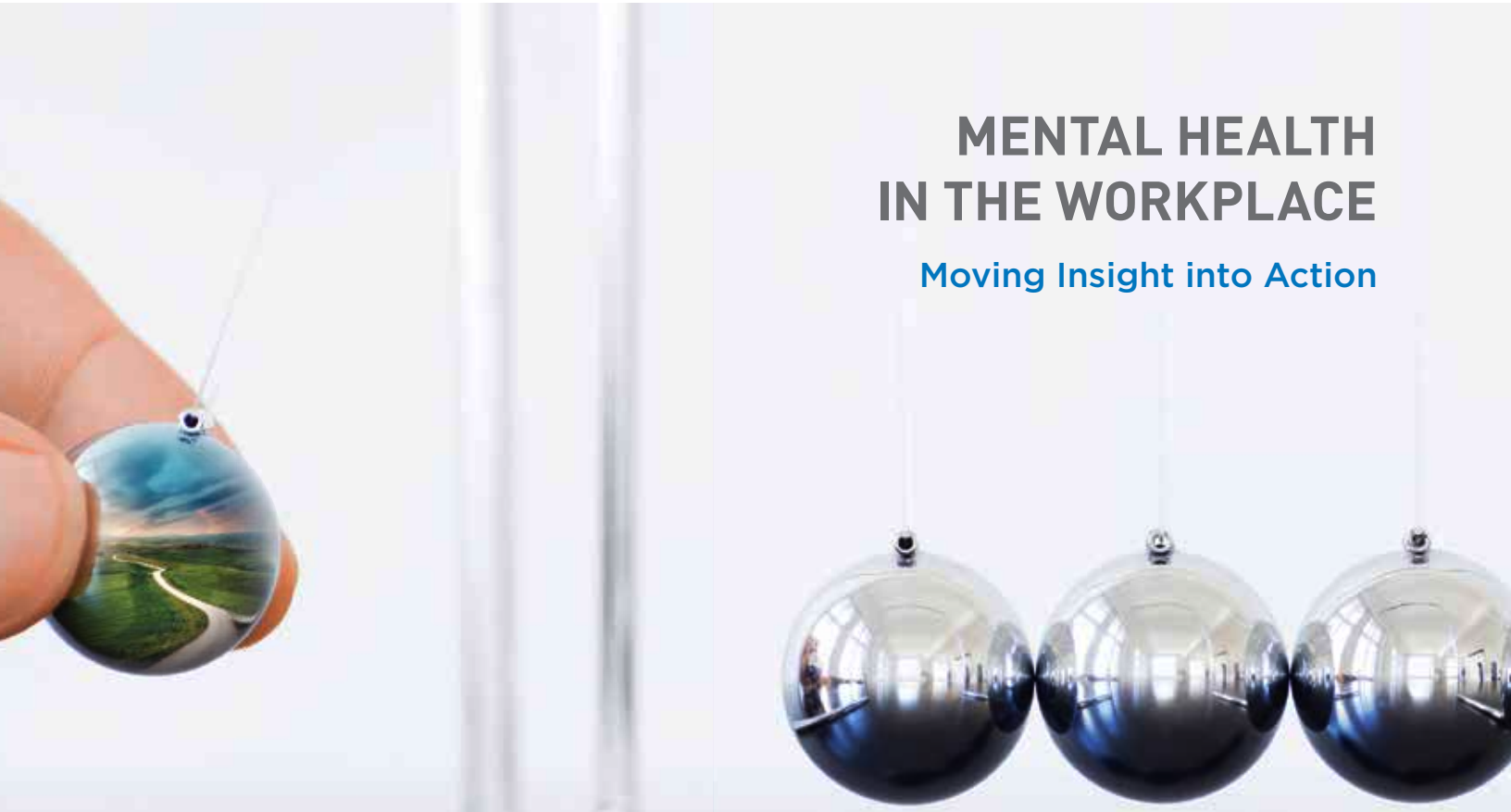
CEO Health +Safety Leadership Network

MENTAL HEALTH IN THE WORKPLACE

Moving Insight into Action



An Executive White Paper by: CEO Health + Safety Leadership Network
Written by: Workplace Safety & Prevention Services in collaboration with Heather West, Fresh Communications | April 2016

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Workplace Safety & Prevention Services®

