

## Mental Health in the Workplace

In business, good mental health is considered a key motivator in terms of success and productivity. The World Health Organization defines positive mental health as "a state of well-being in which every individual realizes his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to her or his community. Employees with good mental health will perform better in their work."



In recent years, however, mental health of employees in organizations has gradually become a growing health and safety concern. Studies show that due to the globalization of economies and advances in workplace technology, the nature of work is changing the way employees conduct their work within the context of data organization, skill acquisition and competency, communication, innovation and the social intelligence.

These rapid changes in the nature of work can be rewarding for employees, however, it can also mean that employees may experience additional demands and pressure on cognitive, social and psychological skills. In addition, there is evidence to prove that poor mental health leads to a range of physical illnesses to include musculoskeletal injuries and stress related disease (i.e. heart disease and diabetes).

Today in Canada, the statistics show that mental health problems and illnesses are the leading cause of workplace disability which entails 15% of Canada's burden of disease. "The economic burden of mental disorders in Canada has been estimated at \$51-billion per year, with almost \$20-billion of that coming from workplace losses," said Mental Health Commission of Canada (MHCC) President and CEO, Louise Bradley.

In June of this year, the [MHCC](#), announced a new Psychological Health and Safety Standard for the Canadian Workplace to help employers with increased support for improving the psychological health and safety of their employees. The MHSS is working in conjunction with a committee of representatives, which includes health and safety professionals, to develop standards, services and support with the Bureau of normalization du Quebec (BNQ) and the Canadian Standards Association (CSA). Through this initiative, employers will have the resources to proactively manage the mental health of workers with a wide range of interventions, support and services to promote mental health awareness, prevent stress and develop employee resilience.

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