



HR Conference +
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Strengthening Mental Health In The Workplace

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Are we having enough problems yet!?

- 2017 APA annual report on stress
 - 63% of Americans are significantly stressed
 - State of the country or world
 - Finances
 - Fear for safety
 - 45% of Americans have lain awake in the last month because of stress
 - This is a big jump from previous years
- SunLife Canada
 - 50% of Canadians currently have a significant mental health problem or are living closely with someone with a significant mental health problem

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Why Care about Mental Health at Work??

- Institutional/Societal Obligation
- Solid Business Case
 - Stanford Study
 - <https://www.gsb.stanford.edu/faculty-research/case-studies/business-case-happiness>
- Jurisdictional legislation
- Emerging Business values/ethics



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Mental Health in Canada Conference Board Study: Key Findings

- 44% of respondents were currently, or had previously experienced a mental health issue
- 78% of short-term disability claims and 67% of long-term disability claims in Canada were related to mental health issues.
- Respondents fear that making such a disclosure would jeopardize their chances for promotion (65%) and future success (58%) in their organizations.
- 64% of people believe depression is a personal weakness.

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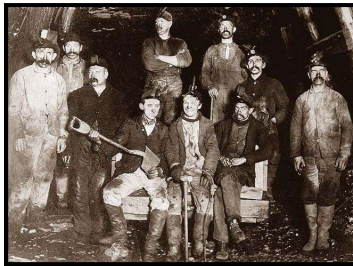
Outline for Strengthening Mental Health in the Workplace

- Understanding and Assessing Psychological Safety in your Workplace
- Understanding Stigma as it relates to mental health problems
- Create organizational habits that help engender Mindfulness at Work
 - Meditation
 - Gratitude
 - Self-Compassion



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Historical Perspective: Safety as a Basic Right



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Why did fall protection reform in the 1940s?

- ❖ During the construction of the Empire State, Chrysler and Rockefeller Center buildings:
 - ❖ Over 20 people died in fall related incidents
 - ❖ Estimated 200-500 serious fall-related injuries
- ❖ Significant improvements in belts in the 1940s led to significant reforms to fall protection



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Goal: Zero Mental Injuries at Work



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“All Canadians have a right to a safe workplace”

Agree or Disagree?



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Psychological Safety

- Do we apply the same level of diligence and concern around psychological safety as we do around physical safety?
- Do we really believe that psychological/emotional risk is substantial?



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What is a psychologically safe workplace?

- ❖ One in which every reasonable effort is made to **protect** the mental health of employees.
 - ❖ Harassment; Bullying; Mobbing; Discrimination;
 - ❖ This is the “old” threshold
- ❖ One in which every reasonable effort is made to **promote** the mental health of employees.
 - ❖ The emerging threshold



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A National Standard for Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace

- Objective: to provide a methodology that will lead to measurable and sustainable improvements in psychological health and safety
- Ratified by Ottawa in 2012, it is a recognized “Best Practices” for guide policy and practice in Canadian workplaces.
 - Both Bill 168 (Ontario) and 14 (BC) were written with the National Standard in mind
 - Arbitrators use the National Standard as a measuring stick to determine risk and culpability



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What is a Psychologically Healthy Workplace?

Workload	• Workloads are monitored • “Face time” does not equal better job performance • Overtime is compensated
Work Scheduling	• Flexible work arrangements exist
Work-Life Balance	• Work-life balance is promoted • Employees encouraged to take vacation • Employees not expected to respond to e-mail 24/7

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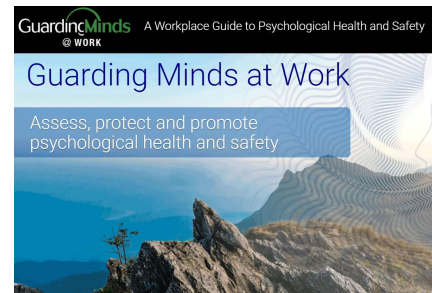
What is a Psychologically Healthy Workplace?

