



# **Mental Health Guide for Small Businesses**



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## Step 1: Get Informed

### Introduction to Psychological Health and Safety

Psychological health means being able to think, feel, and behave in a way that allows us to perform effectively in all parts of our lives – at work, at home, and in the community. Problems with psychological health can range from common difficulties such as fatigue, to severe psychological disorders.

Psychological safety is about avoiding harm to our mental well-being. Making workplaces psychologically safe means preventing things that could hurt employees' mental health.

Both psychological health and safety are important, but it's smart to focus on safety first. This means stopping things that could cause harm to mental health before trying to make things better.

A good workplace is one that cares about employees' mental well-being and actively works to prevent harm from things like carelessness, recklessness, or intentional actions.

Source: [What is psychological health and safety? \(workplacestrategiesformentalhealth.com\)](https://workplacestrategiesformentalhealth.com)

### Why is psychological health and safety important for your business?

As a small business owner, understanding psychological safety and psychosocial hazards is key to fostering a safe and healthy environment for your employees.

Long-term retention and happy healthy employees is the goal, and this can be achieved by focusing on their mental well-being and creating a psychologically safe workplace where we identify and mitigate work-related stress and/or mental harm.

### Getting Started

This guide was created to help understand why it's important to take care of the mental well-being of your employees at work. It also offers resources and tools to help your small business create a supportive and safe environment for mental health.

- **Info Sheets:** Use for safety talks with staff
- **Things to think and talk about:** These are questions to help you think and talk about mental health at work.
- **Resources:** Extra information to support you in your journey.
- **Tools for your toolbox:** Things you can adjust and use in your workplace to support mental health.

#### Things to think and talk about



- What does psychological health and safety mean to you?
- Why should it be important to you or your small business?
- How might a lack of psychological safety affect your workplace?



## Introduction to Workplace Mental Health

Mental health affects every aspect of our lives, including both at work and outside of work. It's always with us, wherever we go. It is important to understand how our mental health can affect us in the workplace, and how the workplace can make our mental health better or worse.

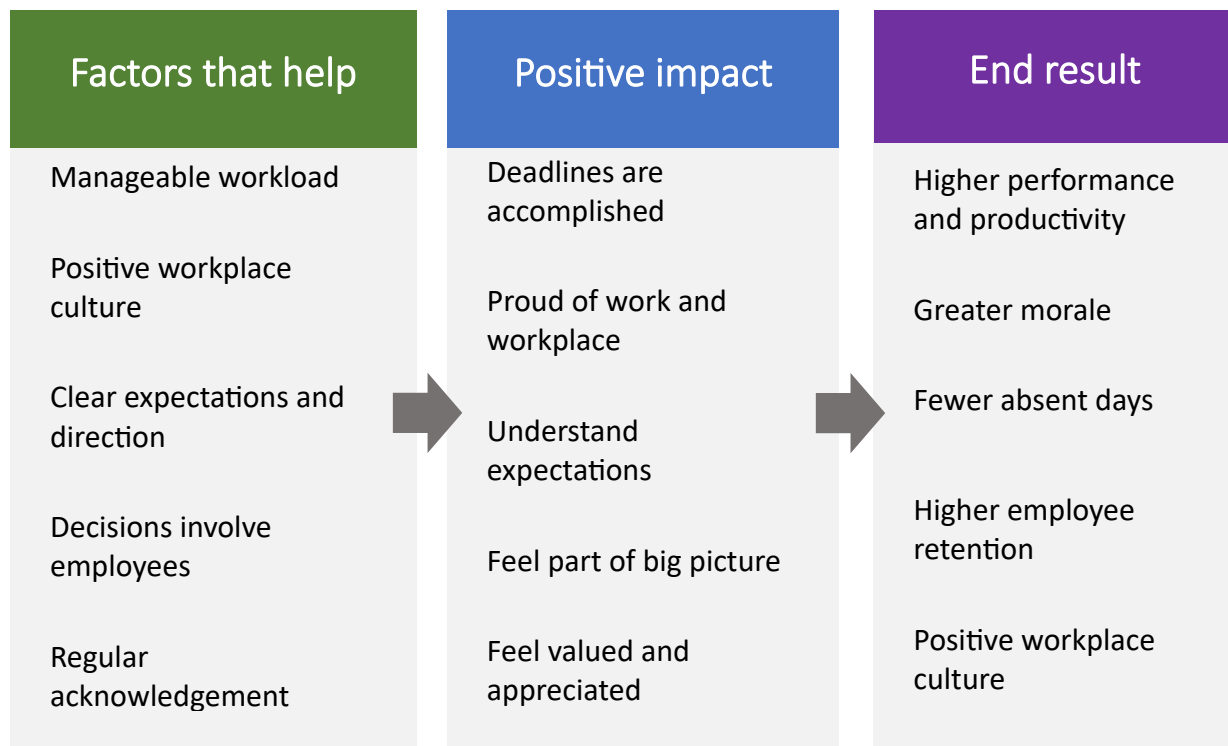
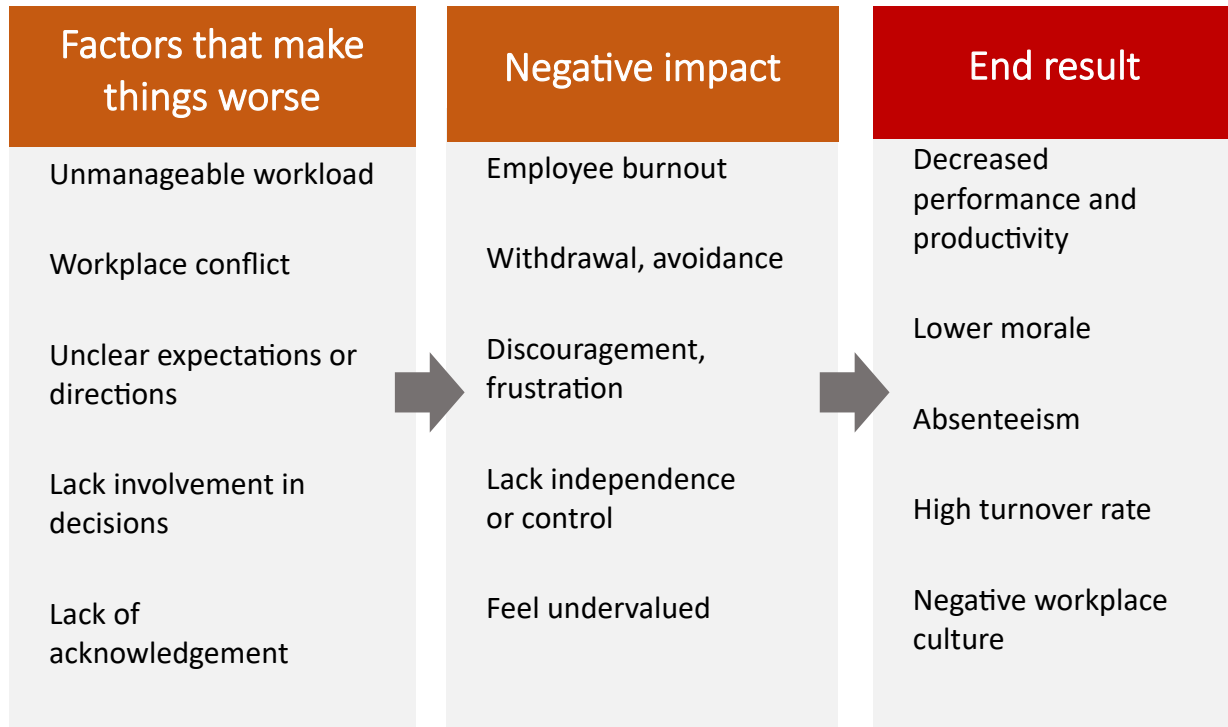
| Mental Health   | Mental Harm  | Mental Illness   |
|---|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mental health = mental wellbeing</li> <li>• We all have it – some days it's great and other days it's not so great</li> <li>• Affects how we think, feel, act; how we handle life's stresses, and how we relate to others</li> <li>• Maintaining good mental health requires effort and self-care plans. Things like exercise, mindfulness, sleep and nutrition can support good mental health.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A traumatic event or stressful work situation can harm our mental health</li> <li>• Harm can happen to anyone, and how each of us perceives harm is different</li> <li>• Can be caused by the type of work we do, being in a bad work environment, how work is set up, and how people treat each other at work</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conditions that affect your thoughts, feelings, behaviour, or mood</li> <li>• They can make it hard to do things or get things done</li> <li>• Even if you have a mental illness, you can have good overall mental health</li> <li>• A doctor diagnoses mental illnesses, and with the right help and support, they can be treated</li> </ul> |



