On the Agenda

Facilitator's Guide

Organizational Culture

Organizational Culture

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 organizational culture in the workplace".

On the Agenda
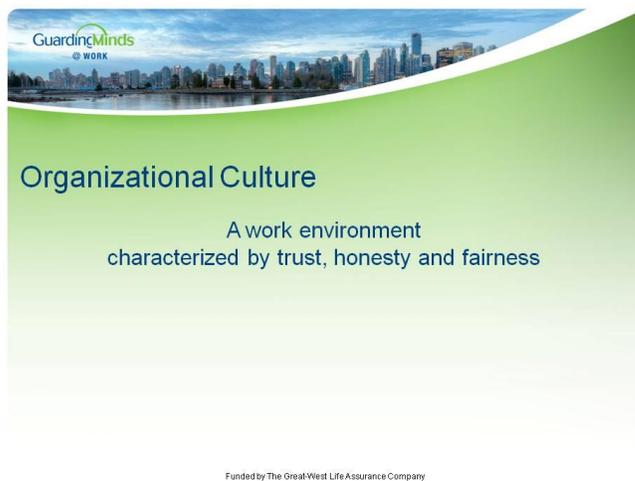
Slide # 2

This slide provides a definition of organizational culture. We recommend starting with the definition provided by *Guarding Minds @ Work™*: "Positive organizational culture is ensuring a work environment characterized by trust, honesty and fairness." Next, open the floor for questions about the definition. 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:

1. What does positive organizational culture mean?

   Possible Answer: A positive organizational culture is an organization that is characterized by trust, honesty and fairness. This can be evident in daily interactions at work, and in employment-specific events (i.e., performance reviews, discipline processes, etc.).

2. Why is positive organizational culture important?

   Possible Answer: According to research, organizational cultures that exhibit trust have increased employee well-being, job satisfaction and organizational commitment. In low trust organizations, burnout tends to be higher, as well as turnover and job dissatisfaction.

On the Agenda

About PF2: Organizational Culture

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 PF2: Organizational Culture?

GM@W defines PF2: Organizational Culture as the degree to which a work environment is characterized by trust, honesty, and fairness. In general, organizational culture has been described as "a pattern of basic assumptions invented, discovered, or developed by a given group." These assumptions are a mix of values, beliefs, meanings and expectations that group members hold in common and that they use as behavioural and problem-solving cues. The critical task is to determine which of these assumptions enhance the psychological health and safety of the workplace and the workforce.

Why is Organizational Culture important?

Organizational trust is imperative for any positive and productive social processes within any workplace. Trust is a predictor of cooperative behaviour, organizational citizenship behaviours, organizational commitment, and employee loyalty, all of which in turn help retain and attract employees. When an organization has a health-focused culture, employee well-being, job satisfaction and organizational commitment are all enhanced. A work culture with social support also enhances employee well-being and can provide a positive environment for employees who may be experiencing psychological conditions such as depression and anxiety.

What happens when a workplace does not have good organizational culture?

Culture 'sets the tone' for an organization; if that culture is negative it can undermine the effectiveness of the best programs, policies and services intended to support the workforce. An unhealthy culture creates more stress in the workplace, which lowers employee well-being. If an organization has a culture of 'profit at all costs' and constant chaotic urgency, it can create an environment in which burnout is the norm.

How can Organizational Culture be improved?

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

Further information about Organizational Culture:

- Canadian Psychiatric Research Foundation. (2007). When Something's Wrong: Strategies for the Workplace. In *Education & Awareness*. Retrieved from http://cprf.ca/education/workplace.html

- Findler, L., Wind, L., & Mor Barak, M. E. (2007). The challenge of workforce management in a global society: Modeling the relationship between diversity, inclusion, organizational culture, and employee well-being, job satisfaction and organizational commitment. *Administration in Social Work, 31*(3), 63-94. doi: 10.1300/J147v31n03_05

- 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

- Härtel, C. (2008). How to build a healthy emotional culture and avoid a toxic culture. In N. M. Ashkanasy & C. L. Cooper (Eds.), *Research companion to emotion in organizations* (pp. 575-588). Northampton, MA: Edward Elgar Publishing.

