

Suggested Responses

Please consult the *Selection of Suggested Actions* and *Applying a Quality Framework* documents to help you select suggested actions to undertake for Psychological Protection.

PF12: PSYCHOLOGICAL PROTECTION

OBJECTIVE: A work environment where employees' psychological safety is ensured.

PF12: Survey Results
(check rating, if applicable)

Serious Concerns

Significant Concerns

Minimal Concerns

Relative Strengths

PF12: Organizational Review Results
(check rating, if applicable)

Serious Concerns

Significant Concerns

Minimal Concerns

Relative Strengths

Serious Concerns = 5 to 9 Significant Concerns = 10 to 13 Minimal Concerns* = 14 to 16 Relative Strengths** = 17 to 20

* Although this is a Minimal Concern, it is important to attend to it and review the Organizational Review Results and the Survey Results for any additional or individual-identified areas of concern.

** Although this is a Relative Strength, it is important to review the Organizational Review Results and the Survey Results for any additional or individual-identified areas of concern.

The list below contains actions that you can take to respond to actual or potential concerns related to **Psychological Protection**. Many of these actions have been found to be effective in research studies, have been recommended as best practices, or have been found valuable in applied settings. Some have been informed by emerging case law and regulatory requirements. *Psychological Protection is an area of particular importance from this perspective (see also: PSR1, 4, 5 and 9)*. The actions are drawn from diverse industries and sectors, and not all may be applicable or feasible in your particular workplace. This list is not exhaustive, nor is it intended to be prescriptive. Rather, these are suggestions for possible courses of action.

If **Psychological Protection** has been flagged as a **Relative Strength** in your workplace, it is important not to overlook this finding. You can do this by developing policies that protect this relative strength and engaging staff in discussions of how this strength can be enhanced by implementing the suggested actions below.

If **Psychological Protection** has been flagged as an area of concern in your workplace, consider which of these actions might be appropriate. In making your decision, it can be helpful to keep the following six key quality dimensions in mind: Appropriateness, Acceptability, Accessibility, Effectiveness, Efficiency and Safety (see *Applying a Quality Framework* for more information).

The actions below fall into four main categories: (1) norms, values and practices of the work environment; (2) training and development initiatives; (3) communication strategies and approaches; and (4) formal policies and programs. You may have already initiated some of the actions – but consider the others. You may also have other ideas for actions you could implement – there is a space for writing these down at the end of this document. **Remember, not every action that might enhance Psychological Protection in your workplace is listed here. Implementing the following actions, however, will provide a strong foundation for building a psychologically healthy and safe workplace.**

Work Environment (Norms, Values & Practices)

- Create a culture where psychological health and safety is valued, encouraged and promoted
- Ensure organizational justice across all facets of the workplace: ensure fairness in how workplace decisions are made and how procedures are carried out (“procedural justice”); ensure fairness in the outcomes of workplace decisions, such as promotion decisions (“distributive justice”); and communicate explanations for decisions in a respectful manner, with sincerity, care and empathy (“interactional justice”)
- Create a process where difficult workplace situations can be discussed and addressed in a safe and confidential manner
- Recognize that the assurance of psychological safety is more than just a policy – it involves an ongoing process of education, implementation and evaluation, with revisions as needed
- Provide incentives and reinforcement for the active demonstration of psychologically healthy and safe behaviour

Training & Development

- Provide ongoing orientation and training on organizational/union policies and programs on harassment, discrimination, violence at work and conflict management
- Orient and train managers/supervisors, human resources providers, and union personnel to be knowledgeable and accountable for ensuring a psychologically healthy and safe workplace
- Provide training on identifying and dealing with psychosocial stressors in the workplace (e.g., training in assertiveness, problem-solving and stress management)

Communication

- Provide ongoing awareness and communication about existing policies on harassment, discrimination, violence and conflict management (using both formal and informal communication networks)
- Provide safe opportunities for employees to identify and participate in the remediation of psychological safety concerns
- Communicate the availability of resources, educational material and supports available to manage stress

Formal Policies & Programs

- Comply with the National Standard of Canada for Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace
- Develop policies and programs that assess and address harm to employees (i.e., harassment, discrimination, violence)
- Regularly review and modify policies and programs to reflect emerging case law and regulatory changes
- Create company ethics, values and employee privacy statements with participation from all levels of staff
- Provide internal programs and benefits, as well as information on external resources, that support employees who have experienced work-related harassment, discrimination or violence (e.g., Employee and Family Assistance programs, access to psychologists or other regulated mental health professionals, community services)
- Conduct regular risk assessments and reviews to help understand and monitor factors that may negatively affect employees' psychological health and safety
- Provide programs and services for those working in vulnerable situations/hours (e.g., debriefing, peer support, "safe-walk" programs, secure parking access)
- Provide employees with adequate rest/break or job rotations for particularly burdensome mental or physical tasks (e.g., rest period for night-shift workers)

Additional resources have been created to help you take action, including: presentation slides and supporting materials (freely available at www.workplacestrategiesformentalhealth.com/ota) and a new resource - *Psychological Health and Safety: An Action Guide for Employers*, developed on behalf of the Mental Health Commission of Canada Workforce Advisory Committee, that is a practical tool designed to help employers develop implementation plans on the basis of Guarding Minds at Work findings (freely available at www.mentalhealthcommission.ca/SiteCollectionDocuments/Workforce/Workforce_Employers_Guide_ENG.pdf).

We encourage you to review these resources for additional suggested actions.

Other Actions:

There won't be a perfect set of actions – often it's a matter of choosing the actions most likely to accomplish positive outcomes while generating the fewest potential problems.

Once you have selected one or more actions to undertake, enter them into the corresponding *Action Planning Worksheet*, pick your start date, identify who will be involved – your Action Team, and get started!