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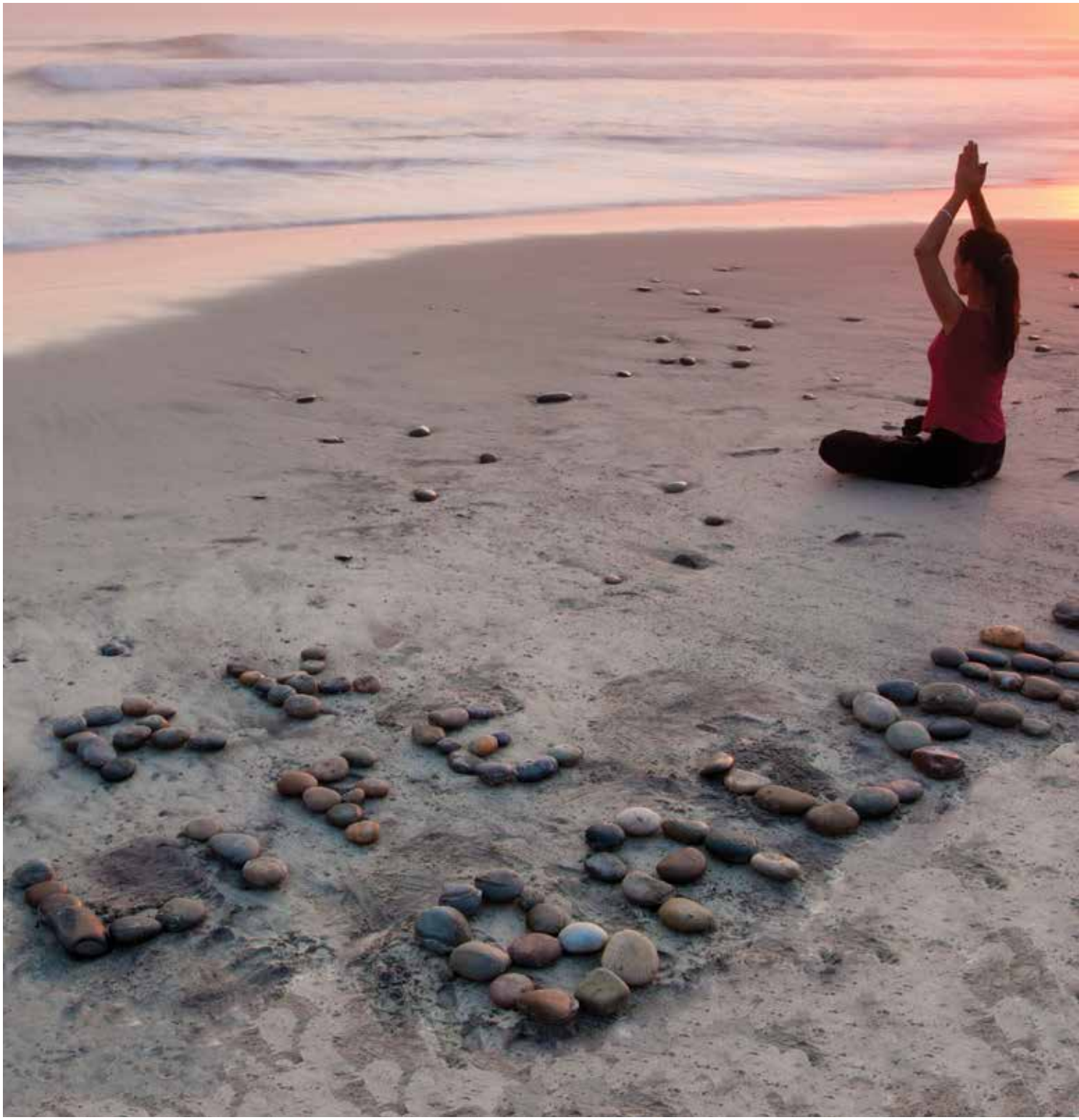


Introduction

In February 2016, Lundbeck Canada, the Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA), and the Workforce Mental Health Collaborative released the report Workplace Mental Health in Canada, based on their survey of nearly 600 individuals from across Canada. Their goal was to find out where workplaces are on their journey and the supports needed to promote workplace mental health. The survey revealed that 32% of leaders are taking action, 42% have shown interest but haven't taken real action as yet, and 26% were seen to be unsupportive.

While these numbers may seem discouraging, the pendulum is indeed starting to swing. With mental health problems being the number one cause of disability in Canada, most employers understand the importance of creating a mentally healthy and safe workplace. Many want to take action, but are unsure where to begin.

In April, members of the CEO Health + Safety Leadership Network demonstrated their commitment to taking action by participating in a Roundtable event where they shared their experiences and insights with one another.

