

Beyond the Assessment: Addressing Workplace Factors

Workplace Mental Health Webinar Series

What are Psychosocial Risk (PSR) factors?

These organizational factors that impact organizational health, the health of individual employees and the financial bottom line, including the way work is carried out and the context in which work occurs, are:

- Balance
- Civility and Respect
- Clear Leadership and Expectations
- Engagement
- Growth and Development
- Involvement and Influence
- Organizational Culture
- Protection of Physical Safety
- Psychological Competencies and Demands
- Psychological Protection
- Psychological and Social Support
- Recognition and Reward
- Workload Management

How do we assess psychological hazards?

Assessing the state of psychosocial factors in an organization can take many forms. Common psychological health and safety assessment methods include:

- Reviewing internal data such as complaint reports, absenteeism and turnover rates, and resource usage rates.
- Auditing existing structures related to mental health including policies and procedures, management practices, workplace supports, training programs, and job descriptions.

- Gathering feedback through conversations, observations, group discussions, anonymous forms, and surveys.

Most likely organizations will need to use more than one assessment method to understand where improvements can be made and how. For example, well-designed survey questions can be used to get a general idea of how all psychosocial factors are doing in the workplace, then follow up with several discussion groups to learn more details about the areas of concern.

The assessment can include all the psychosocial factors or target one or a few of them at a time, as long as all factors are assessed on a regular basis.

What does it mean to control psychosocial hazards?

The goal of control measures is to minimize workplace psychosocial factors that may be negatively influencing mental health and well-being. Control measures should follow the same hierarchy as traditional health and safety principles, where interventions addressing the source of the hazard are prioritized. This approach means prioritizing control measures that can affect the whole organization instead of only focusing on measures individuals may take.

For example, consistently asking for workers' input in the initial job design or when evaluating effectiveness of work processes can protect everyone against exposure to low job control, which can have a negative impact on mental health. A consistent feedback process also provides everyone opportunities for engagement and involvement, which is another workplace factor that can impact worker mental health.

References

CAN/CSA-Z1003-13/BNQ 9700-803/2013 (R2022),
Psychological health and safety in the workplace

<https://www.csagroup.org/store/product/CAN-CSA-Z1003-13-BNQ%209700-803-2013/>

ISO 45003:2021, Occupational health and safety management - Psychological health and safety at work – Guidelines for managing psychosocial risks

<https://www.iso.org/standard/64283.html>

Mental Health – Psychosocial Risk Factors in the Workplace

https://www.ccohs.ca/oshanswers/psychosocial/mh/mentalhealth_risk.html

Have THAT Talk Videos

<https://www.ottawapublichealth.ca/en/public-health-services/ht-workplaces.aspx>

Psychological Health and Safety Program –
Assessing Psychosocial Hazards

https://www.ccohs.ca/oshanswers/psychosocial/phs/mentalhealth_checklist_phs.html

Psychological Health and Safety Program –
Controlling Psychosocial Hazards

https://www.ccohs.ca/oshanswers/psychosocial/phs/phs_controllinghazards.html

Psychological Health and Safety Program –
Evaluation and Continuous Improvement

https://www.ccohs.ca/oshanswers/psychosocial/phs/phs_evaluation.html

Evidence-Based Actions for Psychological Health
and Safety

<https://www.workplacestrategiesformentalhealth.com/resources/evidence-based-actions-for-psychological-health-and-safety>

Psychosocial Hazard Mitigation

<https://www.workplacestrategiesformentalhealth.com/resources/psychosocial-hazard-mitigation>

Psychological Health and Safety Change Process

<https://www.workplacestrategiesformentalhealth.com/resources/psychological-health-and-safety-change-process>

Primary, Secondary and Tertiary Prevention

<https://www.iwh.on.ca/what-researchers-mean-by/primary-secondary-and-tertiary-prevention>

Skills to manage performance in a psychologically
safe way

<https://www.workplacestrategiesformentalhealth.com/resources/performance-management>

Tactful words to use when approaching
employees who are showing signs they may be
lacking work-life balance

<https://www.workplacestrategiesformentalhealth.com/resources/referring-employees-to-resources>

Supporting Working Caregivers and Their Work-
Life Balance

<https://www.workplacestrategiesformentalhealth.com/resources/caregiver-resources>

Carer Friendly Workplaces

https://www.ccohs.ca/oshanswers/psychosocial/carers_workers.html

Canada's Care Economy – A Conceptual
Framework

<https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/89-652-x/89-652-x2023002-eng.htm>

Violence and Harassment in the Workplace -
Legislation

https://www.ccohs.ca/oshanswers/psychosocial/violence_legislation.html