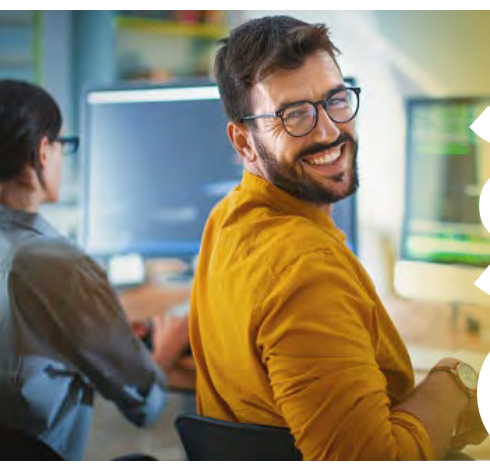




WSPS Mental Harm Prevention Roadmap:



JUMP START GUIDE



In partnership:



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“Psychological safety is a belief that one will not be punished or humiliated for speaking up with ideas, questions, concerns or mistakes.”

Amy Edmondson

HARVARD BUSINESS SCHOOL PROFESSOR

How concerned is your organization about psychological health and safety in the workplace?

With changes in legislation, an increase in worker compensation claims, the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, remote workers, and growing concerns about the mental health of the Canadian workforce, attraction and retention of healthy employees is becoming top of mind for many senior leaders.

Mental health in the workplace requires two-way accountability. There is no single program or policy that will fix the current trends with respect to short-term mental health disability claims or the percent of worker compensation claims that now have psychological elements. What is required is the employer working with the employees in a joint partnership to reduce mental harm and promote mental health.

Workplace Safety & Prevention Services (WSPS) in Ontario is committed to assisting the employer to evolve the conversation past the traditional occupational health and safety (OHS) paradigm that focused solely on prevention of physical harm in the workplace. The evolution of OHS will be to include both physical and psychological safety in the workplace.

This Jump Start Guide is intended to help psychological health and safety champions make decisions on where to focus, as well as provide concrete action steps.

The Jump Start Guide is based on the [Mental Harm Prevention Roadmap](#) that was published by the Conference Board of Canada (CBoC). The Roadmap was created to be a user-friendly interface for the *CAN/CSA-Z1003-13/BNQ 9700-803/2013 National Standard for Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace* ([National Standard](#)). It is aligned with its three tenets: to prevent mental harm, promote mental health, and resolve incidents or conflicts in the workplace. The Roadmap is a flexible framework that any organization can use in initiating or facilitating a psychologically healthy and safe (PHS) workplace.



How to Use the Jump Start Guide

STEP 1 - Become familiar with the Roadmap.

We suggest you first read the [Mental Harm Prevention Roadmap](#) published by the CBoC as an overview of the eight building blocks. The building blocks are not intended to be linear.

Each of the eight building blocks has been developed to enable flexibility, continuity, and continual improvement. The Roadmap implementation will be defined by the champions available, leadership support, organizational change-readiness, existing systems, budget, timelines, intended outcomes, and available resources.

Organizations interested in adopting or adapting the Standard are more likely to explore all eight building blocks and leverage building block eight to facilitate the Standard's Plan-Do-Check-Act approach.

We suggest you scan the building blocks below. You will notice all building blocks fall under one of three headings. Because the Roadmap is flexible you can leverage this framework to adapt or adopt the Standard, beginning with Getting Started and building out. Employers looking for ideas to support employees, leadership, culture, social connections, or prevention may jump to a desired building block.

The more the employer can adopt a Plan-Do-Check-Act approach with a defined game plan, the more likely they will be able to achieve a better outcome. However, saying that, doing something with intention to prevent psychological health and safety issues in the workplace is certainly better than doing nothing.

STEP 2 - Complete the Roadmap Key Performance Behavior (KPB) Gap Analysis.