Work Environment	• People are friendly, empathetic, understanding, and supportive • Bullying, harassment, and discrimination are not tolerated • Not a high-stress environment; no hostility or conflict
Management Style	• Managers are well trained and good people managers • Managers are not autocratic, authoritarian, controlling, and aggressive • Employees are not blamed or punished for mistakes
Communication	• Open communication between management and employees • Human resource professionals and managers are approachable • Discussions are kept confidential

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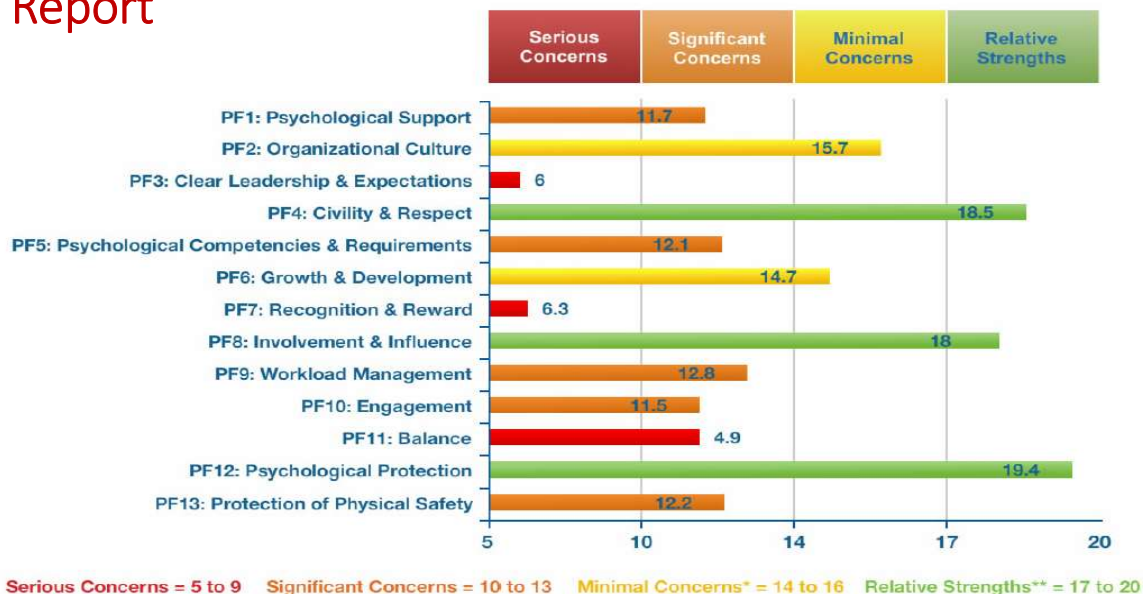
What is Guarding Minds at Work (GM@W)

- 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
- GM@W is a response to current and emerging legal requirements in Canada for the protection of employee mental health and the promotion of civility and respect at work.
- <https://www.guardingmindsatwork.ca/>



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Sample GM@W Report



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Understanding Stigma

- The word stigma is of Greek origin.
- Originally referred to the brand or scar burned or cut into the body, signifying that the bearer was a slave, or criminal or otherwise set apart from the general society.
- Stigma is defined as a sign of disgrace or discredit, which sets a person apart from others



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What are the “LABELS” we give to people with Mental Illness?

A green oval containing the word **SCARY** in black capital letters.A yellow oval containing the word **STRANGE** in black capital letters.An orange oval containing the word **LAZY** in black capital letters.A yellow oval containing the word **WEIRD** in black capital letters.A blue oval containing the word **CRAZY** in black capital letters.A blue oval containing the word **DANGEROUS** in black capital letters.A large red circle containing the word **DIFFERENT** in black capital letters.