Kevin Hong of the Vancouver Airport Authority (YVR) kicked things off by giving participants an overview of the award-winning health and safety culture in his workplace. Last October, YVR received the inaugural Canada's Best Health and Safety Culture Award at the Canada's Safest Employers Awards.

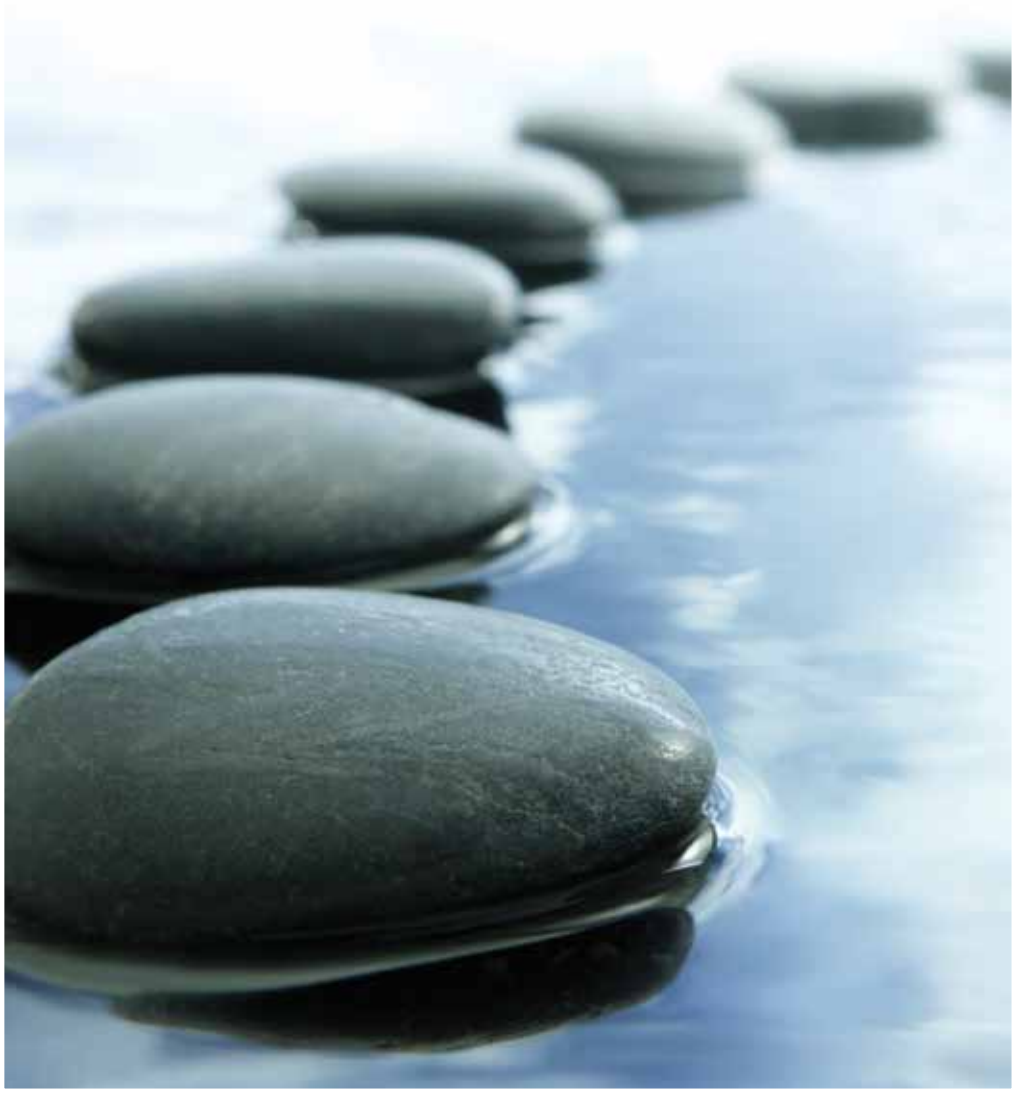
Ontario Minister of Labour Kevin Flynn followed up with an impassioned call-to-action to treat mental health as seriously as physical health and safety, and he challenged participants to consider what they could do to prevent harm to workers' psychological health and well-being in their workplaces.

Kiran Kapoor, Workplace Safety & Prevention Services (WSPS) Director of Business and Market Strategy, shared statistics and insights gleaned from a variety of studies on the topic. She pointed out that when it comes to managing mental health, the end goal isn't necessarily elimination—it's about making a long-term commitment to invest in a psychologically healthy and safe workplace.