Mental health problems, illness, and harm can affect people just as much as physical problems, sickness, and harm can. We must treat them with the same level of importance.



## Psychological Distress at Work







### Things to think and talk about



- How can your small business help your employees feel better mentally and stay healthy?
- What things at work might be causing mental harm?
- If your employee tells you're they're struggling with their mental health, how can you help them?

### Resources



- [Mental Health in the Workplace | Workplace Safety North](#)
- [Fast Facts about Mental Health and Mental Illness | Canadian Mental Health Association \(CMHA\)](#)
- [Mental health in the workplace | Government of Canada](#)
- [Workplace Mental Health | Mental Health Commission of Canada](#)
- [Webinar: Unlocking workplace wellbeing: Psychological safety essentials for small business | WSN](#)
- [Part III: Duties of employers and other persons | Guide to the Occupational Health and Safety Act](#)
- [How to ask "Are you OK?" | R U OK?](#)

WORKPLACE SAFETY NORTH

## HEALTHY WORKPLACE MONTH

### Unlocking workplace wellbeing: Psychological safety essentials for small businesses

Wed. Oct. 18, 2023 | 11:00 am - 12:00 pm ET

**Lindsay Digby** CRSP  
WSN Health and Safety Specialist and  
Certified Psychological Health and Safety Advisor

**Lisa Dupuis** CDMP  
WSN Health and Safety Specialist and  
Certified Psychological Health and Safety Advisor

 Workplace Safety North

 Putting the **MENTAL HEALTH** in Health & Safety

[workplacesafetynorth.ca/events](https://workplacesafetynorth.ca/events)

