On the Agenda

Facilitator's Guide

Clear Leadership & Expectations

The Great-West Life Centre for Mental Health in the Workplace

Clear Leadership & Expectations

Slide # 1

Funded by The Great-West Life Assurance Company

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 clear leadership and expectations in the workplace".

Slide # 2

Clear Leadership & Expectations

A work environment where there is effective leadership and support that helps employees know what they need to do, how their work contributes to the organization, and whether there are impending changes

Funded by The Great-West Life Assurance Company

This slide provides a rationale for clear leadership and expectations. We recommend starting with the rationale provided by *Guarding Minds @ Work*™: "The rationale for clear leadership and expectations is ensuring a work environment where effective leadership and support helps employees to know what they need to do, how their work contributes to an organization, and whether there are impending changes." Then, open the floor for questions about the rationale. An idea to get people 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:

What do clear leadership and expectations look like?

Possible answer: According to recent research, clear leadership leads to individuals being 40% more likely to be in the highest category of job well-being, a 27% reduction of sick leave, and a 46% reduction in early retirements with disability pensions. Also, a leader who demonstrates commitment to maintaining his or her own physical and psychological health can influence the health of their employees. In other words, when the leader is not stressed out, overwhelmed or exhausted, they are better able to lead effectively.

About PF3: Clear Leadership & Expectations

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 PF3: Clear Leadership & Expectations?

GM@W defines PF3: Clear Leadership & Expectations as present in a work environment where there is effective leadership and support that helps employees know what they need to do, how their work contributes to the organization, and whether there are impending changes. There are many types of leadership, each of which impacts psychosocial health and safety in different ways. The most widely accepted categorizations of leadership are instrumental, transactional and transformational. Of these, transformational leadership is considered the most powerful. Instrumental leadership focuses primarily on producing outcomes, with little attention paid to the 'big picture,' the psychosocial dynamics within the organization, and, unfortunately, the individual employees. Transformational leaders are seen as change agents who motivate their followers to do more than what is expected. They are concerned with long-term objectives and transmit a sense of mission, vision and purpose. They have charisma, give individualized consideration to their employees, stimulate intellectual capabilities in others, and inspire employees.

Why is Clear Leadership & Expectations important?

Leadership is the foundation of a health pyramid (see below)[1]. Effective leadership increases employee morale, resiliency and trust, and decreases employee frustration and conflict. Good leadership leads to individuals being 40% more likely to be in the highest category of job well-being, a 27% reduction of sick leave, and a 46% reduction in early retirements with disability pensions. A leader who demonstrates a commitment to maintaining his or her own physical and psychological health can influence the health of employees (sickness, presenteeism, absenteeism), as well as the health of the organization as a whole (vigour, vitality, productivity).
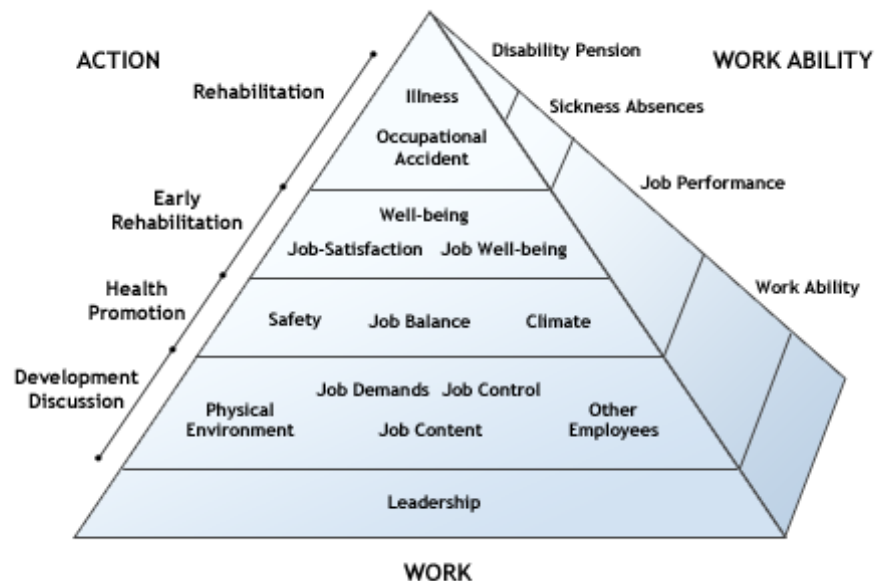
[1] The term "job well-being" used in the pyramid refers to health aspects that are related to work, such as burnout (Kuoppala et al., 2008).

