

# Workplace Strategies for Mental Health

Compliments of Canada Life

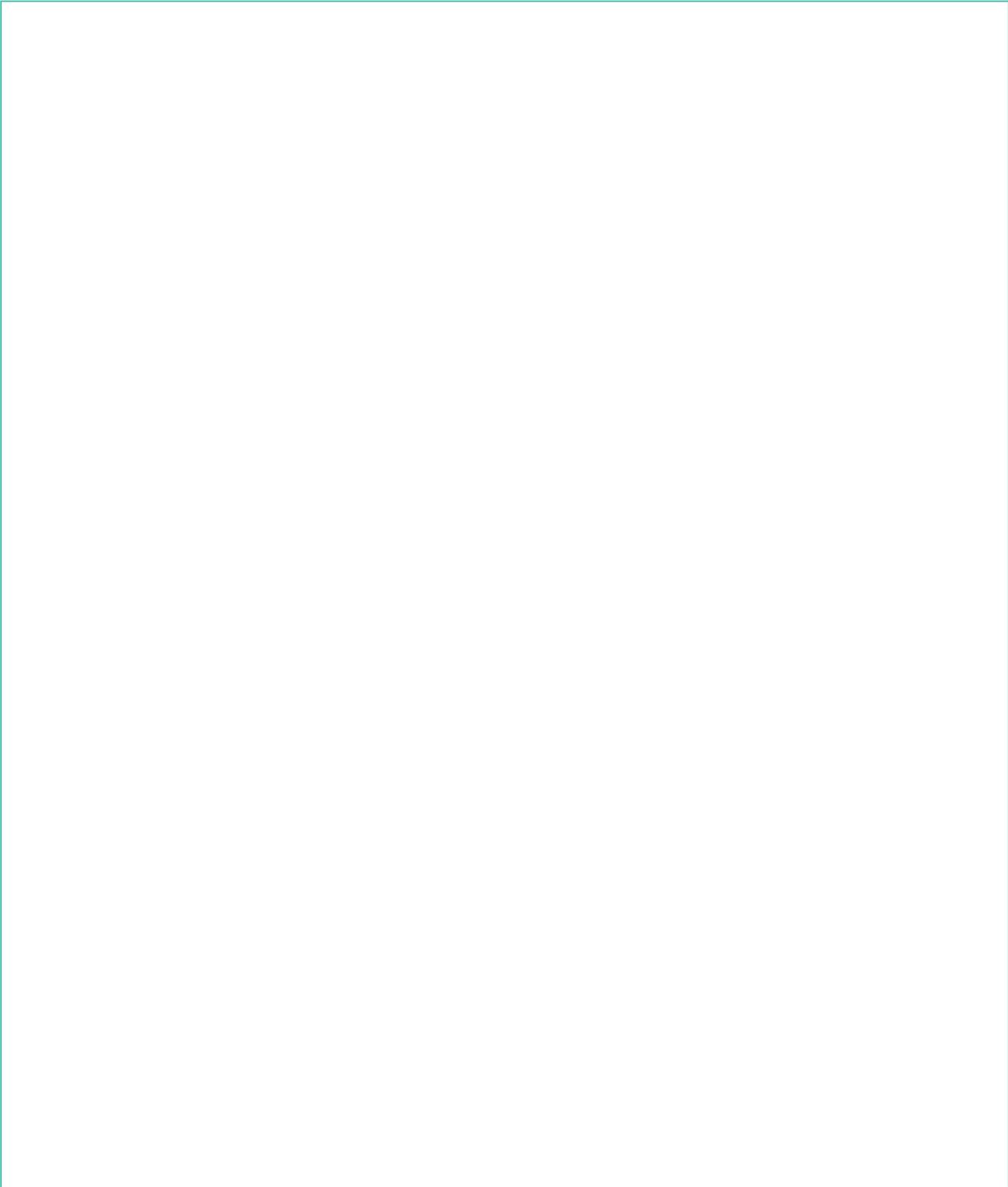
Workshop  
Series



**Participant handout**

Putting balance on the agenda:  
**Creating change**

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## Putting balance on the agenda: creating change

The results from employee input during the Creating awareness workshop on this topic should accompany this handout. If this piece is missing, please notify the workshop facilitator.