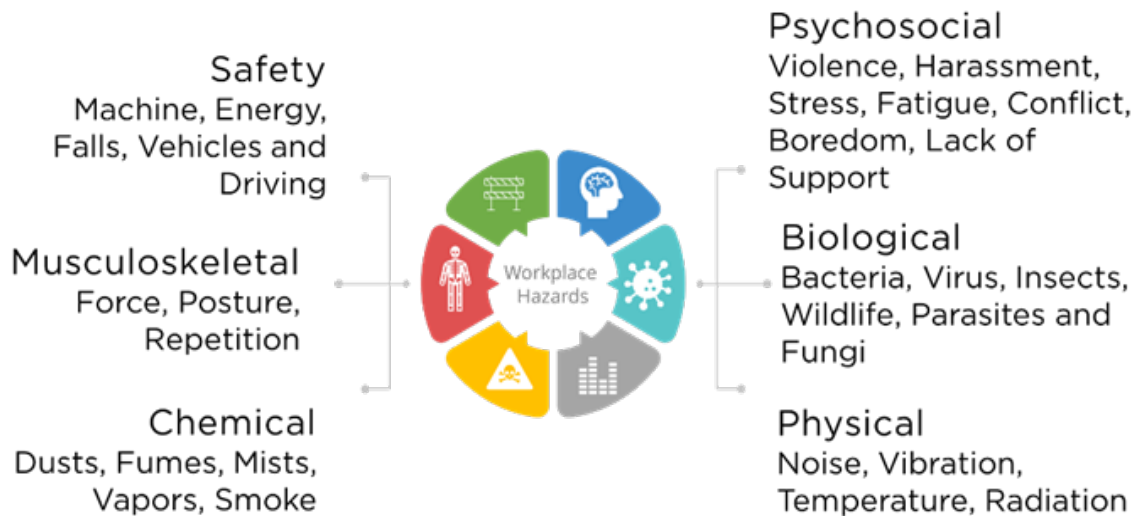
Celebrate Small Business Week Oct. 15-23



## Step 2: Risk Management

### Hazard Types

There are six main types of hazards that can happen in the workplace: safety, physical, chemical, biological, musculoskeletal, and psychosocial. People usually pay more attention to all of these hazards except for one – psychosocial hazards.



### Psychosocial Hazards

Psychosocial hazards at work are things that can harm your mental health and wellbeing. Eliminating these types of hazards contributes to a psychologically safe and healthy workplace.

Examples are violence or bullying at work, excessive stress, having too much work to do, arguing with coworkers, feeling tired, not knowing what to do, and not getting enough help.

As an employer, you have a duty to keep workers safe from all hazards, including the psychosocial ones. The aim is to make sure the workplace is healthy and safe for everyone, and that includes looking after people's mental health based on what is within the employers control.

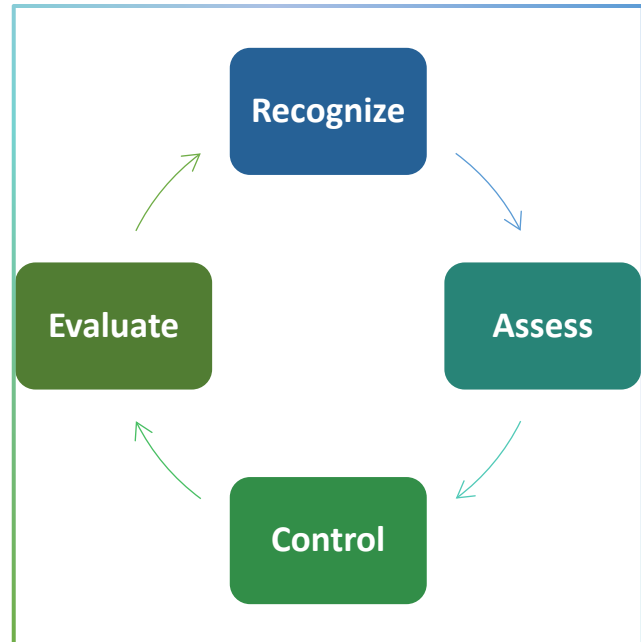


## Hazard Management

To make sure everyone stays safe and healthy, you need to reduce or eliminate the things that can cause excessive stress or mental strain as much as you reasonably can.

You can do this by using a continuous improvement cycle called **RACE**, which helps you manage risks just like you would for any other hazard.

1. **Recognize**: Find the hazard (hazard or problem) that could harm workers.
2. **Assess**: Figure out how bad the hazard could be.
3. **Control**: Deal with the hazard to reduce or eliminate the negative impact it can have.
4. **Evaluate**: Check to see if the controls are doing their job.



In workplaces, there are many different types of hazards, including ones that affect our mental health and well-being. We need to recognize what they are, assess how bad they are, put control measures in place to reduce the negative impact, and evaluate regularly how well our controls are performing.

### Things to think and talk about



- Do we think about and take care of our mental health and safety as much as we do our physical health and safety?
- How do we deal with identifying and managing potential hazards and risks in our workplace?
- Do we consider things like stress, relationships at work, and other factors that can affect our mental well-being when we manage overall workplace hazards and risks?

### Resources



- [Psychosocial hazards - Workplace Strategies for Mental Health](#)
- [Blueprint for Workplace Mental Health Programs | Workplace Safety North](#)





## Phase 1: Recognizing Psychosocial Hazards

Sometimes, problems with how people feel at work aren't noticed or dealt with. This can happen because these issues aren't always easy to see or hear like other hazards in the workplace. For example, you can spot a slippery patch of ice, but you can't always see if someone is feeling stressed or unhappy.

To spot these kinds of problems, we need to look closely and use different methods.

We can ask people how they're feeling, we can use special teams or committees to help, we can ask questions in surveys, and we can watch how people act at work.

We can also check records to see if there are any patterns, like lots of people taking time off or leaving their jobs. There are tools we can use to help, like tests to see how people are feeling, assessments by experts, and regular meetings between managers and workers.