Impacting psychological health and safety, is no different than impacting OHS, given that success is dependent on implementing the right behaviours. The Roadmap KPB Gap Analysis provides the organization's psychological health and safety champions with the ability to self-evaluate, based on current programs, policies, and data, the degree of confidence the organization has in successfully facilitating KPBs in each of the building blocks. **Check only the ones you are confident you have in place.**



Keep in mind that more is not always better. This exercise provides context as to what KPBs the organization is intentionally influencing that are consistent with the Standard. The more building blocks and KPBs covered, the more mature your organization's activity is towards becoming a psychologically healthy and safe workplace. This exercise can also help you identify gaps or areas that have not been addressed or have not had the desired outcomes.

We coach psychological health and safety champions to be thoughtful on capacity, access, buy-in from employees and leaders, as well as their involvement in current initiatives. Again, more activity may not necessarily be better. Moving from a check box mindset to an evidence-based mindset requires intention, having the right data and engaging all key stakeholders on a regular basis.

STEP 3 - Decide where to start within the building blocks.

Under building blocks one to eight we have provided three optional leading practices that we recommend to employers who are looking for an idea about how to get started. Having different programs and initiatives can help to create some momentum. However, it is important not to confuse programs with strategy. A mental health strategy aligned to the Standard will include measurement, monitoring, reporting, and continual improvement.





Level One Getting Started

INCLUDES

Three building blocks



FOUNDATION



SUPPORT



PLANNING

PURPOSE

Support communication, build awareness, normalize conversation about mental health, reduce stigma, promote positive health actions, and initiate a PHS strategy.

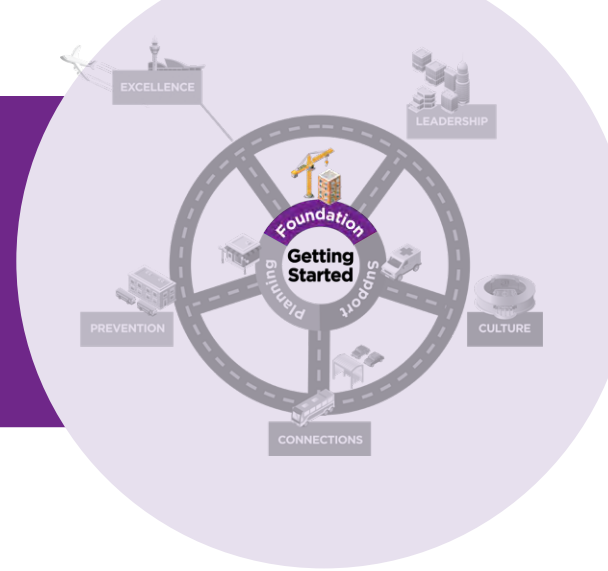
ACTION

Check all key performance behaviours (KPBs) that reflect the current state. Select the building block(s) to implement with the fewest KPBs. Explore suggested action steps in case you do not have the resources or time for formal planning and are simply looking for an idea under each building block as to where you could start.

BUILDING BLOCK 1

FOUNDATION

Establishes organizational readiness, budget, resources, and senior leadership buy-in.



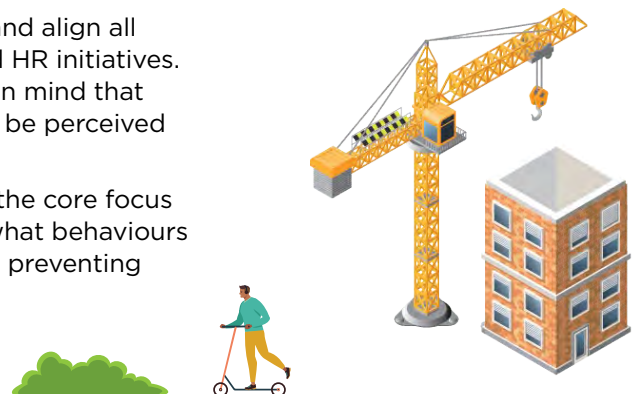
Key Performance Behaviours (KPBs)