She called on the group to consider how they might translate insight into action, pointing to leadership commitment, training people managers adequately, and talking openly to de-stigmatize the issue, as important strategies.

After the formal presentations, each table worked through a series of questions that included writing a personal commitment statement and then sharing possible actions that would help bring that commitment to life. Participants also brainstormed the most significant barriers they would need to address.

This white paper presents information about the impact of mental health on Canadian businesses, attitudes and perceptions about mental health in the workplace, as well as a summary of the conversation that transpired at the Roundtable event. In addition, it includes a case study featuring The Beer Store, insights from experts, and a list of resources to help you get started on your journey to creating a psychologically healthy and safe workplace.



Defining Mental Health

Mental health is a broad term that can mean different things to different people. At the Roundtable discussion, and for the purpose of this white paper, we are using the World Health Organization's definition.

Men-tal Health *noun,* A state of well-being in which the individual realizes his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to his or her community.

Mental Health Conditions

According to the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH), mental health conditions are comparable to physical conditions in many ways: they take many forms, they are distinct from the people who experience them (for example, individuals have schizophrenia, they are not schizophrenic) and these conditions are treatable.

"Removing the stigma of mental health problems is becoming a more topical issue that people are adopting, embracing and talking about and that can only make our workplaces better."

— Ted Moroz
President
The Beer Store

Mental Health conditions can include:

The Business Case for Creating Psychologically Healthy and Safe Workplaces

Mental health problems and illnesses account for $20 billion in workplace losses each year.[1] In a given week, at least 500,000 employed Canadians are unable to work due to mental illness[2], and 82% of individuals who say they have experienced a mental health issue say it impacted their work[3].

In the 2015 report *Workplace Mental Health Priorities*, based on a survey conducted by Morneau Shepell, 99% of physicians indicated that work plays a role in the mental health issues they see on a regular basis, and 45% of employees surveyed said they have thought about leaving their job due to workplace stress and its impact on them.

Despite the toll this is taking on many workplaces, Sapna Mahajan, Director, Prevention and Promotion Initiatives, Workplace at the MHCC says some employers are still not making the connection. "They don't see the link between mental health and key workplace issues like absenteeism, turnover, and retention. Initially, we spoke to leaders about mental health focused statistics and they weren't responding. Now, I ask about turnover and retention, and whether people are burning out. I stress how important psychological health and safety is to things like productivity and innovation. And I talk about other organizations like theirs that are creating mentally healthy environments and reaping the benefits, and point out that they don't want to be at the back of this curve."

Employers who ignore the signs of mental health concerns may do so at their peril. Creating a true culture of health and safety, which protects both the mental and physical well-being of employees, has been shown to heighten engagement levels, reduce injuries and absences, boost productivity, and enhance financial results.

In the Morneau Shepell report, 86% of employees surveyed said they believe a mentally healthy workplace positively impacts loyalty, and 90% felt it was important to employee productivity. The National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) in the UK estimates that improving the management of mental health in the workplace, including prevention, early action to combat stress, and early identification of problems, could decrease losses to productivity by as much as 30%.

"With most adults spending more of their waking hours at work than anywhere else, addressing mental health is vitally important for all Canadians. Mental health is a crucial piece of workplace health and safety and it can no longer be ignored or overlooked."

— The Mental Health Commission of Canada (MHCC)

[1] The Mental Health Commission of Canada

[2] Canadian Mental Health Association, Fast Facts about Mental Illness

[3] Civic Action, *Mental Health in the Workplace: Let's Make it Happen,* 2016

"Attending to the mental health and well-being of employees can have a profound impact on absenteeism, turnover, presenteeism, benefits usage, disability, sustainability and productivity, and can be an important factor in attracting and retaining employees."

— Andrew Harkness, Strategy Advisor Organizational Health Initiatives at WSPS

While cost reduction and boosting productivity are powerful reasons to attend to the mental health of employees, they aren't necessarily driving forces for all employers.

In February 2014, the MHCC launched a three-year National Case Study Research Project to better understand how workplaces across Canada are implementing *The National Standard of Canada for Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace (The National Standard)*. The goals of the project are to monitor progress; identify promising practices, as well as challenges and barriers to implementation; and develop tools that will enhance adoption of *The National Standard* across Canada.

When the 41 participating firms were asked about their primary motivation for implementing *The National Standard*, costs and productivity were at the bottom of the list. The top answers were to protect the health of employees, do the right thing, and increase engagement.