### Recognition Tools

- ✓ The CMHA Mental Health Continuum helps us understand our own mental state
- ✓ CAAT Happiness Assessment Tool
- ✓ Health and Safety Representative helps identify health and safety hazards
- ✓ Inspection Checklists help spot problems during inspections
- ✓ Field Level Hazard Assessments help identify hazards at a work site
- ✓ Leader/worker 1-on-1 meetings help leaders understand workers' concerns
- ✓ The CSA Standard for Psychological Health and Safety lists 13 factors to consider
- ✓ P-12 Factors Assessment Tool





When we use these types of tools, it helps us give workers an opportunity to talk about any mental health, mental harm or safety related problems they might be experiencing. It also gives us a starting point to refer to when we're evaluating how things are going.

### Things to think and talk about



- What are things people say or do at work that might indicate there are problems with how people are feeling or interacting with each other?
- When we do safety checks at work, do we pay attention to things that might affect our mental health and well-being, like stress or how we get along with others?
- When we're doing tasks that require focus, how do we make sure that everyone is physically and mentally ready for the job?
- Do we capture a fit for duty requirement in field level hazard assessments? Do we check if people are in the right state of mind to work safely?

### Resources



- [Psychological Health and Safety Program - Assessing Psychosocial Hazards | CCOHS](#)
- [Climate Assessment and Audit Tool \(CAAT\): Measuring workplace health and safety culture and systems | Workplace Safety North](#)



## Workplace factors that affect mental health at work

The Canadian Standards Association released the Standard for Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace (CSA-Z1003-13). It has 13 things to look at to make sure workplaces are safe for mental health. This standard aims to help employers prevent problems and provide guidance on how to make things better. When these things are missing, therein lies the hazard.

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>Organizational Culture</b>            | We all believe in the same important things: trusting each other, being honest, fair, and responsible |
| <b>Psychological and Social Support</b>  | Everyone feels like they belong and are making a difference   |
| <b>Clear Leadership and Expectations</b> | Workers understand their tasks, trust their bosses, and know about any upcoming changes               |
| <b>Civility and Respect</b>              | Everyone involved is thoughtful and fair when they communicate and deal with each other               |
| <b>Psychological Demands</b>             | Workers are always helped to handle the mental challenges of their job                                |
| <b>Growth and Development</b>            | Workers are always encouraged and supported to enhance interpersonal, emotional, and job skills       |
| <b>Recognition and Reward</b>            | Workers are included in discussions and can give input into decisions that affect their jobs          |
| <b>Involvement and Influence</b>         | Workers are consistently helped to deal with the mental pressures of their job                        |
| <b>Workload Management</b>               | Workers feel supported to finish assigned work and responsibilities successfully                      |
| <b>Engagement</b>                        | Workers want to do their job well and feel connected to their work, co-workers, and organization      |
| <b>Balance</b>                           | Workers are helped to handle the demands of work, family, and personal responsibilities               |
| <b>Psychological Protection</b>          | Workers are free from bullying, harassment, stigma, and discrimination; and feel safe and respected   |
| <b>Protection of Physical Safety</b>     | Management makes sure to do the right things to keep workers safe from harm                           |

**Things to think and talk about**

- Which of these things are most important to you as a boss, a manager, or a worker?
- What would happen if we didn't deal with these things at work?
- How can we make sure these things are happening at our workplace?

**Resources**

- [Guarding Minds – Psychosocial factors \(workplacestrategiesformentalhealth.com\)](http://workplacestrategiesformentalhealth.com)
- [13 Psychosocial Factors for Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace - CMHA Kelowna](#)
- [Mental Health - Psychosocial Risk Factors in the Workplace - CCOHS](#)

Source: Workplace Strategies for Mental Health, Guarding Minds@Work



## Phase 2: Assessing Psychosocial Hazards

Once we find a hazard at work, we need to figure out how bad it is, and how it is impacting our people. This helps us decide what's reasonable and practical to keep everyone safe. Doing an assessment should involve both workers and leadership. Sometimes, the Joint Health and Safety Committee or a Health and Safety Representative will also be involved.

When we assess, we need to think about whether more than one person is impacted and consider if multiple hazards mix together whether it can make things worse.

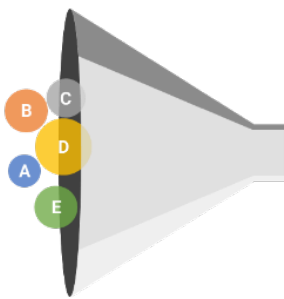
When it comes to how we feel and are interacting with others at work, the risk can increase and become more serious if the bad situation(s) happens a lot, is severe in nature, or goes on for a long period of time. If workers face a combination of these situations, the risk can go up.

These negative situations can harm us both physically and mentally and can lead to time off work which can cost more money in the long run. So, when we assess the hazards, we should think about three main things:

1. **Duration:** How long the worker(s) are around these hazards.
2. **Frequency:** How often the worker(s) face these hazards.
3. **Severity:** How bad the hazards are and how much they negatively affect the workers.

After the risk assessment, you can decide which hazards are most urgent to fix. We focus on the ones that are the riskiest first, and deal with the less risky ones later.

### Hazards



### Risk



- Duration
- Frequency
- Severity

### Consequences

- Impaired Judgement
- Loss of concentration
- Absent-mindedness
- Fatigue episode
- Lack of self-control
- Higher risk tolerance
- Unsafe behaviour
- Safety incidents
- Absenteeism
- Presenteeism
- Negative impact on teams
- Decline in productivity

**Things to think and talk about**

- How do you currently assess hazards at work? Do you also investigate things like stress and mental strain, or cognitive demands?
- Among the mental and psychosocial hazards you've spotted at work, which ones do you see as the most serious?

