

## Frequently asked questions

### **General Inquiries**

#### **What is Guarding Minds @ Work?**

*Guarding Minds @ Work*© (GM@W) is an evidence-based strategy that assists employers in protecting and promoting psychological safety and health in the workplace. GM@W provides a comprehensive set of resources employers can use to effectively address the impact of 12 psychosocial risk (PSR) factors known to have a powerful impact on organizational health, the health of individual employees, and the financial bottom line. The PSRs were identified by researchers from the Consortium for Organizational Mental Healthcare (COMH) in the SFU Faculty of Health Sciences on the basis of extensive research and a comprehensive review of empirical data related to national and international best practices. The determination of the factors also reflects existing and emerging Canadian case law and legislation.

#### **Why was Guarding Minds @ Work developed?**

Resources related to physical safety and health are readily available in most workplaces, but there are very few resources employers can use to help protect the psychological safety and health of their employees. Guarding Minds @ Work (GM@W) was developed to help fill that gap. The GM@W process provides human resource professionals, managers, supervisors, union representatives, and small or mid-sized business owners the tools they need to assess risks to psychological health in their workplace, implement appropriate solutions, and measure the effectiveness of their actions.

#### **What is the cost of Guarding Minds @ Work?**

*Guarding Minds @ Work* is available to all employers, large or small, in the public or private sector. All online resources are available at no cost - there is a nominal print cost for employers who order a hard copy of the GM@W kit (hard copies can be ordered by contacting [info@guardingmindsatwork.ca](mailto:info@guardingmindsatwork.ca)). For those employers seeking to develop greater knowledge and skill relevant to successful implementation of GM@W, additional consultation and training is available from the GM@W development team.

#### **Who can use Guarding Minds @ Work?**

*Guarding Minds @ Work* was designed to be used by employers across Canada, regardless of business type. It will be useful to anyone in the workplace with responsibilities or concerns about employee safety and health - human resource professionals, managers, supervisors, consultants, union representatives, and small or mid-sized business owners. The process is simple to understand, easy to implement, and requires no special training.

## Who developed Guarding Minds @ Work?

GM@W was commissioned by the Great-West Life Centre for Mental Health in the Workplace, funded by the Great-West Life Assurance Company, and developed by experienced research-practitioners - Dr. Joti Samra, Dr. Merv Gilbert, Dr. Martin Shain and Dr. Dan Bilsker - from the Faculty of Health Sciences at Simon Fraser University in Vancouver, BC.

What are the 12 psychosocial risk (PSR) factors?

- **PSR1: Psychological Support**

A work environment where coworkers and supervisors are supportive of employees' psychological and mental health concerns, and respond appropriately as needed.

- **PSR2: Organizational Culture**

A work environment characterized by trust, honesty and fairness.

- **PSR3: Clear Leadership & Expectations**

A work environment where there is effective leadership and support that helps employees know what they need to do, how their work contributes to the organization, and whether there are impending changes.

- **PSR4: Civility & Respect**

A work environment where employees are respectful and considerate in their interactions with one another, as well as with customers, clients and the public.

- **PSR5: Psychological Job Fit**

A work environment where there is a good fit between employees' interpersonal and emotional competencies, their job skills, and the position they hold.

- **PSR6: Growth & Development**

A work environment where employees receive encouragement and support in the development of their interpersonal, emotional and job skills.

- **PSR7: Recognition & Reward**

A work environment where there is appropriate acknowledgement and appreciation of employees' efforts in a fair and timely manner.

- **PSR8: Involvement & Influence**

A work environment where employees are included in discussions about how their work is done and how important decisions are made.

- **PSR9: Workload Management**

A work environment where tasks and responsibilities can be accomplished successfully within the time available

- **PSR10: Engagement**

A work environment where employees enjoy and feel connected to their work, and where they feel motivated to do their job well.

- **PSR11: Balance**

A work environment where there is recognition of the need for balance between the demands of work, family and personal life.

- **PSR12: Psychological Protection**

A work environment where employees' psychological safety is ensured.

### **How were the 12 psychosocial risk (PSR) factors identified?**

The PSR factors were determined using a grounded theory approach, which involved a thorough review of relevant academic and business literature and extensive consultation with Canadian employers, unions and employees.

This included the following steps:

- Review of the scientific literature pertaining to the workplace and mental health.
- Review of relevant Canadian regulatory and case law pertaining to the workplace and mental safety
- Formation of an advisory committee who provided input on each step of the development of GM@W. The committee consisted of representatives from the mental health, scientific, union, occupational health, employee, and employer communities.
- Consultation with experts in workplace mental health from countries and jurisdictions with existing workplace psychosocial risk resources.
- Consultation with focus groups across Canada consisting of key stakeholders - human resource professionals, union representatives, lawyers, small and large employers, employees and researchers - to provide input into the description and relevance of the psychosocial risk factors.
- Implementation of a national survey amongst a diverse array of informants to gain input into the description and sample questions for each of the twelve risk factors.
- Commission of a national Ipsos Reid survey on psychological safety and health for which over 7000 respondents from a diverse range of backgrounds and sectors were polled.

The twelve risk factors are consistent with domains identified by a large body of research as areas of fundamental psychosocial risk; the definitions and language used here are unique to the 12 PSRs addressed in GM@W. For each of the factors, lower scores indicate greater risk to employee psychological health and organizational psychological safety. Higher scores indicate greater employee and organizational resilience and sustainability. The factors are interrelated and therefore influence one another; positive or negative changes in one factor are likely to change other factors in a similar manner.