If you haven't already done so, please read through this handout before starting the workshop.

This session aligns with the recommendations of the National Standard of Canada on Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace (CSA z1003).

## Process

- Recap definition and statements
- Align employee input with evidence-based actions
- Define criteria for choosing actions
- Complete Creating change worksheets
- Share ideas
- Vote | Refine | Commit

## Psychologically safe discussions

- Focus on moving forward and not on the past
- Offer constructive suggestions for improvement
- Discuss ideas, not individuals
- Allow everyone the chance to contribute

## **Guarding Minds at Work description of positive balance:**

**“A work environment where there is recognition of the need for employees to be able to manage the demands of work, family and personal life.”**

People in this type of work environment would be able to say:

- My employer encourages me to take my entitled breaks (e.g., lunchtime, sick time, vacation time, earned days off, parental leave).
- I am able to reasonably balance the demands of work and personal life.
- My employer promotes work-life balance.
- I can talk to my supervisor when I am having trouble maintaining work-life balance.
- I feel supported in my workplace when I am dealing with personal or family issues.
- My employer has programs or policies to prevent worker burnout.

# Evidence-based actions for creating change in balance

## Adapted from Guarding Minds at Work

### Ensure leaders model positive work and life balance behaviour.

- Ensure messaging from leaders and management is consistent with their demonstrated behaviour or expectations.
- Provide training for managers and supervisors so they can support both themselves and their employees to manage work and life demands.

### Consider organizational amenities and events that support balance.

- Provide healthy opportunities, such as on-site fitness space.
- Encourage the use of allocated time off and breaks by sharing [Healthy break activities](#).
- Support employees who wish to share non-work-related accomplishments, such as the birth of children, major anniversaries, accomplishment of lifelong goals and others.

### Review policies that impact balance.

- Allow “personal time” off, options for unpaid leaves and other considerations.
- Offer opportunities to earn time off during peak work periods to use during periods with a lower workload demand.
- Offer personal and family supports for both child and elder care, such as:
  - Comprehensive benefits
  - Daycare
  - Fitness facility access
  - Health education
  - Family responsibility leaves
- See [Work-life balance](#), from the Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety, for initiative ideas to boost work-life balance as well as guides on how to implement these changes.
- Remind and demonstrate to your team regularly that your organization’s committed to balance as an important part of being healthy and productive.

### **Provide flexible work arrangements when possible.**

- Consider:
  - Compressed work schedules
  - Working from home
  - Virtual conferencing
  - Part-time work
  - Contract opportunities
  - Job sharing
  - Longer days with more days off for those who find more balance with this schedule instead of the traditional 5-day workweek
- Provide appropriate support for shift-based employees. For example:
  - Limit split and rotating shifts
  - Provide advance notice of shift change
  - Permit shift trading
- Offer supports for employees who work from home or off-site, such as appropriate technology and resources.
- Ask employees what solutions will work best for them. Refer to [Accommodation strategies](#) to help employees who have disabilities to remain productive.

### **Provide educational opportunities to support work and life balance.**

- Make available information on creating and sustaining balanced work-life demands. These may include enhanced resiliency, coping and problem-solving skills.
- Offer a range of educational internal and external opportunities on non-job-related topics. Consider ideas like “lunch-and-learn” sessions on childcare or eldercare issues.
- Ensure your team’s aware of existing company and community resources or programs that support work-life balance.