What happens when clear leadership and expectations are lacking in the workplace?

Leaders who are more instrumental in their approach (rather than transformational) are more likely to find staff health complaints including general feelings of malaise, irritability and nervousness. Similarly, leaders who do not demonstrate visible concern for their own physical and psychological health set a negative example for their staff and can undermine the legitimacy of any organizational program, policy and/or service intended to support employees. Middle managers are at greater risk due to the fact that they must be leaders and be led simultaneously. This role conflict can lead to feelings of powerlessness and stress.

How can Clear Leadership & Expectations be improved?

Start by conducting the GM@W Organizational Review and/or the GM@W Survey and reviewing the results. If **Clear Leadership & Expectations** 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 **Clear Leadership & Expectations**. 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 **Clear Leadership & Expectations** can be enhanced.

Further information about Clear Leadership & Expectations:

- Boumans, N. P. G., & Landeweerd, J. A. (1993). Leadership in the nursing unit: relationships with nurses' well-being. *Journal of Advanced Nursing, 18*, 767-775. doi: http://dx.doi.org/10.1046/j.1365-2648.1993.18050767.x

- 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

- Howell, J., & Avolio, B. (1993). Transformational leadership, transactional leadership, locus of control, and support for innovation: Key predictors of consolidated-business-unit performance. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 78*(6), 891-902. doi: 10.1037/0021-9010.78.6.891

- Kuoppala, J., Lamminpää, A., Liira, J., & Vainio, H. (2008). Leadership, job well-being, and health effects: A systematic review and a meta-analysis. *Journal of Occupational & Environmental Medicine, 50*(8), 904-915. doi: 10.1097/JOM.0b013e31817e918d

- McConville, T., & Holden, L. (1999). The filling in the sandwich: HRM and middle managers in the health sector. *Personnel Review, 28*(5/6), 406-424. doi: 10.1108/00483489910286738

- Quick, J., Macik-Frey, M., & Cooper, C. (2007). Managerial dimensions of organizational health: The healthy leader at work. *Journal of Management Studies, 44*(2), 189-205. doi: 10.1111/j.1467-6486.2007.00684.x

- Stordeur, S., Vandenberghe, C., & D'hoore, W. (2001). On examining the moderators of leader behaviors in nursing: An investigation of substitutes for, and neutralizers and enhancers of, leadership. In J. de Jonge, P. Vlerick, A. Bussing & W. B. Schaufeli (Eds.), *Organizational psychology and health care at the start of a new millennium* (pp. 85-104). Munich, Germany: Rainer Hampp Verlag.

- The Great-West Life Assurance Company. (2012). PF3: Clear Leadership and Expectations. 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 clear expectations and leadership in the workplace may look like. Simply read the points on the slide. If you would like to elaborate on the information, we suggest elaborating on what unclear leadership and expectations can sometimes look like. You can suggest the following and why you don't want this for your group:

- Leaders who are too focused on outcomes will more often hear staff complaining about general issues, such as irritability and nervousness

- Feelings of powerlessness and stress

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 support clear leadership and expectations in the workplace.

- 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 *Selection of GM@W Suggested Actions* and *Selection of Effective Actions: Applying a Quality Framework* documents to help you select GM@W suggested actions to undertake for Clear Leadership & Expectations.

PF3: CLEAR LEADERSHIP & EXPECTATIONS

OBJECTIVE: A work environment where there is effective leadership and support that helps employees know what they need to do, how their work contributes to the organization, and whether there are impending changes.

