

On the **Agenda**



Facilitator's Guide

Psychological Competencies & Requirements

Psychological Competencies & Requirements



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 competencies and requirements in the workplace”.

On the Agenda



Slide # 2

This slide provides a definition of psychological competencies and requirements in the workplace. We recommend starting with the definition provided by *Guarding Minds @ Work*™: “Effective psychological competencies and requirements occurs in a work environment where there is a good fit between an employee’s interpersonal and emotional competencies and the requirements of the position they hold.” Then 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 may wish to share additional information such as:

1. What does psychological competencies and requirements in the workplace mean?

Possible Answer: This means that employees have the technical skills and knowledge for a particular position, but they also have the psychological skills and emotional intelligence to do the job. Emotional intelligence means self-awareness, impulse control, persistence, self-motivation and empathy required for the position.

2. Why is psychological competencies and requirements important?

Possible Answer: It has been found that it is more important for employees to feel that they fit their job, rather than being assessed to match a particular job.

About PF5: Psychological Competencies & Requirements

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 PF5: Psychological Competencies & Requirements?

GM@W defines PF5: Psychological Competencies & Requirements as present in a work environment where there is a good fit between employees' interpersonal and emotional competencies and the requirements of the position they hold. This means that employees not only possess the technical skills and knowledge for a particular position, but they also have the psychological skills and emotional intelligence to do the job. Emotional intelligence includes self-awareness, impulse control, persistence, self-motivation, empathy and social deftness. Of note is the fact that a subjective job fit has been found to be more important than an objective job fit, meaning it is more important for employees to feel they fit their job, rather than being assessed and matched to the job.

Why is Psychological Competencies & Requirements important?

A fit between employees' psychological competencies and the requirements of the position they hold is associated with fewer somatic health complaints, lower levels of depression, greater self-esteem and a more positive self-concept. It is also associated with enhanced performance, job satisfaction and employee retention.

What happens when there is a misfit between employees' psychological competencies and the requirements of the position they hold?

A misfit between employees' psychological competencies and the requirements of the position they hold may result in job strain. This strain can be expressed as emotional distress and arousal, excessive cognitive rumination, defensiveness, energy depletion and lower mood levels. Organizationally, competencies and requirements misfit is linked to a reduction of applicants in the recruitment and training process, lack of enjoyment and engagement, poor productivity, conflict, and greater voluntary turnover.

How can Psychological Competencies & Requirements be improved?

Start by conducting the GM@W Organizational Review and/or the GM@W Survey and reviewing the results. If **Psychological Competencies & Requirements** 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 Competencies & Requirements**. 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 Competencies & Requirements** can be enhanced.

Further information about Psychological Competencies & Requirements:

- Canadian Mental Health Association, Ontario. (2012). *Mental health works*. Retrieved from <http://www.mentalhealthworks.ca>
- Carless, S. (2005). Person-job fit versus person-organization fit as predictors of organizational attraction and job acceptance intentions: A longitudinal study. *Journal of Occupational & Organizational Psychology*, 78(3), 411-429. doi: 10.1348/096317905X25995
- 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
- Goleman, D. (1995). *Emotional intelligence*. New York: Bantam Books.
- Scroggins, W. (2008). The relationship between employee fit perceptions, job performance, and retention: Implications of perceived fit. *Employee Responsibilities & Rights Journal*, 20(1), 57-71. doi: 10.1007/s10672-007-9060-0
- Shaw, J., & Gupta, N. (2004). Job complexity, performance and well-being: When does supplies-values fit matter? *Personnel Psychology*, 57(4), 847-879. doi: 10.1111/j.1744-6570.2004.00008.x
- The Great-West Life Assurance Company. (2012). PF5: Psychological Competencies and Requirements. In *Centre Resources by GM@W Factor and On the Agenda*. Retrieved from <http://www.workplacestrategiesformentalhealth.com>

www.guardingmindsatwork.ca



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What does a workplace with good psychological competencies and requirements look like?