## **Psychological Safety & Health Within My Organization**

### **What is a psychologically safe and healthy workplace?**

A psychologically safe and healthy workplace is one that promotes employees' psychological well-being and does not harm employee mental health in negligent, reckless or intentional ways.

### **What are some indicators of a psychologically unsafe and/or unhealthy work environment?**

The failure to adequately address psychosocial hazards at work is apparent in the escalation of disability claims based on depression or "stress", increased reports of workplace conflict, and decreased levels of job satisfaction, health and commitment. These, in turn, lead to reduced performance, higher turnover, increased costs and compromised safety. If they are not dealt with appropriately, the net result may well be loss of customers, productivity and valued employees. On the other hand, proper awareness and attention to ensuring the psychological health of workers and the workforce will yield enhanced employee engagement and well-being and organizational effectiveness and sustainability.

### **Employee well-being is fine, but what about the bottom line. Is Guarding Minds @ Work good for business?**

Absolutely. Psychologically healthy employees are more productive and have significantly lower absenteeism and disability rates. The economic impact of mental health problems on Canadian business is estimated at tens of billions of dollars annually, due to lost productivity, accidents/injuries, and short and long-term disability rates. The goal of the GM@W process is to minimize such impacts on an organization. You can implement GM@W with full confidence that you are, not only supporting the health and well-being of employees, but also helping to ensure a thriving and profitable enterprise. This is especially true during difficult economic times, when the financial impacts of absenteeism, disability, or legal/regulatory sanctions are more difficult to absorb.

### **What time and resources must my organization devote to implementing Guarding Minds @ Work successfully?**

All the resources needed to conduct the GM@W process are available online, at no cost. The process is designed to be quick and efficient to implement. In the employee feedback stage, employers might choose the brief Initial Scan (2-3 minutes to complete) and develop a quick snapshot of employee work experiences. Or, they might select the comprehensive PSR-12 Employee Survey (15-20 minutes to complete) along with the GM@W Organizational Audit. The recommended approach is to both administer the PSR-12 Employee Survey and complete the Organizational Audit. The risk identification and action implementation phases require dedicated time and effort - however, experience shows that the beneficial results far outweigh the expenditure of resources.

## **Conducting The Survey/Accessing The Tools**

### **I am confused about how to begin the GM@W process. What should I do?**

On the GM@W website home page, click the Navigating the Website link or click How to Implement GM@W on the menu. All the information needed to begin, undertake, and complete the GM@W process can be found there.

### **What is the GM@W Dashboard?**

The GM@W Dashboard is a secured login section used by registered users to administer the various GM@W surveys. The results of these surveys are also generated and displayed in the Dashboard. The Dashboard contains many valuable resources to help you assess and evaluate the effectiveness of action strategies that have been implemented. To fully utilize the many effective GM@W tools, we encourage an organizational designate to register for the Dashboard (at no cost).

### **Do I need to sign up to the Dashboard to access the resources and surveys?**

All documents, resources and surveys are available for viewing in the Documents and Resources section of the website, which does not require Dashboard registration to access. To administer the surveys, however, one must sign up for the Dashboard.

### **Do all my employees need to sign up for the Dashboard?**

No, only the person administrating the survey(s) needs to sign up for the Dashboard.

### **How much time will our organization be allowed to complete the surveys?**

Initially, organizations will be given one year to complete the surveys, but it is recommended that the survey process be completed within 2-4 weeks.

### **Employees are worried that the survey might not be confidential. What should our organization do to alleviate their concerns?**

We have a number of materials you can distribute to your employees which explain the GM@W process and its strictly confidential nature. Please explore the Documents and Resources section of our website to view the materials.

### **What happens to the information provided by our organization? Will it be stored or used?**

Information provided by the organization will be kept on a secure server and is strictly confidential. Any use of survey data will be kept anonymous and will be used only upon permission of your organization. Access is provided only to the research/development team. Great-West Life and other partners will not have access.

## **Arranging For Consultation**

**My organization has completed the survey and examined the Action Tools but we still need help. Is further consultation available?**

Yes, consultation services are available for a variety of circumstances and situations. Please contact us by phone at 778.782.7671 or by email at [info@guardingmindsatwork.ca](mailto:info@guardingmindsatwork.ca) for more information.

**What types of consultations are provided?**

Depending on the specific requirements of your organization, our consultants can provide you with a range of services (manager training, staff training, introductory learning sessions, action implementation strategies, etc.)

**How are consultations provided?**

Consultations can take place through in-person workshop sessions, videoconference, teleconference, or web conference technologies depending on the specific needs, location and resources of your organization.

**Who provides the consultation services?**

Consultation services are provided by members of the GM@W development team (Dr. Joti Samra, Dr. Merv Gilbert, Dr. Martin Shain, or Dr. Dan Bilsker). For more information on the development team, please visit the Project Team section of our website.

## **Languages Available**

**Is there a French version of GM@W?**

Yes, a French version of GM@W was launched on May 31st, 2010.

**Will GM@W be available in any other languages?**

At this time, there is no plan to provide GM@W in any languages other than English and French.

## **Troubleshooting**

**I cannot sign up for the Dashboard and/or for the updates. What do I do?**

First, please try again, ensuring that your email address is being entered without error. If the problem persists, please contact us by phone at 778.782.7671 or by email at <mailto:info@guardingmindsatwork.ca> for assistance.

**My question has not been answered by this FAQ list. What should I do?**

Please contact us by phone at 778.782.7671 or by email at [info@guardingmindsatwork.ca](mailto:info@guardingmindsatwork.ca) for further assistance.