- ☐ Senior leaders are engaged and committed to supporting psychological health and safety.
- ☐ There is a defined budget for supporting psychological health and safety.
- ☐ The reason the organization is motivated and ready to develop psychological health and safety in the workplace has been clearly defined.
- ☐ The internal champion responsible for leading all psychological health and safety initiatives has been identified and role has been communicated.
- ☐ The goals leadership wants achieved with respect to psychological health and safety initiatives have been clearly defined (e.g., reduce short-term disability claims due to mental health).
- ☐ A business case that supports the benefits of investing in psychological health and safety has been built.
- ☐ The organization has made an initial determination with respect to Roadmap destination, desired outcome, timelines, and human and other resources needed.

SCORE: ____ /7

Three action steps for consideration:

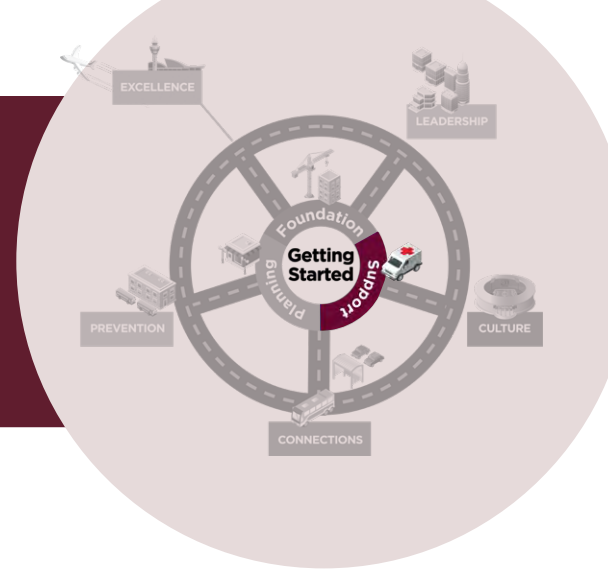
- **IDENTIFY CHAMPIONS AND KEY STAKEHOLDERS** – Be clear on who is accountable (i.e., oversight and who owns results) and responsible (i.e., tasked with leading and facilitating the psychological health and safety initiatives with the workforce). Engage key stakeholders at all levels of the organization to get fair representation. Keep diversity and inclusion in mind when engaging stakeholders.
- **REMOVE SILOS** – Evaluate all opportunities to integrate and align all psychological health and safety initiatives with OHS and HR initiatives. Focus on maximizing the employees' experience. Keep in mind that every interaction an employee has in the workplace can be perceived as positive or negative.
- **FOCUS ON BEHAVIOURS FIRST** – Whenever possible, put the core focus on behaviours, not programs and policies. Be clear on what behaviours you're looking to impact and each behaviour's effect on preventing mental harm and promoting mental health.



BUILDING BLOCK 2

SUPPORT

Defines and validates which supports are currently in place for employees and the minimal level of supports recommended.



Key Performance Behaviours (KPBs)

- ☐ All employees have been effectively trained in the respectful workplace policy that includes workplace violence and harassment.
- ☐ Crisis response planning has been put in place to deal with critical incidents that include suicide, violence, and domestic violence.
- ☐ Policies and programs support employees' mental health accommodation and return-to-work needs.
- ☐ Mental health supports are in place that acknowledge the organization's size, budget, resources, employee needs and values.
- ☐ Mental health supports are in place that include at a minimum Employee Family Assistance Programming (EFAP), up to and including paramedical psychological services and access to internet cognitive behavioral therapy for anxiety and depression.
- ☐ Substance use policy for managing substance use impairment in the workplace is in place and employees have been trained in it.
- ☐ An inventory of all policies and programs is in place, including employees' participation levels.

