Building a Resilience in the Workplace:
An introduction to a Psychologically Healthy Workplace\(^1\)

This document will help employers understand the importance of building a workplace environment that supports employees and minimizes work-related emotional distress. Employers should understand current strengths in the workplace and opportunities for improvement to promote emotional well-being and optimize business performance.

What is a psychologically healthy workplace?

A supportive work environment characterized by trust, respect and fairness. A psychologically healthy workplace promotes employee emotional well-being and business performance by offering individual-level interventions (e.g. self-service resources & benefits) and systems-levels interventions (to identify & minimize workplace hazards that can cause emotional/psychological distress).

There is significant overlap between a psychologically healthy workplace and the culture of well-being (particularly social, emotional, career/purpose and physical).

Why is a psychologically healthy workplace important?

Explicit attention to a psychologically healthy workplace takes the burden off the employee and onto the organization to determine what is going on in the workplace that is causing emotional/psychological distress. This in turn, creates an environment that allows people to perform their best because employees know they will be treated fairly, be recognized appropriately and have opportunities to develop. A psychologically healthy workplace contributes to high emotional well-being and makes it easier for individuals to address mental health conditions.

Compromised emotional well-being has a range of negative health effects on organizations, including:

- **Finances**: mental health conditions are a major cause of disability. Employers are facing increased disability premiums, rising health and benefits costs and expenses associated with replacing absent employees.
- **Productivity**: In addition to absenteeism, poor emotional well-being is a significant contributor to ‘presenteeism’ and decreases in performance due to illness or injury while an employee is still at work
- **Safety**: most jobs require employees to have good concentration, social skills and the ability to solve problems effectively. These skills are undermined by most mental health conditions and stressful, uncivil workplace environments.
- **Workplace Morale**: reduced emotional well-being and safety contributes to conflict and grievances.

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\(^1\) The following terms are used interchangeably in this document: Emotional and Psychological
Rate Your Psychologically Healthy Workplace Elements

- **Score on scale of 1-5**
  - o 1 = Poor, work needed
  - o 5 = Good, maintenance only

- **Narrow down your “targets”**
  - o Focus on scores of 1 & 2

- **Remember this formula to maximize your efforts:**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>As-Is</th>
<th>PHW Elements:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Psychological Support – support for mental health concerns</td>
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<td>Organizational Culture - workplace characterized by trust, honesty and fairness</td>
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<td>Clear Leadership &amp; Expectations - employees know what they need to do, how their work contributes to the organization</td>
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<td>Civility &amp; Respect - based on showing esteem, care and consideration for others, and acknowledging employee dignity</td>
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<td>Psychological Competencies &amp; Requirements - good fit between employees’ interpersonal and emotional competencies, their job skills and the position they hold</td>
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<td>Growth &amp; Development - employees receive encouragement and support in the development of their interpersonal, emotional and job skills</td>
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<td>Recognition &amp; Reward - there is appropriate acknowledgement and appreciation of employees’ efforts in a fair and timely manner</td>
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<td>Involvement &amp; Influence - employees are included in discussions about how their work is done and how important decisions are made</td>
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<td>Workload Management - tasks and responsibilities can be accomplished successfully within the time available (often biggest workplace stressor)</td>
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<td>Engagement - employees enjoy and feel connected to their work and where they feel motivated to do their job well</td>
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<td>Balance - recognition of the need for balance between the demands of work, family and personal life</td>
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<td>Psychological Protection - employees feel able to put themselves on the line, ask questions, seek feedback, report mistakes and problems, or propose a new idea without fearing negative consequences to themselves, their job or their career</td>
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<td>Protection of Physical Safety - protect the physical safety of employees</td>
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Source: Canadian Center for Occupational Health and Safety

Resources + Communication

Organizational Culture/Leadership = Impact

Leverage Existing Resources:

- Employee Assistance Program (EAP)
- Human Resources Business Partners
- Wellness Program Provider(s)
- KP Account Manager or Workforce Health Consultant
- Wellness Champions

- Leave Management Programs
- Risk & Safety/ Occupational Health Providers
- Legal
- Inclusion & Diversity
- Business Resource Groups

kp.org/choosebetter

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