

Some workplaces not considered psychologically safe by employees

By Mary Ann Baynton, Program Director, Great-West Life Centre for Mental Health in the Workplace

(WPG) A recent Ipsos Reid survey, commissioned by the Great-West Life Centre for Mental Health in the Workplace, found that 71 per cent of Canadian employees surveyed report some degree of concern with psychological health and safety in their workplace.

A psychologically healthy and safe workplace is one that promotes workers' psychological well-being and actively works to prevent harm to worker psychological health including in negligent, reckless or intentional ways.

Fourteen per cent of survey respondents disagreed that their workplace was psychologically healthy and safe, a slight decrease from an earlier survey in 2009, which was also based on the questions included in the [Guarding Minds @ Work](#) resource.

There can be a link between how employees perceive the psychological health and safety of their workplaces and the [psychological support](#) they receive. *Guarding Minds @ Work* states that 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 this support isn't provided, stress levels can continue to rise, which may result in loss of productivity, increased costs and greater risk of accidents, incidents and injuries.

A [study](#) conducted for Chrysalis Performance Inc. in 2006 shows that workplace stress may contribute up to 55 per cent of employee assistance program costs and 30 per cent of short term disability and long term disability costs.

In its fact sheet, [By the numbers](#), The American Psychological Association reports that 51 per cent of employees said they were less productive at work as a result of stress and that 52 per cent have considered or made a decision about their career, such as looking for a new job, declining a promotion or leaving a job, based on workplace stress.

While the numbers speak for themselves, many employers still feel overwhelmed by the prospect of taking action to address or improve psychological health and safety.

[Guarding Minds @ Work](#) and [The Leadership Framework for Advancing Workplace Mental Health](#) from the Mental Health Commission of Canada are just two of the free resources that can help employers address workplace psychological health and safety. The 2012 Ipsos Reid survey results and even more resources can be found at [Workplace Strategies for Mental Health](#).

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[Infographic](#): Psychological health & safety in the workplace



[Photo](#):
Mary Ann Baynton

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