**Resources**

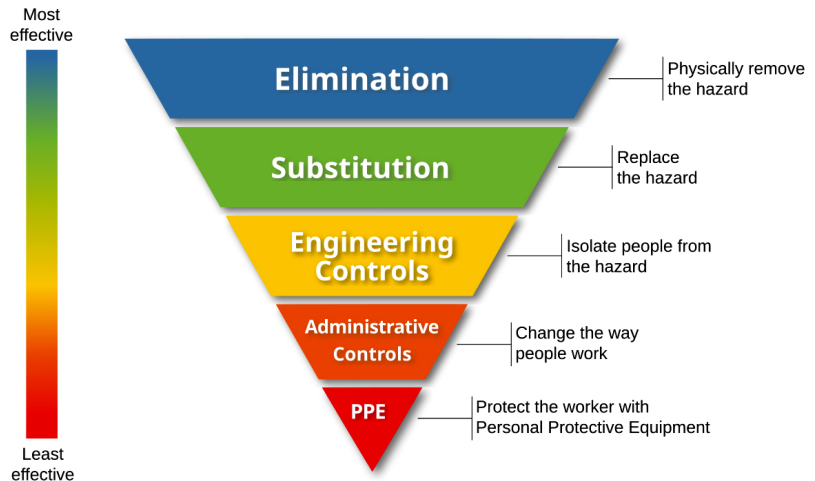
- [How to Assess Psychological Risk in Your Workplace – Lunch and Learn Webinar | Workplace Safety North](#)
- [Psychological Health and Safety Program - Assessing Psychosocial Hazards | CCOHS](#)
- [Guarding Minds at Work](#)





### Phase 3: Controls for Psychosocial Hazards

The next step in the RACE Model is Control of psychosocial hazards. This means focusing on ways to control (reduce or eliminate) the potential or actual harm to workers. We use the Hierarchy of Controls to help us determine the best way to control a hazard, and ultimately getting rid of it completely is the most effective, but not always possible. When it's not possible we often see layering of controls to reduce the risk, like having standard operating procedures and wearing protective gear.



For hazards related to mental and emotional well-being, like stress, mental strain, the priority for controls is elimination of conditions that threaten the wellbeing of the workers but see a shift where we must prioritize our efforts in developing safety programs that are more focused on positive workplace culture as a priority. Source: modified from [Fundamentals of Total Worker Health Approaches. Essential Elements for Advancing Worker Safety, Health, and Well-Being \(cdc.gov\)](#)





## Examples of Controls or Safety Measures for Psychosocial Hazards

- Change how work is organized, like adjusting workload, shiftwork, deadlines, etc.
- Make sure policies and procedures include ways to identify mental health concerns and provide support. This can be done in forms for investigations, one-on-one meetings, etc. (see examples in this Guide's Toolbox)
- Provide training and education about mental health at work, including how to handle different types of mental health issues:
  - Psychological health, safety, and wellbeing
  - Workplace mental health
  - Types of psychosocial hazards and their impact
  - How to recognize and respond to psychosocial hazards in the workplace
- Create rules for reporting mental health hazards at work
- Check in with employees often, focusing on their mental wellbeing (like workload, challenges they're facing, how they're feeling about work-life balance, etc.)
- Offer an Employee Assistance Program and encourage people to use it
- Give staff access to resources and encourage them to ask for help when they need it

### Things to think and talk about



- What safety measures or controls does your small business have in place for psychosocial hazards?
- What does your health and safety culture look like?
- How can you encourage your staff to speak up and ask for help?

### Resources



- [Mental Health in the Workplace | Workplace Safety North](#)
- [Psychological Health and Safety Program - Controlling Psychosocial Hazards - CCOHS](#)



## Additional Examples of Controls for Psychosocial Hazards

### Show support by providing resources

- Leaders can help prevent psychological issues by giving time, money, or staff support. This will be different for each organization based on need and ability.

### Create a friendly atmosphere and build relationships

- Make a place where everyone feels comfortable giving feedback, talking about difficult things, and making connections.
- When leaders regularly check in with their team, they should listen without judging, focus on understanding and supporting.

### Equip leaders with tools to build trust at work

- Give leaders training and information to help them understand emotions and ensure they use a management style that keeps everyone feeling safe.
- Make sure everyone knows that even if they disagree, they still respect each other and care about what's best for everyone.
- Treat everyone fairly and make them responsible for their actions.

### Think about how decisions affect people

- Before making decisions, think about how they might affect employees' mental health, their work, how they get along with coworkers, and their overall happiness.
- Tell everyone about changes and how they might affect them.

### Communicate a lot

- Keep employees up to date about changes that might affect their work and give them ways to share feedback and worries.
- Make sure everyone knows about mental health resources and keep encouraging them to use them.

### Plan work better

- When planning tasks, think about other things the employee must do and leave time for last-minute requests.
- If the job is too much for one person, think about putting more people on it.
- Let employees talk about any problems that make their workload bigger and offer flexibility or workload shifting.

**Help middle managers**

- Develop leaders with the skills to speak clearly and be flexible so they can help their team.
- Create an environment where leaders can get into habits that help them be mentally healthy, so they can show their team how to do the same (walk the talk).

**Add the prevention of psychological issues into your workplace health and safety program**

- Add the prevention of psychological issues into the health and safety policy, programs, training, and risk management.
- This shows that mental health problems are given the same importance as physical ones and can be eliminated or managed using the RACE process.

**Include mental injuries and distress in accommodation and return-to-work procedures**

- Just like with physical problems, bosses don't need to know everything about mental problems to help employees come back to work. They just need to know what the employee can do, as told by their doctors, to know how to help them come back to work.