Score: ____ /7

Three action steps for consideration:

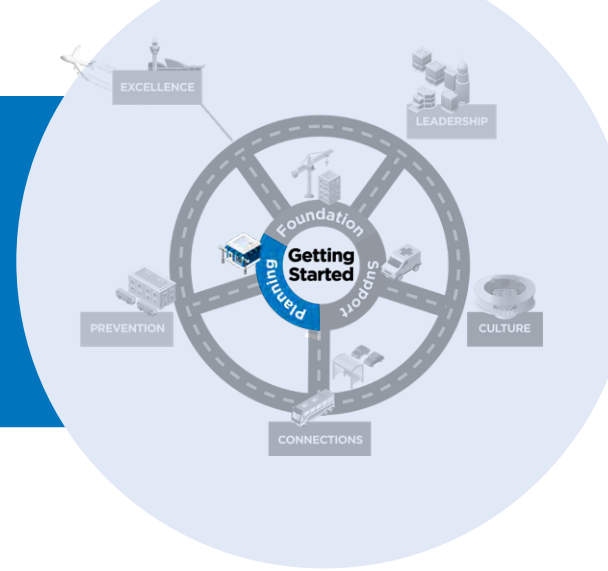
- **PURCHASE EFAP SERVICES** – Consider putting an EFAP program in place if financially possible. In the event it is not, consider promoting the [Wellness Together Canada Portal](#). Ensure a robust communication and education plan is in place to educate all employees on when and how to access EFAP. Emphasize the benefit of early access as a prevention step for getting support to solve personal problems.
- **PLAN FOR CRISES** – Develop a crisis management plan to respond to crises and communicate this plan to employees. During the planning, identify the types of crises the organization will address. The goal is to ensure the plan includes what to do, what to say, who to report to.
- **FOCUS ON PROGRAM EVALUATION** – Have in place a basic evaluation process that establishes how programs are being evaluated, above and beyond employee satisfaction. Be clear on what specific KPBs a program or policy is meant to impact as well as what key performance metrics will be impacted.



BUILDING BLOCK 3

PLANNING

Establishes which actions the employer will take with respect to programs and policies to promote mental health and reduce mental harm.



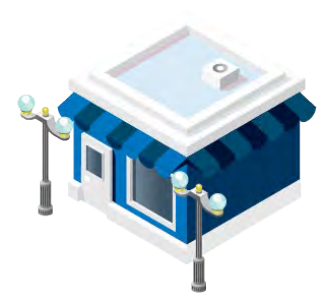
Key Performance Behaviours (KPBs)

- ☐ A strategic plan for facilitating psychological health and safety within the workforce has been completed.
- ☐ The types of data and methods of collection have been clearly defined.
- ☐ The most important key performance indicators have been determined and reporting frequency for senior leadership is in place.
- ☐ A program review process for determining what new programs will be added and what old programs may be removed, based on data and program evaluation, is in place.
- ☐ A reporting schedule is in place with clear timelines and the audience to get each report.
- ☐ A change management strategy is in place for how all new programs and policies will be onboarded and communicated to staff.

Score: ____ /6

Three action steps for consideration:

- **BUILD DATA MAP** – Data are powerful for making decisions. However, it's important to be clear on what the right data are and how they will be used, as well as the kinds of analysis that will be used (e.g., return on investment (ROI) to evaluate the benefits for investing in mental health).
- **PICK ASSESSMENT TOOLS WITH CAUTION** – Ensure that any assessment tool being used to collect data has been validated to achieve its goal to measure: psychological factors (e.g., isolation), psychological harm (e.g., loneliness), current program's impact, employee mental fitness, stigma, productivity, perception of leaders to be psychologically safe leaders, and productivity.
- **SHARE PHS STRATEGY AND PROPOSED ACTIONS AND SEEK FEEDBACK** – Share proposed action plan activities with all employees and get their feedback. The more employees are involved in the development of the plan, the more engaged they will be in completing surveys and participating in programs.





Level Two Gaining Momentum

INCLUDES

Four building blocks



LEADERSHIP



CULTURE



CONNECTIONS



PREVENTION

PURPOSE

Influence positive impact on behaviours and conduct, promote two-way accountability between the employer and the employee, and improve the employee experience.