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The Process of Stigmatization

- Labelling
- ↓
- Negative stereotypes
- ↓
- Separation of “us” from “them”
- ↓
- Status loss and discrimination

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De-Stigmatizing Mental Illness

- **How we make sense of any problem DETERMINES how we intervene**
 - Example: The Witches of Salem
 - The community believed these strange and marginalized women were possessed by the devil
 - Burning was thought to be the cure for their souls
- Our interventions emerge from how we understand the nature of the thing to be
- How we (as leaders in the workplace) make sense of mental illness will determine how we deal with it
- Where do we get our ideas and prejudices?



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Group Exercise

Justin and Anne each go on Short term disability on the same day. They're both off for 2 months. Anne was involved in a serious MVA with broken legs. Justin (who's always been a bit moody) is away on what people are saying is a "stress leave"

- How will their co-workers talk about these two different STD situations?
- Are you more sympathetic with one over the other?
- Which one will receive more contact etc. while they are gone?
- Which one would be easier to visit and why?
- When they return to work, studies show that they will be treated very differently by co-workers.
 - What are some of those differences and what's that about?

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The Needed Shift

- We need to begin viewing Mental Disorders as:
 - Common human conditions
 - Medical/Neurological conditions
 - Treatable conditions
- Many of the common mental health problems we treat today are the symptoms indicating a prior psychological/emotional injury.



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**“Education is the
most powerful
weapon which you
can use to change the
world”**

Nelson Mandela



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***Start a conversation
about Mental Illness
and Stigma***



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Bell's *Let's Talk* Framework

- Lead a safety or members meeting that focuses on mental health problems and stigma
 - 15 minutes 4X a year
- Show a short video and talk about it
- Introduce the conversation by saying that we want our workplaces to be safe for everyone, including psychological safety
- Start a dialogue, not a debate

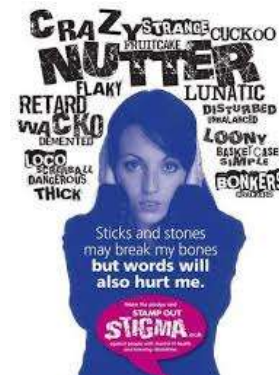
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Bell's *Let's Talk* Framework

- Why does Howie Mandel make it easier to talk about our mental health?
- What did you think about Mental Health vs. Dental Health?
- Most people agree that the main issue is that mental health is largely invisible, compared to physical health. Why does this change things for us?



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PERK

Berkeley's Foundations of Happiness at Work

- PERK = **Purpose**; **Engagement**; **Resilience**; **Kindness**
- Happiness is not:
 - Amusement; Pride; enthusiasm; relief
 - Maintaining a stream of positive emotions in a state of perpetual cheerfulness
- Happiness is the experience of positive well-being combined with a sense that life is good and worthwhile
- Happiness is more than just feeling good, its that my life, including my work life is full of meaning and purpose



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Resilience and Positive Mental Health

- The most effective way to increase resilience is to intentionally cultivate Positive Mental Health (PMH)
- What we all need to KNOW about PMH
 - PMH is a quality that is not bound by context
 - PMH improves the quality of our lives more than any other studied factor (beyond having basic needs like having clean water or living in non-violent situations)
 - Working with the brain is the fastest and most effective way to improve our PMH



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Question #1

What is going on when you have a great day at work?

Question #2

Do you feel as if you were in charge of that outcome or not?



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So, what is Positive Mental Health?



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“When we are mentally healthy, we enjoy our life and environment, and the people in it. We can be creative, learn, try new things, and take risks. We are better able to cope with difficult times in our personal and professional lives. We feel the sadness and anger that can come with the death of a loved one, a job loss or relationship problems and other difficult events, but in time, we are able to get on with and enjoy our lives once again..” CMHA

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“To live as if each moment were important; as if each moment counted and could be worked with...even if it’s a moment of pain, sadness, despair or fear”

Jon Kabat-Zinn



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The 3 Pillars of Positive Mental Health

Gratitude

- Being able to notice and focus on all good things in my life

Mindfulness

- Being able to pay attention to the present moment, non-judgementally

Compassion

- To feel love for myself and others

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