Whether they are financially motivated or simply want to do the right thing, WSPS is seeing a rise in the number of employers who are looking for assistance in creating mentally healthy workplaces. In response, WSPS is developing more resources and solutions to assist them, including creating an Organizational Health Team. Members of the team have received specialized training in Mental Health First Aid and are continuing their professional development through the University of Fredericton Psychological Health and Safety (PHS) online training program. Their expertise includes clinical psychology, public health, human resources/social work, management systems, national standards, kinesiology, and student mental health.

Andrew Harkness, Strategy Advisor, Organizational Health Initiatives at WSPS says, "Attending to the mental health and well-being of employees can have a profound impact on absenteeism, turnover, presenteeism, benefits usage, disability, sustainability and productivity, and can be an important factor in attracting and retaining employees. Our Organizational Health Team, with the support of our consulting staff across the province, is helping the employers who understand this to develop psychological health and safety prevention programs that are tailored to their businesses."

Mental health problems and illnesses account for

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In a given week, at least

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82% of individuals who say they have experienced a mental health issue say it impacted their work

Moving Insight into Action

As awareness of the need to support individuals with mental health problems and illness grows, so does the body of research, tools, and training programs that are available.

For some, the issue and the large volume of resources available can seem overwhelming. Mindful Employer Canada is a not-for-profit organization offering an ongoing training program to build capacity among those who address conflict, performance or accommodation. National Manager, Sarah Jenner, says that figuring out where to begin is a question they frequently get from the employers they work with.

Look for credible programs and resources

"Employers are trying to do more with less. They may not have a budget, but there are many credible resources at no cost or low cost. The real investment is time and commitment." says Jenner. (See page 16 for a list of programs and resources.)

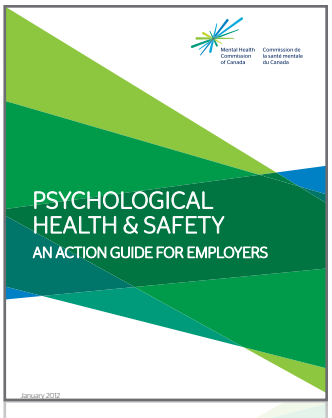
One of the resources available to employers is *The National Standard*—a voluntary set of guidelines, tools, and resources focused on promoting employees' psychological health and preventing psychological harm due to workplace factors.

Harkness says, "*The National Standard* enables employers to take a systematic approach to addressing workplace factors that affect psychological health and safety. It focuses on workplace practices and processes, not individual health, and it can be tailored to meet the specific needs of each workplace."

In addition to *The National Standard*, both Jenner and Harkness point to sources such as Great-West Life Centre for Mental Health in the Workplace, CMHA, MHCC, Mindful Employer Canada, and Partners for Mental Health as examples of organizations that provide excellent resources to employers.

Focus on what you can control

Another is Guarding Minds @ Work (GM@W) a free, comprehensive set of resources designed to help employers protect and promote psychological health in the workplace. These resources help employers assess 13 psychosocial factors (see the following illustration) that have been shown to impact employees' psychological responses to work and work conditions. Managing these factors, which are relevant to all Canadian organizations (large, small, public, and private) in all sectors, can enhance resilience and sustainability.



"The goal of mental health strategies, in addition to supporting persons with mental health issues, is a commitment to reduce risks such as work demand, safety, bullying, harassment, manager-employee relationships, and stigma."

Source: Reducing the Stigma of Mental Health in the Workplace, Globe & Mail Leadership Lab

Harkness adds, "Some organizations fear that addressing mental health is about diagnosing people. We have been working with organizations to help them address the workplace factors they can control—how they organize work and manage people. When they realize that focusing on what they can control can have a significant impact, they feel a huge sense of relief."

For workplaces that want to gradually integrate mental health into their culture, Jenner suggests a simple solution, "Every time a policy comes up for renewal, think about how it will affect the mental health of employees."

Figure out what you will measure

Mahajan of the MHCC stresses that it is important to understand where your organization is now and where you want to go. "Measurement is a very difficult piece of the puzzle and many are struggling with it. You can spend thousands of dollars on lunch and learns and not necessarily make any progress. You have to establish your baseline so you understand where your organization stands. *The National Standard* contains a series of indicators that can help organizations figure out what they want to measure."

Mental Health Commission of Canada | Commission de la santé mentale du Canada

Overview of Roundtable Discussion

Overall, there was strong agreement that psychological health and safety must become as commonplace as physical health and safety and should be woven into the very fabric of the organization. As one participant put it, "Mental health must just become part of who we are."

