Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

General Inquiries

What is Guarding Minds @ Work (GM@W)?

Guarding Minds @ Work (GM@W) is a unique and free, comprehensive set of resources designed to protect and promote psychological health and safety in the workplace. GM@W resources allow employers to effectively assess and address the 13 psychosocial factors known to have a powerful impact on organizational health, the health of individual employees, and the financial bottom line. GM@W was developed by researchers from the Centre for Applied Research in Mental Health and Addiction (CARMHA) within the Faculty of Health Sciences at Simon Fraser University on the basis of extensive research, including data analysis of a national sample and reviews of national and international best practices, as well as existing and emerging Canadian case law and legislation.

Why was GM@W developed?

Resources related to physical health and safety are readily available in most workplaces, but there are very few resources available to help protect psychological health and safety. GM@W was developed to help fill that gap. GM@W provides human resource professionals, managers, supervisors, union representatives, and small or mid-sized business owners the resources they need to effectively assess psychological health and safety in their workplace, undertake appropriate interventions, and measure the effectiveness of their actions. It answers the questions "Where do we begin?" and "Where can we best use our limited resources?".

What is the cost of GM@W?

GM@W is available to all employers - large or small, in the public or private sector - at no cost. GM@W Resources were developed so they could be implemented in-house, without the need for external support. However, for those interested in implementation or facilitation support for GM@W, there are outside consultants who are workplace psychological health and safety experts offering these services.

Who can use GM@W?

GM@W was designed to be used by employers across Canada, regardless of business type. GM@W will be useful to anyone in the workplace with responsibilities or concerns about psychological health and safety at work - human resource professionals, managers, supervisors, consultants, union representatives, and small or mid-sized business owners. The GM@W Resources are simple to understand, easy to implement, and require no special training.

Who developed GM@W?

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 from the **Centre for Applied Research in Mental Health and Addiction(CARMHA)** within the Faculty of Health Sciences at Simon Fraser University in vancouver, Canada (GM@W 2009: Samra, J., Gilbert, M., Shain, M., Bilsker, D.; GM@W 2012: Gilbert, M., Bilsker, D. shain, M., Samra, J.).

What is CCOHS' Role in GM@W?

The GM@W website is operated, hosted and maintained by the **Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety** (CCOHS). CCOHS also provides English and French email and telephone support for GM@W users, in consultation with CARMHA as needed.
CARMHA, the Great-West Life Centre for Mental Health in the Workplace, and CCOHS collaborate to increase utilization of GM@W by raising awareness and understanding of GM@W and its importance, and by promoting GM@W as a leading organizational resource supporting psychological health and safety in the workplace.

What are Psychosocial Factors?

Psychosocial factors are elements that impact employees' psychological responses to work and work conditions, potentially causing psychological health problems. Psychosocial factors include the way work is carried out (deadlines, workload, work methods) and the context in which work occurs (including relationships and interactions with managers and supervisors, colleagues and coworkers, and clients or customers).

What are the 13 Psychosocial Factors assessed by GM@W?

PF1: Psychological Support
A work environment where coworkers and supervisors are supportive of employees' psychological and mental health concerns, and respond appropriately as needed.

PF2: Organizational Culture
A work environment characterized by trust, honesty and fairness.

PF3: 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.

PF4: 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.

PF5: Psychological Competencies & Requirements
A work environment where there is a good fit between employees' interpersonal and emotional competencies and the requirements of the position they hold.

PF6: Growth & Development
A work environment where employees receive encouragement and support in the development of their interpersonal, emotional and job skills.

PF7: Recognition & Reward
A work environment where there is appropriate acknowledgement and appreciation of employees' efforts in a fair and timely manner.

PF8: Involvement & Influence
A work environment where employees are included in discussions about how their work is done and how important decisions are made.

PF9: Workload Management
A work environment where tasks and responsibilities can be accomplished successfully within the time available.

PF10: Engagement
A work environment where employees feel connected to their work and are motivated to do their job well.

PF11: Balance

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

PF12: Psychological Protection

A work environment where employees' psychological safety is ensured.

PF13: Protection of Physical Safety

A work environment where management takes appropriate action to protect the physical safety of employees.

How were the 13 Psychosocial Factors in GM@W determined?

The 13 Psychosocial Factors were determined via a Grounded Theory approach, which involved a thorough review of relevant literature and extensive consultation with Canadian employers, unions and employees. This included the following steps:

- Review of the scientific literature pertaining to workplace mental health.

