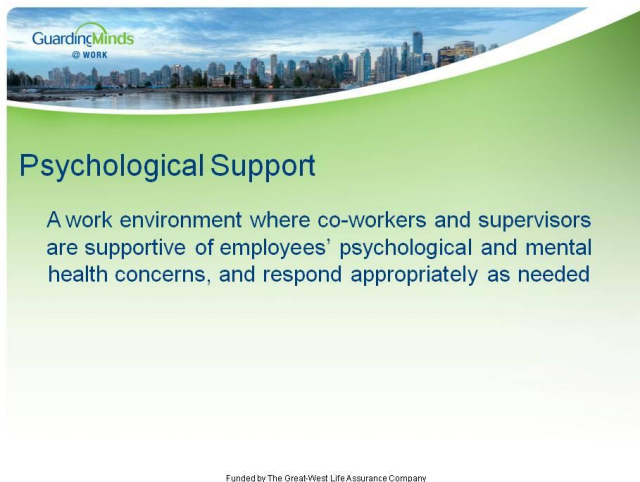
- yourself
- your role within the organization, if unknown to the group
- why you are engaging the group in this discussion
- the importance of addressing psychological health and safety in your organization

The importance of addressing psychological health and safety in your organization can be highlighted by stating the following:

1. Depression will rank second only to heart disease as the leading cause of disability worldwide by the year 2020, which can impact the workplace in areas such as bottom-line production and team work.
2. There are current and emerging legal requirements in Canada for the protection of employee psychological health and safety and the promotion of civility and respect at work.
3. Organizations that value and improve the health of the workplace can improve their organization profile. An improved profile can result in better recruitment and retention rates, enhancing the potential for growth. We want you and potential employees to know that we value your contribution to the organization, that you do good work and that we want to help you to continue to be successful at work.

After these statements, you might say: “The focus of this session is to discuss psychological support in the workplace”.

On the Agenda



Slide # 2

This slide provides a definition of psychological support. We recommend starting with the definition provided by *Guarding Minds @ Work*[™]: “Psychological support occurs in a work environment where co-workers and supervisors are supportive of employees’ psychological and mental health concerns, and respond appropriately as needed.” Following the definition, open the floor for questions about the definition. An idea to get employees to start participating in your presentation is to ask a volunteer in the audience to read the slide. You can also offer additional information such as:

1. What do psychological health/mental health mean?

Possible answer: Psychological health is our ability to think, feel and behave in a manner that allows us to perform effectively at work, at home and in our community. Psychological health and mental health are often used interchangeably.

2. Why is psychological support important?

Possible answer: According to research, the more employees feel that they have psychological support, the greater their job attachment, job satisfaction, job commitment and job performance. Plus, the greater the support the stronger, the likelihood that employees will seek and receive appropriate help for mental health issues, and return to work if they have an extended absence.

About PF1: Psychological Support

What are Psychosocial Factors?

Psychosocial factors are elements that impact employees' psychological responses to work and work conditions, potentially causing psychological health problems. Psychosocial factors include the way work is carried out (deadlines, workload, work methods) and the context in which work occurs (including relationships and interactions with managers and supervisors, colleagues and coworkers, and clients or customers).

What is PF1: Psychological Support?

GM@W defines PF1: Psychological Support as present in a work environment where coworkers and supervisors are supportive of employees' psychological and mental health concerns, and respond appropriately as needed. Equally important are the employees' perceptions and awareness of organizational support. When employees perceive organizational support, it means they believe their organization values their contributions, is committed to ensuring their psychological well-being and provides meaningful supports if this well-being is compromised.

Why is Psychological Support important?

The more employees feel they have psychological support, the greater their job attachment, job commitment, job satisfaction, job involvement, work mood positivity, desire to remain with the organization, organizational citizenship behaviours (discretionary behaviours that are beneficial to the organization and are a matter of personal choice), and job performance. For some organizations, the most important aspect of psychological support may be that it is especially helpful in protecting against traumatic stressors at work. When adequate psychological support is present, employees experiencing psychological distress in the workplace will be more likely to seek, and receive, appropriate help. They will be better equipped to stay safe and productive at work while they recover, and, if work absence is required, will be more likely to have a quicker and more sustainable work return.

What happens when employees lack psychological support?

Employee perceptions of a lack of psychological support from their organization can lead to increases in absenteeism, withdrawal behaviours, strain, conflict and turnover. Strain can then lead to greater issues such as fatigue, headaches, burnout and anxiety. Lack of psychological support can also result in loss of productivity, increased costs and greater risk of accidents, incidents and injuries.

