CivicAction’s MindsMatter: Additional Actions and Resources to Support Workplace Mental Health

Below are actions and resources offered in addition to those available through CivicAction’s MindsMatter online assessment tool to further support mental health in the workplace.

Click here to take CivicAction's MindsMatter Assessment Tool

Awareness and Training

It can be a significant challenge for people who are experiencing a mental health issue if their co-workers or employer lack knowledge of how to be supportive. In particular, stigma makes it more difficult for people to acknowledge or seek help for mental health problems or illnesses. It can also reduce the extent of the support people with mental health problems or illnesses receive from co-workers or managers. Stigma can also make it more difficult for an employee who is on a mental health-related leave of absence from work to return to work in a timely, safe and supportive manner.

1-Provide employees with information on mental well-being and available supports.

- Invite employees to sign up for newsletters or weekly emails with articles or videos that provide strategies for coping both at work and home.
  
  Resources:
  - GWL Workplace Strategies for Mental Health Take Your Break! Newsletter
  - Working through It weekly emails

- Remind employees of available supports on a regular basis (e.g., Employer and Family Assistance Plans, benefits programs, policies, healthy lifestyle programs - yoga, mindfulness)
  
  Resource: Contact your benefits provider to request information or newsletters that can be recirculated.

2-Engage employees in activities supportive of mental well-being.

- Participate in a mental health awareness program on an annual basis. Check out these great campaigns.
  
  Resources:
  - Bell Let’s Talk campaign
  - David Suzuki’s 30 x 30 Nature Challenge
  - Partners for Mental Health - Not Myself Today campaign
  - Canadian Mental Health Association’s Mental Health Week
  - Canadian Alliance on Mental Illness and Mental Health (CAMIMH) Mental Illness Awareness Week
  - Canada’s Healthy Workplace Month
- Create an employee-centered wellness committee that can collect information on the interests and needs of employees.
  
  **Resource:** Canadian Mental Health Association - Toronto - Workplace Mental Health Promotion: A How to Guide - Appendix B

3-Extend formal education/training opportunities to employees.

- Book a Mental Health First Aid training session.
  
  **Resource:** Mental Health Commission of Canada Mental Health First Aid

- Book The Working Mind workshop for employees
  
  **Resource:** Mental Health Commission of Canada The Working Mind workshop

4-Participate in training in workplace mental well-being.

- Book a Mental Health First Aid training session.
  
  **Resource:** Mental Health Commission of Canada Mental Health First Aid

- Provide information to managers about how to accommodate people experiencing mental health issues.
  
  **Resource:** GWL Workplace Strategies for Mental Health Supporting Employee Success: A Tool to Plan Accommodations

**Organizational Support**

Providing targeted training (i.e. stress management and resilience training), an Employee Assistance Program, and psychological benefits and support can help to intervene earlier when an employee may be experiencing a mental health issue. If psychological distress and difficulty are not identified or addressed in a timely manner, they may well develop into more serious problems and functional impairment which will be much harder to resolve.

1. Take action to reduce work-induced stress.

   a. Offer resilience training to employees and teams
      
      **Resource:** MHCC webinar on resilience - by Karen Seward, President, SCM Health Solutions

   b. Put in place a policy that discourages sending work emails before and after regular work hours.
2. Connect co-workers to other mental health supports in the workplace and community.
   a. Create a list of community resources that employees can access to seek assistance.
      Resource: GWL Workplace Strategies for Mental Health Mental Health Resource List Template
   b. Offer an annual "wellness fair" where an Employee Assistance Program provider, benefits provider, or external community resources can offer information on their services - for employees and managers.

3. Take steps to put a mental well-being strategy or plan in place.
   a. Survey employees to understand their experiences and needs and see what types of activities / programs interest them the most and create a base-line to track over time.
      Resource: Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety Sample Workplace Health and Wellness Survey
   b. Develop a mental well-being workplace plan.
      Resource: GWL Workplace Strategies for Mental Health Developing a Workplace Plan

4. Take actions that will support people on leave or returning to work.
   a. Put in place a formal return-to-work process in place within your organization and communicate it to employees.
      Resource: Conference Board of Canada Free templates for return to work process and return to work plan
   b. Complete an individualized return-to-work plan for an employee returning to work from a mental health-related leave of absence.
      Resource: Conference Board of Canada Free templates for return to work process and return to work plan

Leadership

Unless senior leaders clearly support efforts to protect and enhance psychological health and safety, it is difficult to effect lasting positive change. Senior leaders who understand the importance of promoting mental health at work will send a clear message to all employees about the importance of these initiatives, allocate sufficient financial and human resources to ensure their success, demonstrate the organization’s commitment to change, and drive this change when challenges or barriers are encountered.

1. Show senior leadership’s support of a mental well-being strategy.
   a. Make the business case for mental well-being and strategically align to organizational priorities.
2. Demonstrate visible commitment of senior leadership to workplace mental well-being.

   a. Hold an all-staff (in-person or virtual) meeting to announce your commitment to mental health and invite input on specific actions or an action plan.
      
      Resource: GWL Workplace Strategies for Mental Health Developing a Workplace Plan
   
   b. Include the mental well-being of staff as part of leadership's performance objectives.
      
      Resource: Federal Public Service Workplace Mental Health Strategy

3. Secure senior leadership’s support for establishing a mental well-being baseline and process to track progress for the organization.

   a. Track the rates of absenteeism and / or Employee and Family Assistance Program usage and what percentage of these may be related to mental well-being.

   b. Track and benchmark progress by implementing an annual workplace assessment.

      Resource: Guarding Minds at Work Assessment Resources

4. Look for opportunities for senior leadership to shown their visible commitment to mental health in the workplace beyond their organization

   a. Participate in a Mental Health at Work Challenge.

      Resource: Excellence Canada’s Mental Health at Work Challenge

   b. Apply for awards or recognition for your organization’s mental health strategies and impact.

      Resources:
      - Canada’s Top 100 Employers
      - Excellence Canada - Canada Awards for Excellence
      - Mindful Employer Canada - Mindful Employer Charter
      - Safest Employer Awards
      - Employee Recommended Workplace Award