### **Support employees who are struggling with their mental health.**

- There are many tools and resources available to help:
  - [Referring employees to resources](#) includes tactful wording you can modify to refer employees to resources like EAP, support groups or online resources.
  - [Workplace strategies for mental health](#) offers a variety of resources for your employees.
  - [Supporting employee success](#) provides a free tool to support employers in helping an employee create and follow a workplace plan that addresses performance and workplace stressors.

## Support employees who are caregivers.

- Offer [Being a health advocate](#) to employees struggling with balancing caregiving with work. Caring for a family member, partner or friend can be distressing. You may feel stressed when you can't personally provide all they need to be comfortable and when you aren't sure where to turn to for help.
- Use [Employees who are caregivers](#) for strategies to support employees who are caregivers for family members or loved ones with mental health or other health issues.

## Take steps to prevent burnout.

- Review [Burnout response](#) to:
  - Help understand the issue
  - Recognize workplace factors
  - Be aware of signs and symptoms
  - Take pro-active steps to help reduce the impact of burnout on employees and workplaces
- Consider facilitating an organization-wide workshop where each employee completes the [Plan for resilience](#). This self-reflection resource can help them identify effective strategies and resources to build resilience.
- Consider sharing [Burnout in the workplace: a focus on prevention](#). This free webinar explores workplace factors that cause the mental harm leading to burnout. It also discusses how to eliminate or control the hazards that can result in burnout.

## Additional actions and resources

- Ask for employee input when making decisions about benefit programs. For example, provide flexible or "opt-out" options.
- Develop clear expectations around employee availability, communication and technology use during off-work periods.
- Review [Policy recommendations](#) to see where you can improve psychological health and safety.

## Creating change criteria:

- Honours the input of our employees
- Improves balance
- Is within our budget
- Is easy to implement now
- Minimizes risk to psychological safety

## Up to 3 evidence-based actions chosen by our group:

1.

Why we feel this will create the change we want:

2.

Why we feel this will create the change we want:

3.

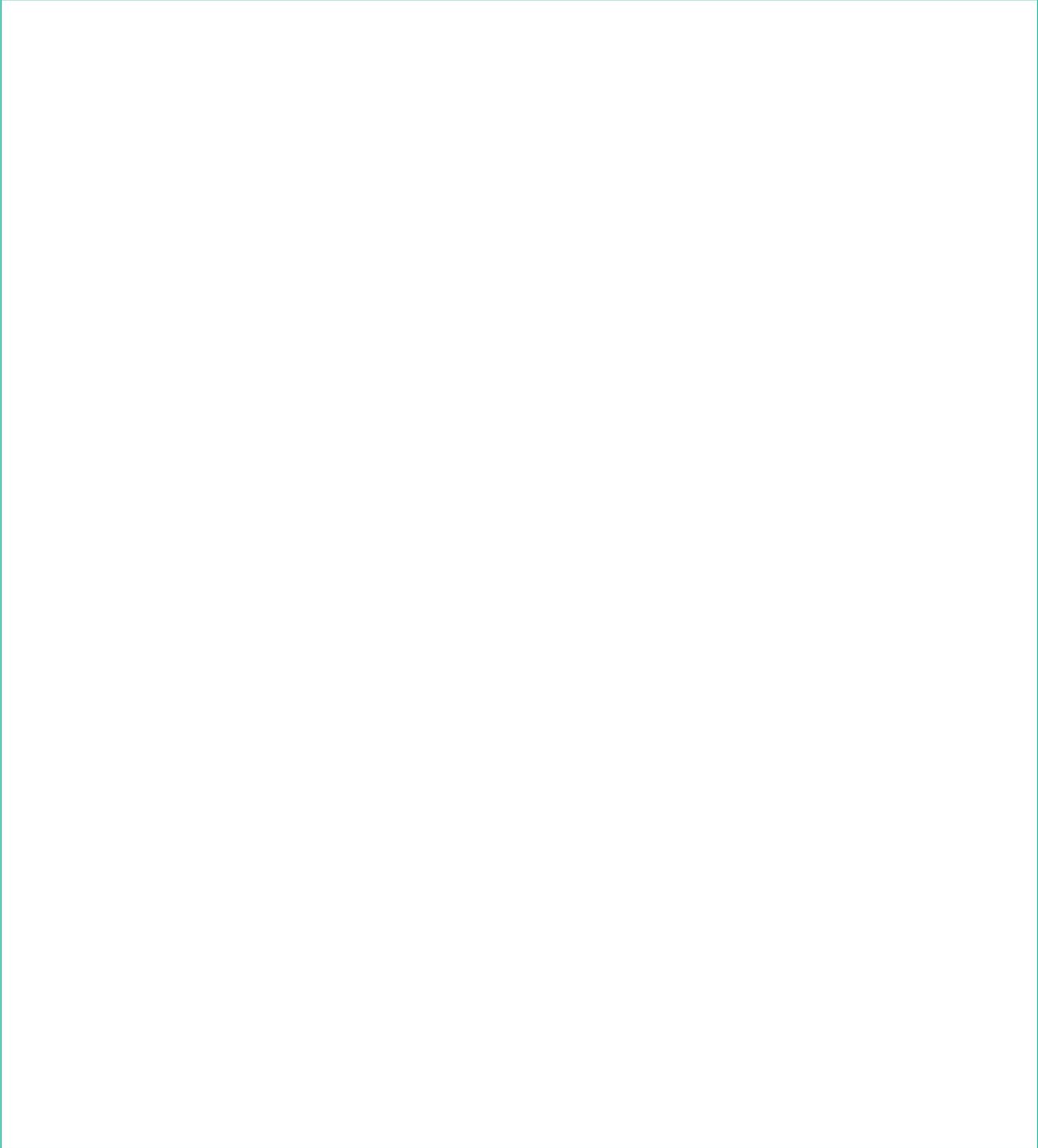
Why we feel this will create the change we want:

## Notes about potential actions

Use this space to record any questions or comments about the actions presented.

## Refining our top action(s)

This space is for notes about potential challenges, solutions to those challenges and ways to improve the effectiveness of the actions chosen.

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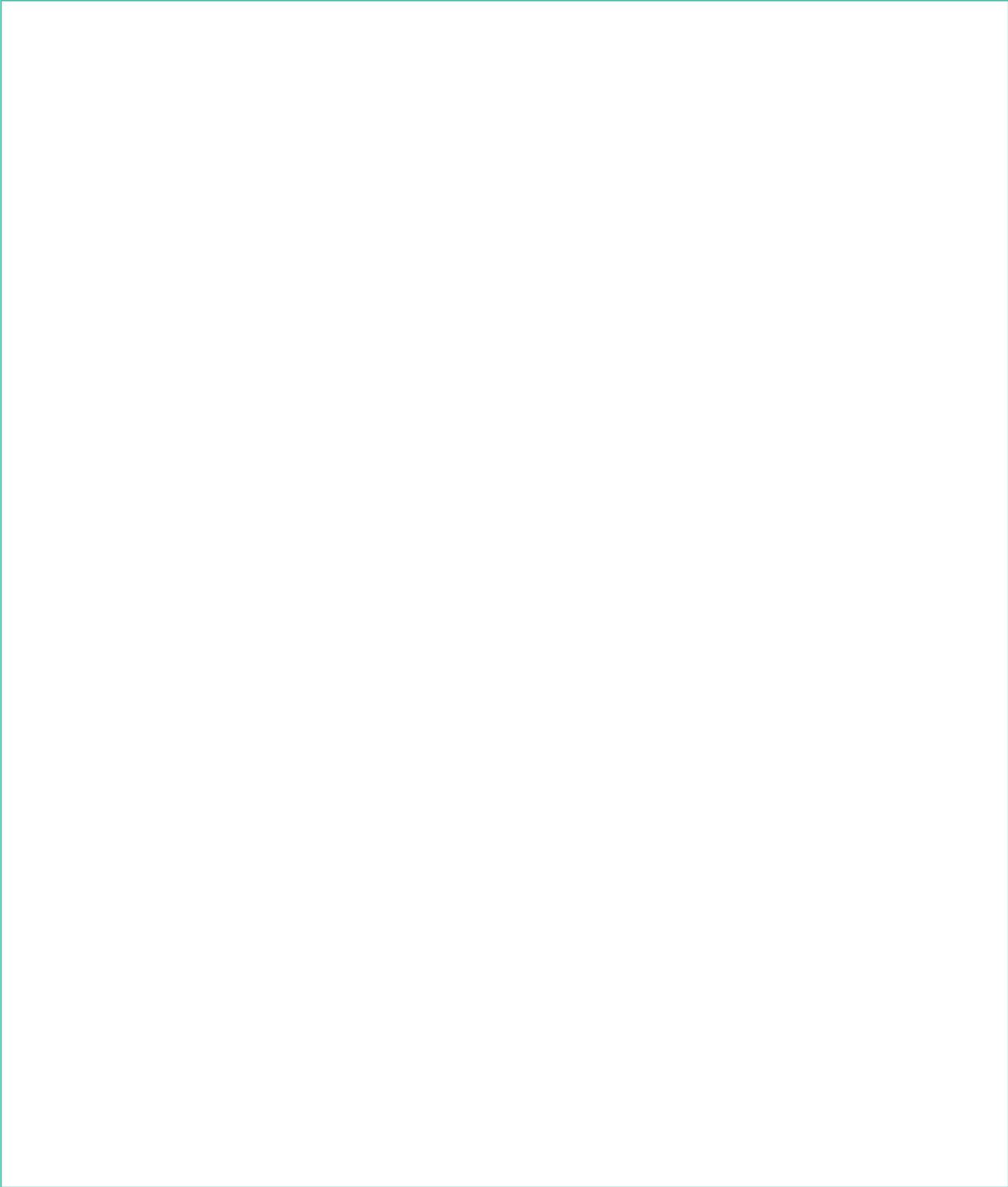
# Committing to our success

