

## About PSR3: Clear Leadership & Expectations

### 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.

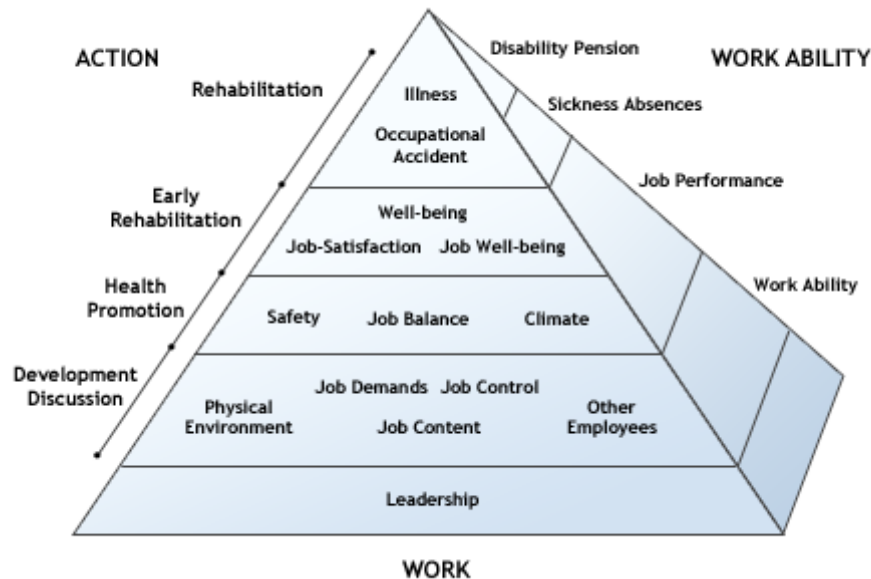
### What is PSR3 - Clear Leadership and Expectations?

Guarding Minds @ Work defines PSR3, clear leadership and expectations, as present in an environment in which leadership is effective and there is support that helps employees know what they need to do, how their work contributes to the organization and whether there are impending changes. There are many types of leadership, each of which impact psychosocial safety and health in different ways. The most widely accepted categorizations of leadership are instrumental, transactional and transformational. Of these, transformational leadership is considered the most powerful. Instrumental leadership focuses primarily on producing outcomes, with little attention paid to the 'big picture,' the psychosocial dynamics within the organization, and, unfortunately, the individual employees. Transformational leaders are seen as change agents who motivate their followers to do more than what is expected. They are concerned with long-term objectives and transmit a sense of mission, vision and purpose. They have charisma, give individualized consideration to their employees, stimulate intellectual capabilities in others, and inspire employees.

### Why is PSR3 – Clear Leadership and Expectations important?

Leadership is the foundation of a health pyramid (see below).<sup>i</sup> Effective leadership increases employee morale, resiliency and trust, and decreases employee frustration and conflict. Good leadership leads to individuals being 40% more likely to be in the highest category of job well-being, a 27% reduction of sick leave, and a 46% reduction in early retirements with disability pensions. A leader who demonstrates a commitment to maintaining his or her own physical and psychological health can influence the health of employees (sickness, presenteeism, absenteeism) as well as the health of the organization as a whole (vigour, vitality, productivity).

<sup>i</sup> The term "job well-being" used in the job pyramid refers to health aspects that are related to work, such as burnout (Kuoppala et al., 2008).



### What happens when clear leadership and expectations are lacking?

Leaders who are more instrumental in their approach (rather than transformational) are more likely to find staff health complaints including general feelings of malaise, irritability and nervousness. Similarly, leaders who do not demonstrate visible concern for their own physical and psychological health set a negative example for their staff and can undermine the legitimacy of any organizational program, policy and/or service intended to support employees. Middle managers are at greater risk due to the fact that they must be leaders and be led simultaneously. This role conflict can lead to feelings of powerlessness and stress.

### How can clear leadership and expectations be improved?

Start by having the organization or work team conduct the Guarding Minds @ Work Assessment (Organizational Audit, Initial Scan and/or PSR-12 Employee Survey) and reviewing the resulting reports. If clear leadership and expectations is identified as an area of concern, refer to the relevant Action Tools for a practical strategy and evidence-based suggestions that can improve the effectiveness of leadership and clarity of expectations. It is also important to discuss the findings with concerned employees within the organization to gain a further understanding of the results and to obtain input and participation in determining useful corrective actions. Also, consider the information in the readings and resources identified below. Finally, refer back to the GM@W website on occasion for new ideas about how clear leadership and expectations can be enhanced.

**Further information about clear leadership and expectations can be found at:**

- Kuoppala, J., Lamminpää, A., Liira, J., & Vainio, H. (2008). Leadership, job well-being, and health effects: A systematic review and a meta-analysis. *Journal of Occupational & Environmental Medicine*, 50(8), 904-915. <http://journals.lww.com/joem/pages/articleviewer.aspx?year=2008&issue=08000&article=00004&type=abstract>
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- The Great-West Life Assurance Company. (2009). PSR3: Leadership. In Centre resources by risk factor. <http://www.gwlcentreformentalhealth.com/english/slides.asp?l1=3&l2=157&l3=159&l4=163&d=159&scroll=3>
- Health and Safety Executive. (n.d.). Work related stress: Health and safety in the workplace. <http://www.hse.gov.uk/stress/index.htm>
- Howell, J., & Avolio, B. (1993). Transformational leadership, transactional leadership, locus of control, and support for innovation: Key predictors of consolidated-business-unit performance. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 78(6), 891-902. <http://web.ebscohost.com/ehost/pdf?vid=9&hid=2&sid=9b6320ad-f934-4019-b8006a98f95517b8%40sessionmgr104>
- Stordeur, S., Vandenberghe, C., & D'hoore, W. (2001). On examining the moderators of leader behaviors in nursing: An investigation of substitutes for, and neutralizers and enhancers of, leadership. In *Organizational psychology and health care at the start of a new millennium* (pp. 85-104). Munich, Germany: Rainer Hampp Verlag. <http://books.google.ca/books?hl=en&lr=&id=07FUgJFuvH8C&oi=fnd&pg=PR3&dq=%20n+examining+the+moderators+of+leader+%22&ots=m3398FycuV&sig=0GrtZF9KaQGhXZXITlvztZ9diGI#v=onepage&q=%20n%20examining%20the%20moderators%20of%20leader%20%22&f=false>
- Boumans, N. P. G., & Landeweerd, J. A. (1993). Leadership in the nursing unit: relationships with nurses' well-being. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 18, 767-775. <http://www.ingentaconnect.com/content/bsc/jan/1993/00000018/00000005/art00022>
- McConville, T., & Holden, L. (1999). The filling in the sandwich: HRM and middle managers in the health sector. *Personnel Review*, 28(5/6), 406-424. <http://www.emeraldinsight.com/Insight/ViewContentServlet?Filename=Published/EmeraldFullTextArticle/Articles/0140280502.html>

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