**Encourage mental health**

- To keep a mentally healthy work environment, eliminate or reduce psychosocial hazards while promoting mental well-being.
- Stopping problems, means fixing things at work that cause harm, and promoting well-being means helping individuals deal with stress and becoming more resilient.

*Source: Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety*



## Educate

Learning forms the basis for understanding, dealing with, and preventing mental health risks in the workplace. It's crucial that everyone has a good grasp of what psychological well-being means, what can cause mental harm, and how to protect themselves. Training sessions, both when starting a new job and as refresher courses, should cover these topics thoroughly.

Creating a solid training program from the start, and covering these key points, will help foster a culture of mental well-being and resilience. The lists below outline important aspects to include in your training program, areas to educate your staff on, and ongoing learning opportunities regarding mental health and safety.

| Training and Orientation   | Leadership Knowledge  | Continuing Education  |
|--|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Violence and Harassment Policies and Programs</li> <li>• Respectful Workplace Policy and Behaviour</li> <li>• Confidentiality Agreements</li> <li>• Code of Ethics</li> <li>• Roles and Responsibilities</li> <li>• How to report hazards (including psychosocial or those causing mental harm)</li> <li>• Safety controls for preventing violence (lighting, panic buttons, barriers, sign-in policies, signage, visibility, working alone)</li> <li>• JHSC and/or HSR Training</li> <li>• Incident Reporting and Investigation Training</li> <li>• Right-to-Disconnect</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is a psychosocial hazard or mental health risk</li> <li>• What is mental harm and mental health</li> <li>• What is psychological safety</li> <li>• Available workplace supports</li> <li>• Community supports available</li> <li>• Employee and Family Assistance Program information (if applicable)</li> <li>• Company wellness strategy (how you promote, encourage and implement wellness, balance, connection, etc.)</li> <li>• Known or potential mental health risks and how to control them</li> <li>• Tools the company uses to assess, report, record, hazards</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Awareness sessions</li> <li>• Posters (Mental Health Continuum)</li> <li>• Safety Talk Videos (YouTube)</li> <li>• Lunch and Learn</li> <li>• Training (Mental Health 101, Mental Health: A Framework for Leaders)</li> <li>• Education on CMHA/Connex Ontario, Crisis Services</li> <li>• Participate in initiatives such as 'Bell Lets Talk Day', Mental Health Awareness Month, etc.</li> </ul> |



### Things to think and talk about



- What type of supports can you put in place for your workers?
- Do you have a company wellness strategy? If so, what is it?
- How can you continue to educate beyond required workplace training and

### Action Items



- ✓ Review your Training and Orientation Program and identify any gaps
- ✓ Use the resources and handouts in this guide to teach workers about the concepts of psychological health and safety

### Resources



- [Mental Health Training | Workplace Safety North](#)
- [Small Business Webinar: Building Capacity in Psychological Safety | Workplace Safety North](#)
- [Health and Safety Checklist - Forms - Central Forms Repository \(CFR\) \(gov.on.ca\)](#)

WORKPLACE SAFETY NORTH

## HEALTHY WORKPLACE MONTH

### Building Capacity in Psychological Safety

Wed. Oct. 5, 2022 | 11:00 am - 12:00 pm ET

**Lindsay Digby** CRSP  
WSN Health and Safety Specialist and  
Certified Psychological Health and Safety Advisor

**Lisa Dupuis** CDMP  
WSN Health and Safety Specialist and  
Certified Psychological Health and Safety Advisor



[workplacesafetynorth.ca/events](https://workplacesafetynorth.ca/events)





## Phase 4: Evaluate and Monitor Effectiveness

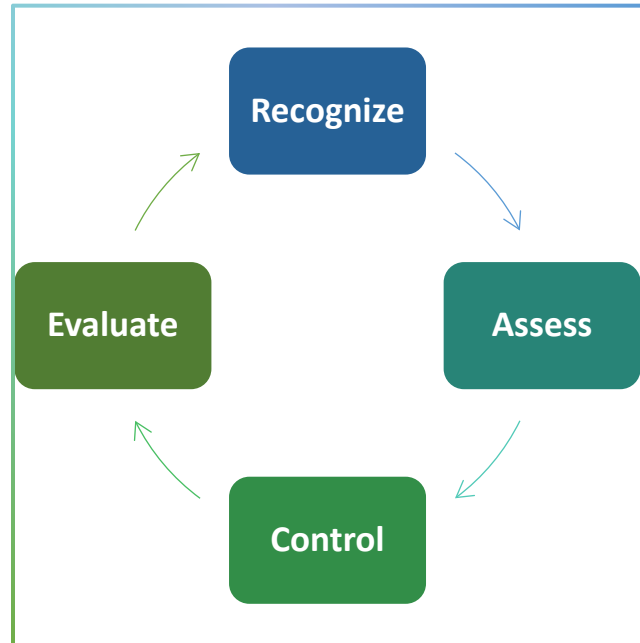
In the RACE model, the last step is to Evaluate. Here, we check if the things we've done to manage psychosocial risks at work are working as we intended or see if they've caused any new problems.