- Enhanced job performance and overall productivity
- Greater job satisfaction
- Increased retention of skilled staff
- Enhanced recruitment success

Slide # 3

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This slide details what psychological competencies and requirements in the workplace may look like. Simply read the points on the slide. If you would like to expand on the information, we suggest elaborating on what a workplace without psychological competencies and requirements may look like. You can suggest the following and why you don't want this for your group:

- Job strain
- Emotional distress
- Defensiveness of employees
- Lower mood levels
- Increased turnover

On the Agenda



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:

- Involve potential co-workers and others as appropriate in the selection process for applicants for new positions or consideration of internal candidates for advancement opportunities
- Provide training in interpersonal/emotional skills, particularly those required for highly demanding positions

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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 interpersonal competencies.
- 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 Psychological Competencies & Requirements.

PF5: PSYCHOLOGICAL COMPETENCIES & REQUIREMENTS

OBJECTIVE: A work environment where there is a good fit between employees' interpersonal and emotional competencies and the requirements of the position they hold.

PF5: 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
PF5: 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 Competencies & Requirements**. 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. *Psychological Competencies & Requirements is an area of particular importance from this perspective (see also: PF1, 4, 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 Competencies & Requirements** 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 Competencies & Requirements** 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 Competencies & Requirements 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)

- Ensure that hiring and promotion decisions consider interpersonal/emotional competencies in addition to technical skills and knowledge (Note: “interpersonal/emotional competencies” refer to abilities and capacities to manage emotions and relationships, and to effectively solve challenging interpersonal problems at work)
- Develop a culture in which the concept of emotional intelligence is understood, valued and used as a criterion for recruitment, selection, recognition/reward and promotion
- Involve potential coworkers and others in the selection process of applicants for new positions or consideration of internal candidates for advancement opportunities

Training & Development

- Provide training and interview guidelines for evaluating an applicant’s potential interpersonal/emotional fit with the specific position, as well as with the overall organization
- Orient new employees to the interpersonal/emotional competencies needed for their jobs
- Provide training in interpersonal/emotional skills, particularly those required for highly-demanding positions

Communication

- Provide reinforcement and praise for demonstration of interpersonal/emotional competencies
- Conduct regular and collaborative performance evaluations that include constructive feedback about interpersonal/emotional behaviour
- Where appropriate, consider a process allowing employees to explore internal positions that may better match their interpersonal/emotional competencies (e.g., via job-shadowing or career-development discussions)

Formal Policies & Programs

- Create detailed job descriptions that include interpersonal/emotional competencies requirements
- Enhance the selection process by allowing candidates to preview job interpersonal/emotional competencies requirements during the hiring process
- Provide a probationary period of employment for new hires to ensure good job fit and provide further feedback, training and support as needed
- Perform job analyses to evaluate the interpersonal/emotional, physical and knowledge competencies requirements of the job, and complementary values and interests

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!



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Activity

Review actions recommended by research or best practices

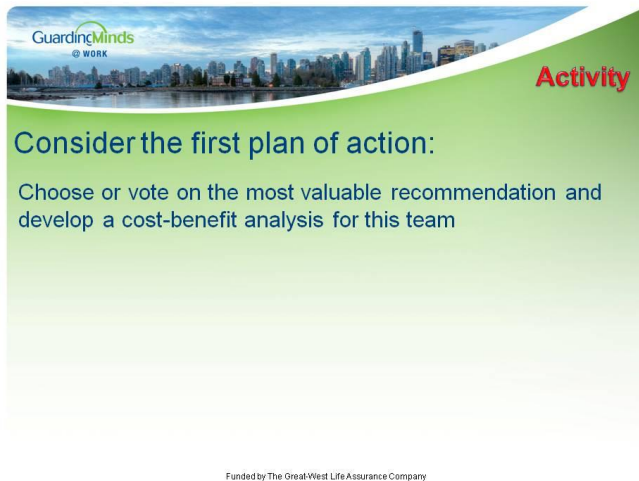
Choose the recommended actions that:

- Are most likely to be effective in promoting psychological competencies and requirements
- 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 competencies and requirements.



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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: ____/____/____

PF5: PSYCHOLOGICAL COMPETENCIES & REQUIREMENTS

OBJECTIVE: A work environment where there is a good fit between employees' interpersonal and emotional competencies and the requirements of the position they hold.

PF5 GM@W Survey Results

PF5 GM@W Survey Score: _____ (5 to 20)

Date administered: ____/____/____



PF5 GM@W Organizational Review Results

PF5 GM@W Organizational Review Score: _____ (5 to 20)

Date administered: ____/____/____



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: <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