

Mental Health in the Workplace*



When you are mentally healthy and well, you cope well with everyday stress and contribute to your family and community. You realize recognize your own abilities and work productively.

When you are dealing with a mental illness, your mood and behaviours can make it difficult to function day to day. These health problems are common and can include depression, anxiety, schizophrenia, substance use, and other illnesses and addictions.

Why is workplace mental health important?

The workplace can be an essential factor to maintain positive mental health – but it can also be a stressful environment that contributes to mental health issues. When our mental health starts to deteriorate, it can be hard to enjoy life like we used to. The total cost from mental health problems to the Canadian economy is more than \$50 billion annually and can contribute to lost productivity from absenteeism, presenteeism, and turnover.

Mental health problems can affect everyone

- Every year, **one in five Canadians** will experience a mental illness of some kind
- Mental illness can affect people of any age and ranges from a short-term illness to chronic disorders
- 70 percent of Canadian employees have concerns about psychological safety in their workplace
- 30 percent percent of disability claims are related to mental illness

Risk factors for mental health problems

There is no one cause for mental health problems. Many factors may come into play, such as biology, genetics, family and social environments, and socioeconomic status. Some risk factors are:

- **Trauma.** Traumatic experiences can be any negative experience that profoundly affects a person.
- **Physical health.** Though we often think of our mind and body as separate, our mental and physical health are connected.
- **Social factors.** Income, education, employment, gender, race, disability, social exclusion, and working conditions can all impact mental health.

Common signs and symptoms

- Changes in eating or sleep patterns
- Changes in mood or appearance
- Difficulty coping with stress or concentrating
- Excessive fear, worries, and anxieties
- Isolating and avoiding others
- Feeling tired or having low energy
- Difficulty managing responsibilities
- Having strange beliefs not based in reality
- Hearing or seeing things that aren't there

Addressing mental health in the workplace

Fear and misunderstanding often lead to prejudice against people with mental illness, and it's one of the main reasons people don't consider it a real health issue.



Stigma can prevent people with mental health issues from seeking treatment and reaching their potential. It can make them feel isolated, worthless, or hopeless.

- Know the facts and educate yourself and your team about mental illness
- Be aware of your attitudes, behaviours, judgments and beliefs about mental illness
- Choose your words carefully – the way we speak affects the attitudes of others
- Support people. Treat everyone with dignity and respect. Offer support and encouragement
- Don't ignore or avoid someone experiencing mental health concerns



For additional resources visit:

Manufacturing Safety Alliance of BC: safetyalliancebc.ca

Mental Health Commission of Canada: mentalhealthcommission.ca

Canadian Association of Mental Health: camh.ca

Toolbox Talk

Name of Facilitator: _____ Date: _____

Supervisor Signature: _____ Date: _____

Safety Specific Training Requirements: Identified Hazards/concerns

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Employee feedback/questions/recommendations

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Workers who attended

Name	Initial	Name	Initial
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
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Key Talking Points

Why is the mental health of workers important in our company?

What are some of the workplace stresses that could affect our team's mental health?

How can we start a conversation with a co-worker who we think may be struggling with mental health?