PF3: GM@W Survey Results (check rating, if applicable)	☐ SERIOUS CONCERNS	☐ SIGNIFICANT CONCERNS	☐ MINIMAL CONCERNS	☐ RELATIVE STRENGTHS
PF3: GM@W Organizational Review Results (check rating, if applicable)	☐ SERIOUS CONCERNS	☐ SIGNIFICANT CONCERNS	☐ MINIMAL CONCERNS	☐ 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 **Clear Leadership & Expectations**. 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. 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 **Clear Leadership & Expectations** 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 **Clear Leadership & Expectations** 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 Clear Leadership & Expectations 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)

- ❑ Emphasize the importance of emotional intelligence leadership style as a consideration in decisions about advancement and promotion
- ❑ Foster opportunities for regular dialogue and interaction between staff and managers/leaders
- ❑ Ensure that employees clearly understand their tasks and responsibilities, and how their work contributes to the overall organization

Training & Development

- ❑ Implement a mentoring/job-shadowing program for leaders who are new to their position
- ❑ Provide training in leadership skills to those in supervisory/management roles
- ❑ Train supervisors/managers in effective communication, emotional intelligence and problem-solving skills
- ❑ Orient new leaders to the organization's culture and values

Communication

- ❑ Maintain regular communication throughout the organization (e.g., through newsletters, bulletins, intranet updates)
- ❑ Provide opportunities for regular, open and effective communication between employees and supervisors/managers, particularly during times of transition and uncertainty
- ❑ Hold regular staff meetings and ensure management is in attendance
- ❑ Strive for direct, accurate and timely communication from senior management, particularly about difficult decisions (e.g., layoffs)

Formal Policies & Programs

- ❑ Review positions to ensure ongoing relevance to organizational goals and objectives, and to minimize redundancy
- ❑ Ensure that job descriptions are current, specific and agreed-upon by relevant staff
- ❑ Create explicit expectations for manager/leader behaviour (e.g., through accountability agreements)
- ❑ Conduct regular performance reviews for all staff (including management) that include collaborative/bi-directional feedback

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 *GM@W Action Planning Worksheet*, pick your start date, identify who will be involved – your Action Team, and get started!

Slide # 5
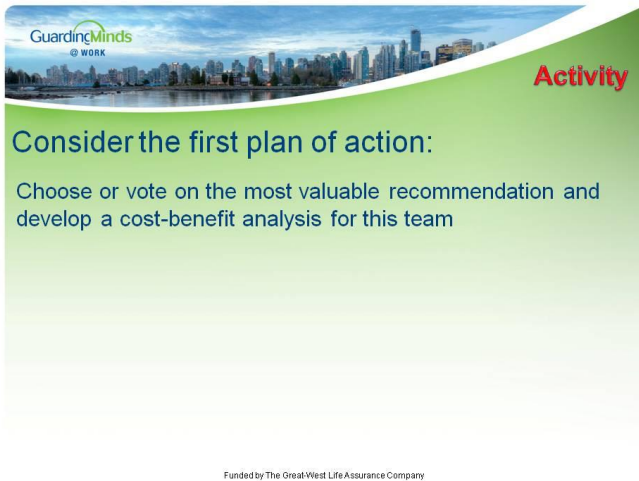
- Review some of the recommended actions in GM@W Suggested Responses document or choose those that you wish to share with the group as possibilities.

- Ask the employees to work in groups of three or more to 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 clear leadership and expectations.

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 if this would be practical.

- Develop a statement with the group about why the chosen recommendation is important.

Slide # 7

- 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 in implementing the various actions 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: ____/____/____

PF3: CLEAR LEADERSHIP & EXPECTATIONS

OBJECTIVE: A work environment where there is effective leadership and support that helps employees know what they need to do, how their work contributes to the organization, and whether there are impending changes.

PF3 GM@W Survey Results

PF3 GM@W Survey Score: _____ (5 to 20)   Date administered: ____/____/____

SERIOUS CONCERNS	SIGNIFICANT CONCERNS	MINIMAL CONCERNS	RELATIVE STRENGTHS

PF3 GM@W Organizational Review Results

PF3 GM@W Organizational Review Score: _____ (5 to 20)   Date administered: ____/____/____

SERIOUS CONCERNS	SIGNIFICANT CONCERNS	MINIMAL CONCERNS	RELATIVE STRENGTHS

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

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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: *(if applicable)*						
Action Priority 3: *(if applicable)*						

Slide # 8

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