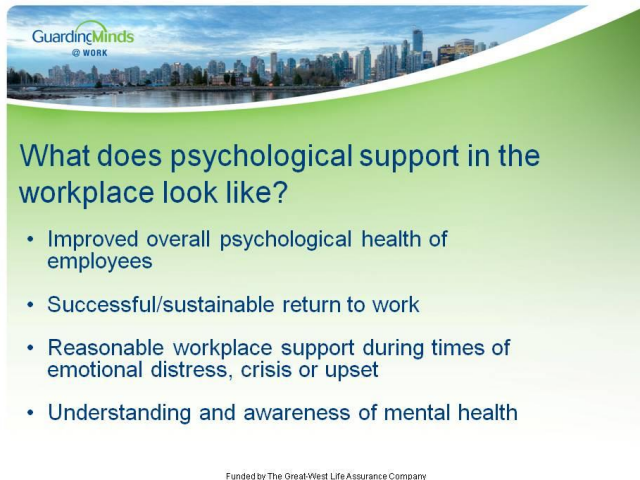
How can Psychological Support be improved?

Start by conducting the GM@W Organizational Review and/or the GM@W Survey and reviewing the results. If **Psychological Support** is identified as an area of concern or relative strength, refer to the GM@W Action Resources for a practical strategy and evidence-based and effective suggested actions that can improve **Psychological Support**. It is also important to discuss the findings with employees to gain a further understanding of the results and to obtain input into possible interventions. Furthermore, it is important to evaluate the undertaken interventions over time to ensure they are effective and to take corrective action where needed. Consider reviewing the resources below. Finally, refer back to the GM@W website on occasion for new ideas about how **Psychological Support** can be enhanced.

Further information about Psychological Support:

- American Psychiatric Foundation. (2012). *Partnership for workplace mental health*. Retrieved from <http://www.workplacementalhealth.org/>
- Canadian Mental Health Association, Ontario. (2012). *Mental health works*. Retrieved from <http://mentalhealthworks.ca>
- Canadian Psychiatric Research Foundation. (2007). When Something's Wrong: Strategies for the Workplace. In *Education & Awareness*. Retrieved from <http://cprf.ca/education/workplace.html>
- Eisenberger, R., Huntington, R., Hutchison, S., & Sowa, D. (1986). Perceived organizational support. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 71(3), 500-507. Retrieved from http://eisenberger.psych.udel.edu/files/22_Perceived_Organizational_Support.pdf
- Gilbert, M. & Bilsker, D. (2012). *Psychological Health and Safety: An Action Guide for Employers*. Retrieved from http://www.mentalhealthcommission.ca/SiteCollectionDocuments/Workforce/Workforce_Employers_Guide_ENG.pdf
- Health and Safety Executive. (2012). Work related stress – together we can tackle it. In *Guidance*. Retrieved from <http://www.hse.gov.uk/stress/index.htm>
- International Federation of Red Cross & Red Crescent Societies. (2001). Psychological support. In *World Disaster Report 2001*. Retrieved from http://www.toolkitsportdevelopment.org/html/resources/2C/2C4783F0-083B-4382-8DED-D99AEC37B0F2/pspmanual_module1.pdf
- Rhoades, L., & Eisenberger, R. (2002). Perceived organizational support: A review of the literature. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 87(4), 698-714. Retrieved from http://eisenberger.psych.udel.edu/files/01_Perceived_Organizational_Support.pdf
- The Great-West Life Assurance Company. (2012). PF1: Psychological Support. In *Centre Resources by GM@W Factor and On the Agenda*. Retrieved from <http://www.workplacestrategiesformentalhealth.com>


www.guardingmindsatwork.ca



Slide # 3

This slide details what a psychologically supportive workplace might look like. Simply read the points on the slide. If you would like to expand on the information, we suggest elaborating on what a psychologically non-supportive workplace may look like. You can suggest the following and why you don't want this for your group:

- Increased absenteeism and increased burden on those left to carry the load
- Strain
- Workplace conflict
- Turnover
- Greater risk of accidents, incidents and injuries



Our scores

Our scores from the *Guarding Minds @ Work*™ survey indicate that we have some room for improvement in this area of the workplace.

For example, some of the recommended suggestions are:

- Provide education and training to all employees to increase awareness about mental health at work
- Ensure widespread awareness about aspects of your benefit programs that may help address mental health issues

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Slide # 4

If your workplace completed the *Guarding Minds @ Work* (GM@W) Survey, you may wish to review the scores now. Let your employees know that there is always room for improvement, and it is also important to recognize and retain what is already working.

- Review the suggestions on the slide and let them know that putting psychological health and safety on the agenda is an active step to increase workplace psychological support.
- If your workplace has not undertaken the GM@W Review or Survey, ask the employees if they feel the suggestions on the slide would be helpful, and why or why not.

GM@W Suggested Responses

Please consult the and documents to help you select GM@W suggested actions to undertake for Psychological Support.

PF1: PSYCHOLOGICAL SUPPORT

OBJECTIVE: A work environment where coworkers and supervisors are supportive of employees' psychological and mental health concerns, and respond appropriately as needed.