ACTION

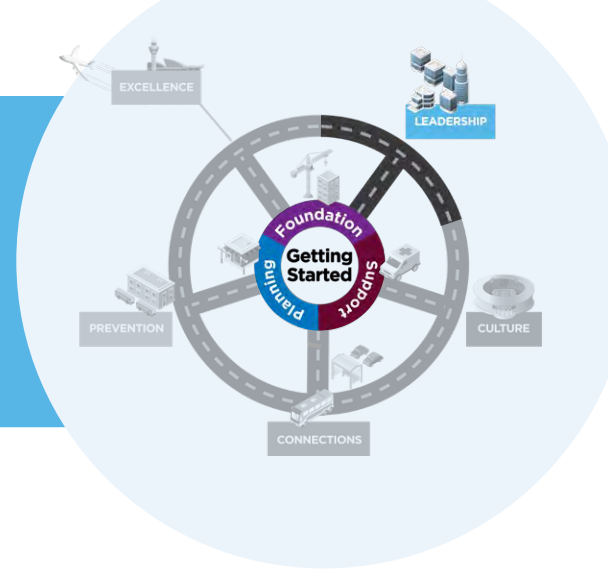
Check all key performance behaviours (KPBs) that reflect the current state. Select the building block(s) to implement with the fewest KPBs. Explore suggested action steps in case you do not have the resources or time for formal planning and are simply looking for an idea under each building block as to where you could start.



BUILDING BLOCK 4

LEADERSHIP

Defines organizational expectations and behaviours around the manager and employee relationship, as well as the well-being of managers and senior leaders.



Key Performance Behaviours (KPBs)

- ☐ Clearly define leaders' behaviour expectations (e.g., leadership core competencies).
- ☐ Learn about and understand the strengths, limitations and vulnerabilities of your people. Encourage as much employee voice and participation in decision-making as possible.
- ☐ Train all leaders in the duty to inquire and how to support employees experiencing a mental health concern in the workplace.
- ☐ Focus leaders' training and development plans on providing the core knowledge and skills required to be an effective leader.
- ☐ Allow as much room as possible for employee discretion about how they do their work. Provide leaders an opportunity to learn and apply psychologically safe leadership principles.
- ☐ Regularly evaluate leaders' performance and behaviours (e.g., extent to which leaders are psychologically safe).
- ☐ Validate your acts and intentions by seeking feedback (360-degree tools) and modifying your practices accordingly.
- ☐ Ensure leadership well-being and support plans are in place, including self-care, peer support and coaching resources.

Score: ____ /8

Three action steps for consideration:

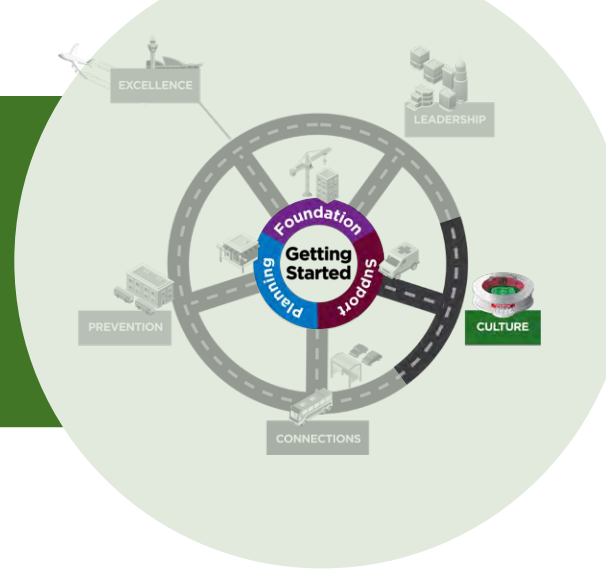
- **TRAIN LEADERS IN BASICS** – Ensure all leaders have basic training to understand the difference between mental health and mental illness, the role of leaders in impacting employees' resiliency, the duty to inquire, and how to support employees in sensitive conversations.
- **DETERMINE LEADERSHIP SUPPORT OPPORTUNITIES** – Determine what kind of leadership supports will be provided such as career development, training in how to become a psychologically safe leader, coaching, and mentoring.
- **EVALUATE LEADERS' EFFECTIVENESS** – Provide leaders with feedback on how psychologically safe they are as an excellent way for them to uncover blind spots. Also, help leaders develop action plans to close any gaps and to celebrate success.