The first group discussion centred on actions and initiatives that would help participants bring their individual commitment statements to life. The top responses were:

Develop a specific strategy

It was widely agreed that a strategy should be in place to ensure that efforts are focused and sustainable. It was also mentioned that a benchmarking survey should be done to gauge where the organization is now, and appropriate metrics identified so that the impact of the program can be measured effectively.

More training for managers and employees

Many talked about the need for mental health, diversity and inclusion training for all employees. And several participants spoke specifically about equipping senior leaders and managers with the tools they need to identify signs and symptoms so they can support employees. There was mention that managers must feel confident in assisting others so they do not just pass employees off to the human resources department or the employee assistance provider. Conversely, managers must trust that they will be respected and supported if they come forward with their own mental health challenges.

Leadership commitment

The need for a strong message from leaders in the organization was also a recurring theme. Participants said they must "walk the talk" and "step up and step in." They felt the CEO must make it okay for employees to talk about how they're feeling and set a tone of transparency and openness. Mahajan at MHCC sums it up this way, "There are lots of tools and resources to help their teams, but CEOs don't need too many tools; they just need to demonstrate visible commitment."

Build trust and create a safe place for employees

It is critical to chip away at fear, build trust, and create a safe place where it is okay to "have the conversation." There was discussion about the Not Myself Today Program, as well as the MHCC's Mental Health First Aid to create a greater sense of security and trust. Several tables discussed the value of special teams or champions to help build awareness and momentum. It was also noted that employee assistance programs must be robust enough to provide the necessary support when employees are concerned about confidentiality. And, many pointed out that a one-size-fits-all approach won't work; individual needs must be considered.

"One of the key things we talked about at our table is how to open the conversation, and making benefits more flexible for employees to actually get access to the help they need. We know there is underfunding in the province, and it is a high priority to support people with mental health issues. There is definitely a way that we as employers can be partners in that, particularly with the employees who work for us."

— Nan Oldroyd, Director
Talent Management
George Brown College

Participants identified a number of barriers that must be overcome, including lack of effective communication, limited resources, time constraints, difficulty of measuring, and misperceptions about the issue. Fear and stigma were identified as barriers at every table. This isn't surprising, given that research shows 71% of employees are concerned about workplace stigma[4], and 39% of Ontario workers indicate they would not tell their managers if they were experiencing a mental health problem[5].

Conclusion

According to the MHCC, people in their early and prime working years are among the hardest hit by mental health problems and illnesses. So committing to the protection and promotion of psychological health just makes good business sense.

But this is new territory for most employers. It will take time and fortitude to create mentally healthy work environments. Stigma, lack of resources, and the inability to measure impact are still significant barriers that need to be addressed.

However, the needle is moving in the right direction. In a survey conducted by CAMH in 2008, 57% of respondents said then that they believed the stigma associated with mental illness was reduced from what it had been five years prior; 81% said awareness had also grown; and 70% said attitudes toward mental health had also improved.

Since that survey was conducted, we've achieved major milestones: the launch of programs such as Bell's Let's Talk campaign in 2010, and the introduction of *The National Standard* in 2013. And the resources and tools available to assist individuals, families, workplaces, and communities continue to grow.

Perhaps the most important thing for employers to remember is that mental health is not a proprietary issue, so this isn't a journey they need to take alone. Sharing ideas and experiences and learning from one another are critically important.

The MHCC Early Findings Interim Report sums this up nicely: *"An important factor for successful implementation of* The National Standard *is the extent to which organizations were able to connect with other organizations or individuals with a similar interest and set of experiences related to workplace psychological health and safety... These interactions enable the sharing of promising practices and discussing implementation barriers."*

[4] Morneau Shepell, *Workplace Mental Health Priorities,* 2015
[5] Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, Facts and Statistics

Creating a Better Experience for Employees at Work and at Home

When Ted Moroz, President of The Beer Store, and his team started to analyze their organizational data, they saw that mental health claims were the number one cause of long-term disability, and often had the longest duration. They also identified delays in diagnosing issues and seeking treatment, and saw that often there were early indications of problems at work.

They were determined to develop a wellness program to address this risk. "People should go home as healthy as they arrived," says Moroz. "To me, people come above all else."

So, with the objective of enhancing employees' experiences at work and home, they started the process of implementing *The National Standard for Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace* and launched a series of initiatives and training programs to support wellness at The Beer Store.