PF1: GM@W Survey Results (check rating, if applicable)	<input type="checkbox"/> SERIOUS CONCERNS	<input type="checkbox"/> SIGNIFICANT CONCERNS	<input type="checkbox"/> MINIMAL CONCERNS	<input type="checkbox"/> RELATIVE STRENGTHS
PF1: GM@W Organizational Review Results (check rating, if applicable)	<input type="checkbox"/> SERIOUS CONCERNS	<input type="checkbox"/> SIGNIFICANT CONCERNS	<input type="checkbox"/> MINIMAL CONCERNS	<input type="checkbox"/> RELATIVE STRENGTHS

Serious Concerns = 5 to 9 Significant Concerns = 10 to 13 Minimal Concerns* = 14 to 16 Relative Strengths = 17 to 20**

* Although this is a Minimal Concern, it is important to attend to it and review the GM@W Organizational Review Results and the GM@W Survey Results for any additional or individual-identified areas of concern.

** Although this is a Relative Strength, it is important to review the GM@W Organizational Review Results and the GM@W Survey Results for any additional or individual-identified areas of concern.

The list below contains actions that you can take to respond to actual or potential concerns related to **Psychological Support**. Many of these actions have been found to be effective in research studies, have been recommended as best practices, or have been found valuable in applied settings. Some have been informed by emerging case law and regulatory requirements. *is an area of particular importance from this perspective (see also: PF4, 5, 9 and 12)*. The actions are drawn from diverse industries and sectors, and not all may be applicable or feasible in your particular workplace. This list is not exhaustive, nor is it intended to be prescriptive. Rather, these are suggestions for possible courses of action.

If **Psychological Support** has been flagged as a **Relative Strength** in your workplace, it is important not to overlook this finding. You can do this by developing policies that protect this relative strength and engaging staff in discussions of how this strength can be enhanced by implementing the suggested actions below.

If **Psychological Support** has been flagged as an area of concern in your workplace, consider which of these actions might be appropriate. In making your decision, it can be helpful to keep the following six key quality dimensions in mind: Appropriateness, Acceptability, Accessibility, Effectiveness, Efficiency and Safety (see *Selection of Effective Actions: Applying a Quality Framework* for more information).

The actions below fall into four main categories: (1) norms, values and practices of the work environment; (2) training and development initiatives; (3) communication strategies and approaches; and (4) formal policies and programs. You may have already initiated some of the actions – but consider the others. You may also have other ideas for actions you could implement – there is a space for writing these down at the end of this document. **Remember, not every action that might enhance Psychological Support in your workplace is listed here. Implementing the following actions, however, will provide a strong foundation for building a psychologically healthy and safe workplace.**

Work Environment (Norms, Values & Practices)

- Work to eliminate the stigmatization of those facing mental health challenges
- Develop formal and informal networks to support management, human resources teams and union representatives when dealing with employee mental health issues
- Incorporate best practices for primary, secondary and tertiary prevention of employee mental health issues
- Create a workplace culture where it is safe to discuss mental health issues without fear of discrimination

Training & Development

- Provide education and training to all staff to heighten mental health awareness (i.e., mental health literacy)
- Provide additional education about mental health issues to all staff whose role involves leading, supporting or managing (e.g., human resources teams, health and safety representatives, union representatives)
- Create opportunities for training and/or mentoring to enhance interpersonal and people management skills
- Provide training and/or mentoring to help deal appropriately and supportively with employees who have possible mental health concerns
- Supply the tools and supports (including time and incentives) needed to succeed in supporting employees with mental health concerns
- Review third-party providers of psychological services to ensure adherence to evidence- based practices and focus on work function
- Train or engage peer-support workers focused on mental health issues

Communication

- Encourage respectful workplace communication where psychological health concerns can be discussed safely and openly
- Ensure widespread awareness of company benefits and programs that employees can access to address their psychological health concerns
- Share community or online resources to help with psychological health concerns
- Maintain regular and supportive communication with employees who are off work due to mental health concerns

Formal Policies & Programs

- Provide comprehensive benefits that support employee mental health (i.e., coverage for the following: psychologists or other regulated mental health professionals; Employee and Family Assistance Programs; prescription drugs; and short- term and long-term disability plans)
- Provide or link to early intervention supports and programs for employees who may have psychological health concerns. Note that Employee and Family Assistance Programs are well-positioned to provide early intervention.
- When appropriate, help employees to obtain assessment of psychological function to determine treatment and accommodation needs
- Create “stay-at-work” policies and programs to assist those who remain at work while dealing with mental health concerns (including formal and informal accommodations)
- Develop programs and procedure to address occupation-specific risks to psychological health and safety
- Identify a contact person who is knowledgeable about mental health issues and is responsible for facilitating healthy and successful work-returns
- Collaborate with employees to create detailed return-to-work plans that include a range of options for coping with mental health concerns (e.g., graduated return-to-work). It is important to ensure coordination among key participants in the return to work process.