We can use the same methods we used to assess these risks to check if our solutions are effective. We can ask workers for feedback and do surveys to see if they're feeling better or if there are still issues. Some examples to evaluate controls and safety measures include:

- Worker feedback and interactions – follow up with workers regarding concerns and ask if new controls are helping the issue or causing additional problems
- Surveys: [Workplace Safety North Climate Assessment and Audit Tool](#), Workplace Safety North Happiness Assessment, [Guarding Minds at Work](#), [Great Place to Work](#), [OHCOW's Stress Assess](#) tool, their [Mental Injury Toolkit](#) or another general workplace survey to gather feedback.
- Examining lagging indicators

When we're checking if our solutions are working, we should think about what we want to achieve, like:

- Knowing what community resources are available
- Getting more staff involved in mental health and safety programs
- Specific behaviour changes in people, promoting kindness respect, and trust in the work environment
- Making changes in how the organization is run, setting strategy, developing a mission and vision related to psychosocial wellbeing. Instituting management practices, implementing procedures, providing resources. Developing and adopting a change management strategy, and making sure we're following our plan for making changes
- Making sure everyone knows the policies, rules, the resources and that help is available
- Building a positive safety culture one where everyone is happy and feels good at work
- Having fewer workers calling in sick
- Dealing with fewer arguments and complaints





Share the results of the evaluation with your company and ask for their thoughts on what worked well and what could be done differently. It's important to celebrate the good things, even if they're small gains or improvements. This makes everyone feel more involved in making things better and encourages them to keep helping.

The feedback and evaluation results together will help you decide if you need to:

- Change the plans to make them better
- Stop doing something if it's not working and try something else
- Keep doing what we're doing and try other ways to make things better.

We should think about how any changes might affect everyone at work. And we should always inform everyone impacted about any changes we're making.

Remember, the RACE process never stops. It is an ongoing cycle of recognizing what the psychosocial hazards are, assessing how bad they are, putting control measures in place to reduce the negative impact, and evaluating regularly how well our controls are performing and protecting our workers. These efforts make sure our workplaces are good for everyone's mental health, but it's a journey that takes time, patience, and a continuous improvement mindset.

#### Resources



- [Psychological Health and Safety Program - Evaluation and Continuous Improvement - CCOHS](#)



## Step 3: Tying it all Together

Creating and promoting psychological safety in the workplace is an ongoing journey that will evolve along with the changes and needs of your small business. It's important to consider both physical and mental health, and always try to protect workers from harm.

Throughout this guideline we covered important topics like:

- Understanding the significance of including mental well-being and safety within our current health and safety systems
- Developed a high level understanding for mental health, mental harm, and mental illness
- Introducing the **RACE** model for managing psychosocial hazards and risks
  - Recognizing psychosocial hazards that can cause psychological harm and highlighting 13 key factors outlined in the CSA Standard for Psychological Health and Safety
  - Assessing the impact of stress and other psychosocial factors in the workplace
  - Controlling psychosocial hazards through discussion, using the hierarchy of controls and by providing examples of how to manage psychosocial hazards to reduce psychological harm
  - Evaluating the effectiveness of measures put in place to address psychological hazards

There needs to be a strong focus on Psychological Health and Safety in the workplace. As an employer, you must protect your workers against all hazards workers will be exposed to in the course of their employment, and that includes psychosocial hazards.

This guide is meant to be a resource you can use as a starting point for your small business to improve the psychological safety in your workplace. By using the information and tools in this guide you can identify, address and work towards eliminating psychosocial hazards in the workplace, provide education to all levels of the organization, promote mental health and well-being initiatives, and foster and implement a positive workplace culture.



## Action Plan and Next Steps for Your Small Business

On the following page, you'll see a blank Action Plan you can personalize for your small business. Look at questions and points within the guide and note areas where you see room for improvement or things you want to address. Determine a priority level for each action, set target dates for implementation, and assign responsibilities. Remember to communicate to all workplace parties, encourage feedback, and provide support to workers as they adapt to any changes in the workplace.

### Action Item Suggestions

| Action Item   | Topic/Page referenced   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Watch WSN webinar – <a href="#">Unlocking Workplace Wellbeing: Psychological safety essentials for small businesses</a>              | Page 2 – Introduction to Psychological Health and Safety        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Present Safety Talk on Workplace Mental Health   | Page 3 – Introduction to Workplace Mental Health                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Revise current hazard and risk management procedure to include psychosocial hazards  | Page 4 – Psychosocial Hazard Identification and Risk Management |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Revise workplace inspection checklists to include psychosocial hazards   | Page 5 – Recognizing Psychosocial Hazards                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Share/post <a href="#">Mental Health Continuum in workplace</a> and <a href="#">review your current program</a>                      | Page 5 and in Resources   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Look into <a href="#">WSN Climate Assessment and Audit Tool (CAAT)</a> for measuring workplace health and safety culture and systems | Page 5 and Resources  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Share the video series on <a href="#">13 factors from the CSA Standard for Psychological Health and Safety</a>                       | Page 6 – Workplace Factors that Impact Mental Health at Work    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Review your current risk registry and matrix and update to include parameters for psychosocial hazards                               | Page 7 – Assessing Psychosocial Hazards                         |



### Action Plan Template

|    | Action Item | Accountable Person | Priority (low/medium/high) | Target Date |
|----|-------------|--------------------|----------------------------|-------------|
| 1  |             |                    |                            |             |
| 2  |             |                    |                            |             |
| 3  |             |                    |                            |             |
| 4  |             |                    |                            |             |
| 5  |             |                    |                            |             |
| 6  |             |                    |                            |             |
| 7  |             |                    |                            |             |
| 8  |             |                    |                            |             |
| 9  |             |                    |                            |             |
| 10 |             |                    |                            |             |
| 11 |             |                    |                            |             |
| 12 |             |                    |                            |             |
| 13 |             |                    |                            |             |
| 14 |             |                    |                            |             |
| 15 |             |                    |                            |             |
| 16 |             |                    |                            |             |
| 17 |             |                    |                            |             |
| 18 |             |                    |                            |             |



