

PSYCHOSOCIAL FACTORS FOR A HEALTHY WORKPLACE: THE NATIONAL STANDARD

It's not always clear how a workplace can be made psychologically healthy and safe, especially in times of economic uncertainty, organizational change or high demand. That's why the National Standard of Canada on Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace (Standard) was released in 2013.

The framework was developed to help business owners cut through the hype of "feel-good" approaches and understand what factors actually impact psychological health and safety in the workplace.

The Standard states that improving psychological health is a voluntary, ongoing process of continual improvement rather than a minimum standard to be imposed by regulators. Part of the motivation to develop the Standard now was the fact that many tools and resources to help employers maintain a psychologically healthy and safe workplace now exist, at no cost, in the public domain. Many of these credible and practical resources are described in the "Annexes" of the

Standard. It's not necessary to wait for additional budget allocation or significant resources. The call to action is recognizing the value of a psychologically healthy and safe workplace for all organizations and being motivated to begin the journey of continual improvement. Download the Standard for free at www.csa.ca/z1003

THE 13 FACTORS

The following psychosocial factors, which can impact psychological health and safety in the workplace, were identified by the Centre for Applied Research in Mental Health and Addiction (CARMHA). These factors are based on extensive research and review of data from national and international best practices, as well as a review of existing and emerging case law and legislation.

- **Psychological support:** The environment is supportive of employees with psychological and mental health concerns, and responds appropriately.
- **Organizational culture:** The work environment is characterized by trust, honesty and fairness.
- **Clear leadership and expectations:** Leadership effectively supports employees in knowing what they need to do, how their work contributes to the organization, and whether there are impending changes.
- **Civility and respect:** Workplace interactions are respectful and considerate. Psychological competencies and requirements: there is a good fit between employees' interpersonal

and emotional competencies and the requirements of the position.

- **Growth and development:** Development of employee interpersonal, emotional and job skills is encouraged and supported.
- **Recognition and reward:** Employees' efforts are given appropriate acknowledgement and appreciation in a fair and timely manner.
- **Involvement and influence:** Employees are included in discussions about how their work is done and how important decisions are made.
- **Workload management:** Tasks and responsibilities can be accomplished successfully within the time available.
- **Engagement:** Workers feel connected to their work and are motivated to do their job well.
- **Balance:** There is recognition of the need for balance between the demands of work, family and personal life.
- **Psychological protection:** Psychological safety is ensured; workers feel able to ask questions, seek feedback, report mistakes and problems, or propose a new idea without fearing negative consequences.
- **Protection of physical safety:** Appropriate action is taken to protect the physical safety of employees.