The first step of the journey was to increase awareness. As a board member of Ontario Shores Centre for Mental Health Sciences, Moroz saw an opportunity to partner with the hospital to deliver the two-day Mental Health First Aid program. In addition to Moroz, those attending the training included the vice presidents of Retail, IT and HR Services, and Logistics, 14 retail district managers, logistics general managers, as well as the UFCW Union President, Union Treasurer, the Disability Management Team, and Labour Relations.

In 2015, they piloted a supervisor/manager training program in the Logistics Division, and based on its success, started planning dates for managers in other divisions across Canada. In early 2016, a 25-minute eLearning program on mental health was launched, which all employees are required to complete.

These training programs provide supervisors, managers, and employees with:

- A better understanding of the statistics and types of mental health issues
- The ability to recognize signs and symptoms of distress
- The knowledge to provide appropriate support and get help for someone at risk of self-harm
- Awareness of all of the resources available to them

"Walking the talk, communicating, and being transparent are extremely important."

— Ted Moroz
President
The Beer Store

The Disability Management Team, rebranded as Wellness Services, has instituted several new initiatives to better accommodate workers, including increasing awareness of the Employee and Family Assistance Program (EFAP), making offers of modified work earlier, offering stay-at-work programs, implementing the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), delivering diversity and inclusion awareness training, and mental health training. And, the Manager of Wellness Services is one of only 200 people in Canada certified as Psychological Health and Safety Advisors.

In addition to all of the training and initiatives, Moroz says, "Walking the talk, communicating, and being transparent are extremely important."

"I think the response has been positive," he says, noting that they will use a number of indicators to gauge the impact of their efforts, including engagement scores, use of the EFAP program, focus groups, and anecdotal feedback from employees.

For Moroz, commitment to this issue also extends outside the organization. Not only is he an active participant in the CEO Health + Safety Leadership Network, he is also helping Ontario Shores extend their knowledge and experience in the community. "I have been volunteering for a couple of years and I think they are amazing. It opens your eyes to what people are going through and how you can help out. And when you have the opportunity to impart this knowledge to thousands of employees, you know you are a creating a better place for people to work and live."

About the CEO Health + Safety Leadership Network

The CEO Health + Safety Leadership Network is a distinguished group of leaders who share a commitment to building sustainable businesses and communities.

This dynamic collaboration offers fertile ground for exchanging knowledge and ideas in the pursuit of performance excellence. In addition to optimizing their own organizational health and safety performance and return-on-investment, members:

- Demonstrate health and safety through their leadership
- Build brand value and enhance corporate reputation
- Influence provincial and national health and safety policies and ensure business requirements are represented in critical conversations
- Contribute to the transformation of health and safety culture in Ontario
- Access exclusive research and information
- Contribute to provincial sustainability and growth
- Celebrate health and safety leadership and encourage others to contribute to a culture of health and safety

Join Us for the Next Roundtable Event

The next **CEO Health + Safety Leadership Network Roundtable** is taking place on **May 2, 2017**, in conjunction with the Partners in Prevention 2017 Health & Safety Conference & Trade Show. Once again, participants will share best practices, and will identify strategies and actions to create a culture of health and safety in their workplaces.

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APPENDIX A: **Roundtable Participants**

The following organizations participated in the April 2016 CEO Health + Safety Leadership Network Roundtable:

3Cs Corporation
ATS Automation
Bender Canada Inc.
Bruce Power
The Campbell Institute
Canadian Foundry Association
Carswell Media, Division of Thomson Reuters
Canadian Mental Health Association
Compass Group Canada
CSA Group
Data Group of Companies
Department of Chemical Engineering, University of Toronto
Flowserve Canada Corp. Canada Alloy Casting
Ford of Canada
Fresh Communications
GoodLife Fitness
Habitat for Humanity Canada
High Point Wellness Centre
Kitchener-Wilmot Hydro Inc.
Levitt-Safety Limited
Longo's
Martin-Brower of Canada Co.
Mental Health Commission of Canada
Mindful Employer Canada
Minerva Safety Management Education
Mirarco
Morneau Shepell
Nations Fresh Foods
Neighbour @ Work Centre
Ontario Ministry of Labour
Optimum Talent
ORCHSE Strategies, LLC
Public Service Health & Safety Association
Radiation Safety Institute of Canada
Respect Group Inc.
Retail Council of Canada
Rogers Communications
Sleep Country Canada
SNC-Lavalin
Strongco
Sturm Consulting
The Beer Store
The Printing House Ltd.
THINK'n Corp.
Threads of Life
Vancouver Airport Authority
Workplace Safety North
Workplace Safety & Prevention Services