- Review of relevant Canadian regulatory and case law pertaining to the workplace and psychological safety.

- Formation of an advisory committee which provided input on each step of the development of GM@W. The committee consisted of representatives from the mental health, scientific, union, occupational health and employer communities.

- Consultation with experts in workplace mental health from countries and jurisdictions with well-developed workplace psychosocial risk assessment resources.

- Implementation of focus groups across Canada with key stakeholders – legal professionals, union representatives, small and large employers, employees and researchers – to provide input into the description and relevance of the psychosocial 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 13 Psychosocial Factors.

The 13 Psychosocial 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 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 Health & Safety within My Organization

What is a psychologically healthy and safe workplace?

A psychologically healthy and safe workplace is one that promotes employees' psychological well-being and actively works to prevent harm to employee psychological health due to negligent, reckless or intentional acts.

What are some indicators of a psychologically unhealthy and/or unsafe 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 GM@W 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 GM@W 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 GM@W successfully?

All GM@W Resources are available online at no cost. GM@W is designed to be quick and efficient to implement. In the GM@W Assessment stage, employers might choose the brief GM@W Initial Scan (2-3 minutes to complete) to get a quick snapshot of employee work experiences. Or, they might select the comprehensive GM@W Survey (15-20 minutes to complete) along with the GM@W Organizational Review – this is the recommended approach. The GM@W Action and Evaluation phases require dedicated time and effort - however, experience shows that the beneficial results far outweigh this expenditure of resources.

Accessing the GM@W Resources

I am confused about how to begin - what should I do?

On the GM@W website home page, go to the navigation bar (the boxes along the left side) and click on Navigating the GM@W Website or How to Prepare to Implement GM@W. All the information needed to begin, undertake, and complete implementing GM@W can be found there.

What is the GM@W Dashboard?

The GM@W Dashboard is a secured login section of the GM@W Website that allows Organizational Representatives (who have signed up for the GM@W Dashboard) to administer GM@W Online Surveys and generate GM@W Reports that will provide a visual summary of the GM@W Online Survey Results. If you would like to utilize these GM@W Resources and are an Organizational Representative we encourage you to sign up for the GM@W Dashboard (at no cost).

Do I need to sign up for the GM@W Dashboard to access the GM@W Resources?

All GM@W Resources (including sample GM@W Reports) are available for download in the GM@W Documents & Resources section of the website, which does not require GM@W Dashboard signup to access. To administer GM@W Online Surveys, however, an Organizational Representative must sign up for the GM@W Dashboard.

Do all employees need to sign up for the GM@W Dashboard?

No, only an Organizational Representative who is planning on administrating GM@W Online Surveys needs to sign up for the GM@W Dashboard.

How much time will our organization be allowed to administer the GM@W Online Survey?

Initially, organizations will be given one year to administer each GM@W Online Survey, but you may extend or shorten your GM@W Online Survey cycle period. However, we recommend a GM@W Online Survey cycle period of 2-4 weeks.

Employees are worried about the confidentiality of the GM@W Online Survey. What should our organization do to alleviate their concerns?

We have a number of materials you can distribute to your employees and refer to for inclusion in communication with your employees that explain the GM@W process and its strictly confidential nature (see the next question). Please explore the GM@W Documents & Resources section of our website to view these materials.

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

Information provided by the Organizational Representative and all GM@W Online Survey data will be kept on a secure server in Canada and is strictly confidential. The GM@W Online Survey data will be kept anonymous and reported in the aggregate only; individual-level data will not be released.

Furthermore, GM@W Online Survey data will be used for research purposes by the GM@W Project Team only with explicit consent of the Organizational Representative and each individual employee. The Great-¬West Life Centre for Mental Health in the Workplace and CARMHA will receive a monthly report of GM@W Users. No individual users or organizations will be identified.

Languages Available

Is there a French version of GM@W?

Yes, a French version of GM@W is available – please click on *Cliquez ici pour Français* in the top left corner of the GM@W Website. You can run a bilingual survey using one survey link. You will need to instruct your employees to open the link and then toggle to the French view to complete the survey. All the survey responses - English and French - will be captured in the same report.

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 GM@W Dashboard - what should 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 1-800-668-4284 or 905-570-8094 or by email at 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 1-800-668-4284 or 905-570-8094 or by email at info@guardingmindsatwork.ca for further assistance.