- Consider a range of accommodation options (both formal and informal) for employees returning to work following an absence due to mental health concerns
- In collaboration with employees and/or union representatives, create plans to ensure sustained work-return, including strategies to deal with possible relapse

Additional resources have been created to help you take action, including: presentation slides and supporting materials (freely available at www.workplacestrategiesformentalhealth.com/ota) and a new resource - *Psychological Health and Safety: An Action Guide for Employers*, developed on behalf of the Mental Health Commission of Canada Workforce Advisory Committee, that is a practical tool designed to help employers develop implementation plans on the basis of GM@W findings (freely available at www.mentalhealthcommission.ca/SiteCollectionDocuments/Workforce/Workforce_Employers_Guide_ENG.pdf).

We encourage you to review these resources for additional suggested actions.

Other Actions:

There won't be a perfect set of actions – often it's a matter of choosing the actions most likely to accomplish positive outcomes while generating the fewest potential problems.

Once you have selected one or more actions to undertake, enter them into the corresponding , pick your start date, identify who will be involved – your Action Team, and get started!



Activity

Review actions recommended by research or best practices

Choose the recommended actions that:

- Are most likely to be effective in promoting and maintaining psychological support
- Are low cost or no cost in terms of both time and expense
- Will have a measurable benefit to the workplace as a whole

Slide # 5

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- Review the recommended actions in the GM@W Suggested Responses document or choose those that you wish to share with the group as possibilities.
- Ask the employees to work in groups of three or more to review the suggested responses and discuss what each of these may mean for your workplace in regards to practicality, profit, cost and challenges.
- Ask that someone keep notes, and let them know that their group is to report back to the larger group in 15 minutes.
- Ask for a group to volunteer to start the report back and begin the discussion to choose which initiative(s) to begin with.
- Check out the Centre website at www.workplacestrategiesformentalhealth.com for free resources related to psychological support.

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Activity

Consider the first plan of action:

Choose or vote on the most valuable recommendation and develop a cost-benefit analysis for this team

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Slide # 6

- Ask the employees to vote on the most important recommendation that they heard from the previous exercise. Ballots, Post-it Notes, stickers or raised hands are all ideas that could be used for voting.
- If there is a discrepancy, see if you can narrow the options down to two and discuss the potential pros and cons of each option and then re-vote, or consider implementing more than one option at once if this would be practical.
- Develop a statement with the group about why the chosen recommendation is important to them; get to the underlying need that is being met.



Activity

Create a plan to implement

Use the handout provided to:

- Describe the action
- Assign tasks to individuals on the team
- Create a start date
- Develop an indicator to determine if the action had the desired effect
- Create a date to evaluate

Slide # 7

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- Hand out the Action Planning Worksheet to each employee so he or she can follow along.
- Identify each step required to implement the chosen action(s).
- Review the steps and ask for volunteers to take on different actions. If individuals feel uncomfortable taking on an action by themselves, suggest working in pairs or groups.
- Set a follow-up date to review progress on the action items together, as well as an expected completion date.

GM@W Action Planning Worksheet

Name: _____

Position: _____ Date: ____/____/____

PF1: PSYCHOLOGICAL SUPPORT

OBJECTIVE: A work environment where coworkers and supervisors are supportive of employees' psychological and mental health concerns, and respond appropriately as needed.

PF1 GM@W Survey Results

PF1 GM@W Survey Score: _____ (5 to 20)

Date administered: ____/____/____



PF1 GM@W Organizational Review Results

PF1 GM@W Organizational Review Score: _____ (5 to 20)

Date administered: ____/____/____



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** Although this is a Relative Strength, it is important to review the GM@W Organizational Review Results and the GM@W Survey Results for any additional or individual-identified areas of concern.

	Selected Action(s) (What exactly are you planning to do?)	Starting Date (What is a realistic date to begin?)	End Date (Is the action ongoing or will it end? If so, when?)	Action Team (Who is involved? Be specific.)	Indicator(s) (What changes do you expect to result from this Action?)	Evaluation Date (When will you determine if the Action was successful?)
Action Priority 1:						
Action Priority 2: <i>(if applicable)</i>						
Action Priority 3: <i>(if applicable)</i>						



Slide # 8

For this slide, we suggest encouraging your employees to check out the *Workplace Strategies for Mental Health* website at www.workplacestrategiesformentalhealth.com. The website features a number of employee-specific resources they can access for free:

- Self-assessment tools to check their current state of mental health
- Information about mental health, addiction and mental illness
- Approaches to mental wellness and coping with workplace stressors
- *Working Through It*, which is a video-based series of video clips by, and for, those struggling while at work, off work or returning to work