## Additional Tools for your Small Business

# Mental Health Continuum Model<sup>1</sup>



### Signs and Indicators

| HEALTHY   | REACTING   | INJURED  | ILL   |
|---|--|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Normal mood fluctuations</li> <li>• Calm/confident</li> <li>• Good sense of humour</li> <li>• Takes things in stride</li> <li>• Can concentrate/focus</li> <li>• Consistent performance</li> <li>• Normal sleep patterns</li> <li>• Energetic, physically well, stable weight</li> <li>• Physically and socially active</li> <li>• Performing well</li> <li>• Limited alcohol consumption, no binge drinking</li> <li>• Limited/no addictive behaviours</li> <li>• No trouble/impact due to substance use</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nervousness, irritability</li> <li>• Sadness, overwhelmed</li> <li>• Displaced sarcasm</li> <li>• Distracted, loss of focus</li> <li>• Intrusive thoughts</li> <li>• Trouble sleeping, low energy</li> <li>• Changes in eating patterns, some weight gain/loss</li> <li>• Decreased social activity</li> <li>• Procrastination</li> <li>• Regular to frequent alcohol consumption, limited binge drinking</li> <li>• Some to regular addictive behaviours</li> <li>• Limited to some trouble/impact due to substance use</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Anxiety, anger, pervasive sadness, hopelessness</li> <li>• Negative attitude</li> <li>• Recurrent intrusive thoughts/images</li> <li>• Difficulty concentrating</li> <li>• Restless, disturbed sleep</li> <li>• Increased fatigue, aches and pain</li> <li>• Fluctuations in weight</li> <li>• Avoidance, tardiness, decreased performance</li> <li>• Frequent alcohol consumption, binge drinking</li> <li>• Struggle to control addictive behaviours</li> <li>• Increase trouble/impact due to substance use</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Excessive anxiety, panic attacks, easily enraged, aggressive</li> <li>• Depressed mood, numb</li> <li>• Non compliant</li> <li>• Cannot concentrate, loss of cognitive ability</li> <li>• Suicidal thoughts/intent</li> <li>• Cannot fall asleep/stay asleep</li> <li>• Constant fatigue, illness</li> <li>• Extreme weight fluctuations</li> <li>• Withdrawal, absenteeism</li> <li>• Can't perform duties</li> <li>• Regular to frequent binge drinking</li> <li>• Addiction</li> <li>• Significant trouble/impact due to substance use</li> </ul> |

### Actions to Take at Each Phase of the Continuum

|   |  |  |  |
|---|--|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Focus on task at hand</li> <li>▶ Break problems into manageable tasks</li> <li>▶ Controlled, deep breathing</li> <li>▶ Nurture a support system</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Recognize limits, take breaks</li> <li>▶ Get enough rest, food, exercise</li> <li>▶ Reduce barriers to help-seeking</li> <li>▶ Identify and resolve problems early</li> <li>▶ Example of personal accountability</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Talk to someone, ask for help</li> <li>▶ Tune into own signs of distress</li> <li>▶ Make self-care a priority</li> <li>▶ Get help sooner, not later</li> <li>▶ Maintain social contact, don't withdraw</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Follow care recommendations</li> <li>▶ Seek consultation as needed</li> <li>▶ Respect confidentiality</li> <li>▶ Know resources and how to access them</li> </ul> |
|---|--|--|--|

<sup>1</sup> Source: Mental Health Commission of Canada, <https://theworkingmind.ca/continuum-self-check>

### Employee Mental Health Support Programs

| Employee Assistance Program | Canada Wide Crisis Support                            | Additional Support |
|-----------------------------|---|--------------------|
|                             | <p><b>Call, 1-833-456-4566</b><br/>or text, 45645</p> |                    |



1-888-730-7821 Toll-free Ontario  
705-474-7233  
workplacesafetynorth.ca  
w i n f y o

Source: [CMHA](#)





### Additional Resources:

- [Workplace Mental Health Videos | Videos to Watch & Share at Work \(thinkmentalhealth.ca\)](#)
- [Assessment and control of psychosocial hazards in the workplace \(alberta.ca\)](#)
- [CCOHS: Healthy Minds @Work-RESOURCES](#)
- [Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace - CSA Group](#)
- [mentalhealth\\_broschuere\\_arbeitgeber.pdf \(enwhp.org\)](#)
- [Mental Health Workplace EN.pdf \(canada.ca\)](#)
- [WorkplaceHealth En.pdf \(mdsc.ca\)](#)
- Mental Health Continuum Self-Assessment chart is from [Working Mind: Self-Care and Resilience Guide](#) - Mental Health Commission of Canada
- [Health and Safety Excellence program](#) - Helping Ontario businesses improve safety and earn rewards
- [Mental Harm Prevention Roadmap | Workplace Safety and Prevention Services](#)
- [Mental Health | Public Services Health and Safety Association](#)
- [Workplace mental health resources | Infrastructure Health and Safety Association](#)



## About Workplace Safety North

An independent not-for-profit, Workplace Safety North (WSN) is one of four sector-based health and safety associations in Ontario. Headquartered in northern Ontario, WSN administers the provincial mine rescue program and provides province-wide Ministry-approved workplace health and safety training and services for the mining and forest products industries.

With health and safety specialists and mine rescue officers located across the province, WSN and its legacy organizations have been helping make Ontario workplaces safer for more than 100 years. A leading provider of health and safety training and consulting, businesses call upon WSN for expert advice and information. For more information, visit [workplacesafetynorth.ca](http://workplacesafetynorth.ca).