

Suggested Responses

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

PF9: WORKLOAD MANAGEMENT

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

PF9: Survey Results
(check rating, if applicable)

Serious Concerns	Significant Concerns	Minimal Concerns	Relative Strengths
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PF9: Organizational Review Results
(check rating, if applicable)

Serious Concerns	Significant Concerns	Minimal Concerns	Relative Strengths
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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 **Workload Management**. 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. Workload Management *is an area of particular importance from this perspective (see also: PF1, 4, 5, and 12)*. 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 **Workload Management** 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 **Workload Management** 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 Workload Management 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)

- Cultivate a work culture that clearly values the quality of work done, not simply the quantity of work (e.g., hours worked)
- Assign workload equitably, with consideration for varying levels of responsibility associated with different positions
- Allow staff flexibility, as appropriate, on task prioritization and determination/modification of deadlines
- Ensure that the necessary equipment and supports are available (e.g., tools, technology, support staff) to help complete work competently and efficiently
- Generate, communicate and implement timely strategies for dealing with peak periods of demand (e.g., temporary staff, job pools, job sharing)
- Acknowledge and appreciate employees' efforts during times of high work demand

Training & Development

- Orient new staff comprehensively, providing accurate and realistic information about job demands and expectations
- Assign tasks based on the particular strengths and abilities of individuals, ensuring equity throughout the process
- Provide education on topics relevant to managing workload (e.g., time management, use of technology)
- Provide education on resiliency, stress management and burnout (e.g., on signs and effects of stress and strategies for self-care)

Communication

- Communicate regularly with staff about how they can optimally manage and adjust their workload
- Inform and prepare staff for anticipated periods of increased work (e.g., seasonal demands, peak shift hours)
- Actively involve employees in the development of strategies to better manage workload (e.g., reduction or elimination of redundant or unnecessary tasks)

Formal Policies & Programs

- Create written job descriptions that include explicit and reasonable productivity expectations
- Provide pay or accrued time off for approved overtime worked
- Ensure that systems are in place to cover staffing shortages (e.g., due to vacation, sick leave, unfilled positions)
- Conduct job analyses/audits to determine workload demands, equity in work distribution and areas for improvement
- Provide non-remunerative perks during times of excessive work demands (e.g., meals, coverage of transportation costs)

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:

- _____

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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!