- Hodge, B.J., & Anthony, W. P. (1988). *Organizational theory*. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

- Lansisalmi, H., Peiro, J., & Kivimaki, M. (2000). Collective stress and coping in the context of organizational culture. *European Journal of Work & Organizational Psychology, 9*(4), 527-559. doi: 10.1080/13594320050203120

- Schein, E. (1990). Organizational culture. *American Psychologist, 45*(2), 109-119. Retrieved from http://www.machon-adler.co.il/readers/reader56.pdf

- The Great-West Life Assurance Company. (2012). PF2: Organizational Culture. In *Centre Resources by GM@W Factor* and *On the Agenda*. Retrieved from http://www.workplacestrategiesformentalhealth.com

- The Health Communication Unit. (2009). *Organizational culture: From assessment to action*. Retrieved from http://www.thcu.ca/Workplace/pdf/2009_03_10_Organizational_Culture.pdf

- Zhang, A., Tsui, A., Song, L., Li, C., & Jia, L. (2008). How do I trust thee? The employee-organization relationship, supervisor support, and middle manager trust in the organization. *Human Resource Management, 47*(1), 111-132. doi: 10.1002/hrm.20200

www.guardingmindsatwork.ca

Slide # 3

This slide details what a positive organizational culture 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 positive organizational culture may look like. You can suggest that you don't want your group to experience:

- Increased absenteeism and increased burden on those left carrying the load
- Increased burnout
- Employees expressing dislike about coming to work
- Employees undermining polices and practices created to assist them
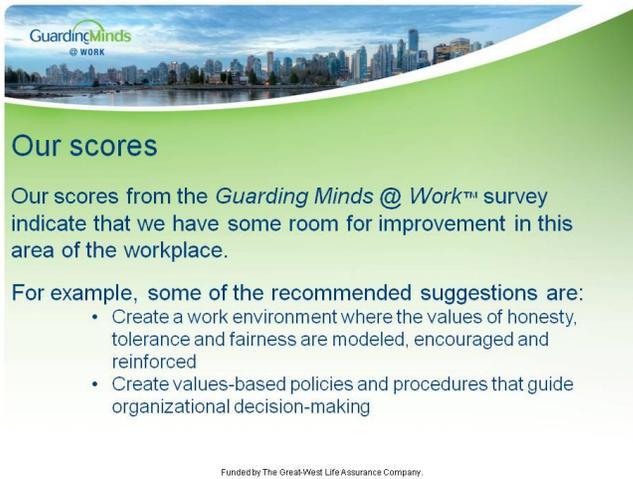
Slide # 4

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 a positive organizational culture.

- 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 Organizational Culture.

PF2: ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

OBJECTIVE: A work environment characterized by trust, honesty and fairness.

PF2: GM@W Survey Results (check rating, if applicable)	☐ SERIOUS CONCERNS	☐ SIGNIFICANT CONCERNS	☐ MINIMAL CONCERNS	☐ RELATIVE STRENGTHS
PF2: 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 **Organizational Culture**. 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 **Organizational Culture** 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 **Organizational Culture** 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 Organizational Culture 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)

❑ Create a respectful work environment where values of honesty, tolerance and fairness are modeled, encouraged and reinforced

❑ Engage staff in maintaining an open environment that promotes group cohesion and communication

❑ Ensure meaningful participation in the development of organizational mission, values and codes of ethics

Training & Development

❑ Provide opportunities for teams to learn and develop together in order to strengthen relationships (e.g., team-building exercises)

❑ Identify role models or mentors for new/junior employees to strengthen and ensure the continuity of organizational culture

❑ Provide training to all staff on effective communication and conflict management

Communication

❑ Encourage ongoing opportunities for staff at all levels to interact and get to know each other (e.g., staff lunches)

❑ Encourage face-to-face communication, particularly about potentially difficult issues

❑ Communicate explanations for decisions and ensure respect, sincerity, care and empathy when the implications of decisions may be seen as negative by some employees

❑ Communicate to staff about management decisions and solicit their input as appropriate

Formal Policies & Programs

❑ Respond in a timely and effective manner when challenging interpersonal issues/conflict arise in the workplace

❑ Create a mission statement that incorporates values of trust, honesty and fairness, and display it prominently for staff and the public

❑ Create values-based policies and procedures that guide organizational decision-making

❑ Hold all members of the organization accountable for their actions, and in particular ensure that managers/leaders are held accountable to the same or higher standard

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 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 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 organizational culture.

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 to them; get to the underlying need that is being met.

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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 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: ____/____/____

PF2: ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

OBJECTIVE: A work environment characterized by trust, honesty and fairness.

PF2 GM@W Survey Results

PF2 GM@W Survey Score: _____ (5 to 20)   Date administered: ____/____/____

SERIOUS CONCERNS	SIGNIFICANT CONCERNS	MINIMAL CONCERNS	RELATIVE STRENGTHS

PF2 GM@W Organizational Review Results

PF2 GM@W Organizational Review Score: _____ (5 to 20)   Date administered: ____/____/____

SERIOUS CONCERNS	SIGNIFICANT CONCERNS	MINIMAL CONCERNS	RELATIVE STRENGTHS

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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 more resources check out:

www.workplacestrategiesformentalhealth.com

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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