## Improving balance in our workplace – potential implementation team

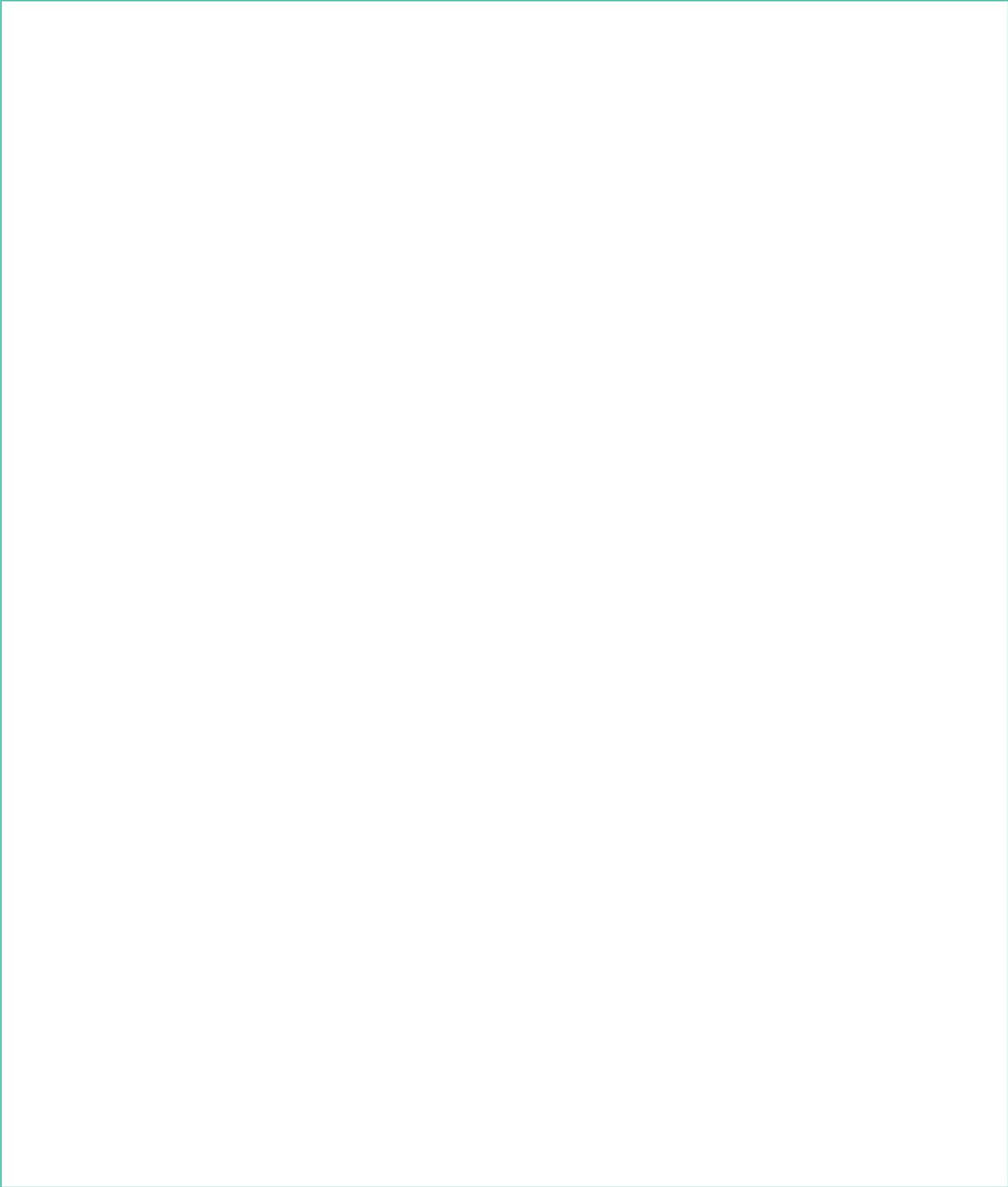
Recommend names and emails, including your own, of who should be involved in:

- Leading the project
- Finalizing the action plan
- Developing measurement tools like surveys or interviews
- Researching, securing or creating resources to use for the action
- Communicating about and promoting the action
- Managing registration, if necessary
- Facilitation of the action
- Participation in the action
- Facilitating the completion or analysis of measurement tools
- Presenting on the outcomes of the action to senior leaders
- Evaluating the outcomes against the objectives
- Authorizing continual improvement

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# Workplace Strategies for Mental Health

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## Workplace Strategies for Mental Health resources are:

- For all employers, people leaders and employees
- Available in English and French
- Evidence- or practice-based
- Available to anyone at no cost

Examples of the resources available at [clwsmh.ca/materials](http://clwsmh.ca/materials) include:

### Developing a workplace plan

The employee and employer develop a plan to create solutions to work-related issues. Use this plan to help in areas of performance, accommodation, or return to work.

### Leadership development

Improve the comfort and effectiveness in resolving workplace issues to enhance psychological health and safety for all. These resources can help.

### Team development

Teams can face many challenges in the workplace, including conflict, bullying, low control and high demands. Discover team building activities, facilitation strategies for discussions, the importance of resilience and more. The resources are both practical and easy to use in a variety of workplaces.

### Responding to issues

Use these practical and action-oriented guidelines to address work issues, including:

- Conflict
- Performance
- Accommodation
- Impairment
- Return to work
- Violence

**All Workplace Strategies for Mental Health resources are available to anyone at no cost, compliments of Canada Life.**



We'd love to hear how you used this free resource!

Contact us through social media or at [clwsmh.com](https://clwsmh.com)

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