Appendix B: **References**

1. *Making the Case for Investing in Mental Health in Canada*, Mental Health Commission of Canada, 2013
2. *Mental Health in the Workplace: Let's Make it Happen*, CivicAction, 2016
3. *Workplace Mental Health Priorities*, Morneau Shepell, 2015
4. *Workplace Mental Health in Canada: Findings from a Pan-Canadian Survey*, Canadian Mental Health Association, 2016
5. *Case Study Research Project*, Mental Health Commission of Canada, 2016
6. Guarding Minds @ Work, The 13 Psychosocial Factors in GM@W, (guardingmindsatwork.ca, accessed June 2016)
7. *Reducing the Stigma of Mental Health Issues in the Workplace*, Globe and Mail Leadership Lab, April 2016
8. Canadian Mental Health and Addictions: Facts and Statistics, (camh.ca, accessed June 2016)
9. *Are Mental Health Issues on the Rise?* Psychology Today, 2015

APPENDIX C: Mental Health Resources

BC211 – connects people with the help they need	bc211.ca
British Columbia Municipal Safety Association "Crew Talks"	bcmsa.ca
Canadian Association of College and University Student Services	cacuss.ca
Canadian Centre for Occupational Health & Safety	ccohs.ca
Canadian Mental Health Association	cmha.ca
Centre for Addiction and Mental Health	camh.ca
CSA Group - Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace standard	csagroup.org
Commission des Normes, de l'équité, de la Santé et de la Sécurité du Travail	csst.qc.ca
Community Cares Mental Health Response Training	communitycarestraining.com
Congé Mobile – time off	travail.gouv.qc.ca
GoodLife Fitness – Health & Wellness Leadership Summit	glfwellness.com
Great West Life EAP program	greatwestlife.com
Groupe Entreprises en Santé	groupeentreprisesensante.com
Guarding Minds at Work	guardingmindsatwork.ca
Healthy Minds Canada – "When Something's Wrong – Strategies for the Workplace"	healthymindscanada.ca
High Point Wellness Centre	highpointwellness.ca
Homewood Health	homewoodhealth.com
Labour Community Advocate Training	labourcommunityservices.ca
Living Life to the Full	lttf.ca
Living Works	livingworks.net
Mental Health Commission of Canada	mentalhealthcommission.ca
Mental Health First Aid	wsps.ca/Shop/Training/Training-Schedules/Mental-Health-First-Aid-MHFA
MIND UK, for better mental Health	mind.org.uk
Mindful, Taking the time for what matters	Mindful.org
Mindful Employer Canada	mindfulemployer.ca
National Network for Mental Health	nnmh.ca
Nonviolent Crisis Intervention	crisisprevention.com
Occupational Health Clinics for Ontario Workers –mental health stress tool	ohcow.on.ca
Pairs Aidants Reseau au Quebec	aqrp-sm.org/pairs-aidants-reseau
Public Services Health & Safety Association	pshsa.ca/mentalhealth
Respect Group	respectgroupinc.com
The Neutral Zone – Coaching & Consulting Services	theneutralzone.ca
THINK'n Corp.	thinkncorp.com
Workplace Safety & Prevention Services – Mental Health Resources	wsps.ca/Information-Resources/Topics/Mental-Health

Committed to building a
culture of health and safety.
Join us on the journey.

Workplace Safety & Prevention Services®

CEO Health +Safety Leadership Network

WORKPLACE SAFETY & PREVENTION SERVICES

Workplace Safety & Prevention Services (WSPS) is a leader in providing impactful risk management solutions that drive lasting business success for our customers. WSPS offers unparalleled health & safety expertise, insight and solutions for creating healthy work environments where employees thrive and businesses prosper.

A dynamic $43-million organization servicing 162,000 member firms, WSPS is primarily focused on the agricultural, industrial/manufacturing and service sectors. A key player in the Ontario occupational health & safety system, WSPS brings together community and business leaders to influence positive change to create a safer and more profitable Ontario.
wsps.ca

CONNECT WITH US

CEO HEALTH + SAFETY LEADERSHIP NETWORK

The CEO Health + Safety Leadership Network is a distinguished group of leaders who share a commitment to building sustainable businesses and communities. We are leaders—CEOs, Directors, operational and informal—who are stepping beyond the bounds of our own organizations to spur transformation on a much larger scale. We understand we are in a position to positively influence health and safety in Ontario and, in concert with other regional leadership charters, across Canada.

Let's Shape the Future of Health and Safety Together

CEOHSNetwork.ca

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WHERE WE LIVE IS WORTH INVESTING IN.
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