BUILDING BLOCK 5

CULTURE

Defines specific actions to shape the culture and influence the social norms around respect, civility, teamwork, and basic human needs.



Key Performance Behaviours (KPBs)

- ☐ Core values have been defined and communicated to all employees.
- ☐ Leaders and employees are successful in implementing and maintaining a no-tolerance policy for bullying, harassment, and violence.
- ☐ Workplace factors and basic human needs are assessed and prioritized.
- ☐ Basic human needs are considered and addressed by people leaders.
- ☐ Action plans are developed for prioritized workplace factors and monitored.
- ☐ Inclusion and diversity are recognized and celebrated, and risk for institutional racism is acknowledged.
- ☐ The organization strives to facilitate a psychologically safe culture to ensure all employees feel safe and welcome.

Score: ____ /7

Three action steps for consideration:

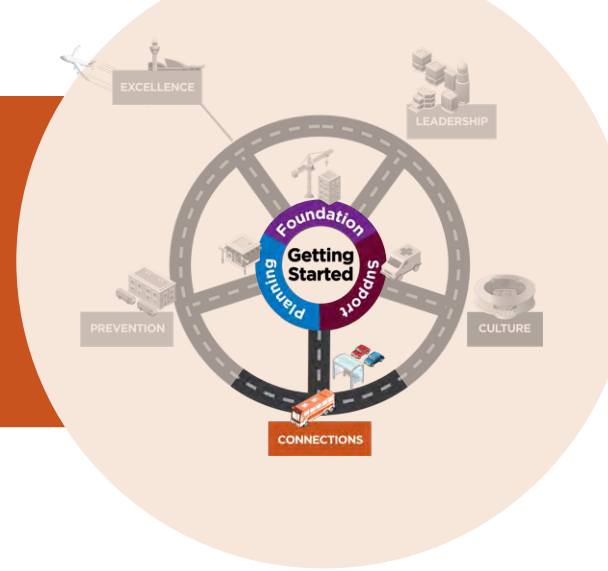
- **BE INCLUSIVE** – Don't assume all employees are having the same experience. Seek to understand employees' perceptions around inclusion through pulse checks, focus groups, and listening tours. Take the learnings from employees to close gaps and remove barriers.
- **MONITOR ACTS OF INCIVILITY** – Rudeness, and the degree it happens and is allowed, can predict the level of risk of respectful workplace violations. Talk about and track acts of incivility (i.e., through pulse checks to protect identity) to help keep the culture focused on behavioural conduct.
- **ACKNOWLEDGE TEAMWORK** – Cultures that work together are more likely to care for each other. Encourage a culture that promotes and acknowledges teamwork through word and appreciation. A thank-you can often go a long way when it's perceived as being authentic.



BUILDING BLOCK 6

CONNECTIONS

Defines how to assist employees with connecting to one another and reduces the risks of perceived isolation and loneliness. The goal here is to build safe communities where all feel included.



Key Performance Behaviours (KPBs)

- ☐ The organization has a strategy for supporting employees to build healthy social connections in the workplace.
- ☐ Leaders are encouraged to do regular check-ins with all employees to ensure they have at least one person they feel psychologically safe to share concerns with.
- ☐ Action plans are in place to reduce employees' risk of experiencing workplace isolation and loneliness.
- ☐ The benefit of building and maintaining healthy workplace social connections is a priority for leadership.
- ☐ A formal peer support program is in place to provide support and encourage help-seeking behaviour when appropriate.
- ☐ The organization promotes activities designed to encourage employees to get out and meet each other in creative ways to build a safe community.

Score: ____ /6

Three action steps for consideration:

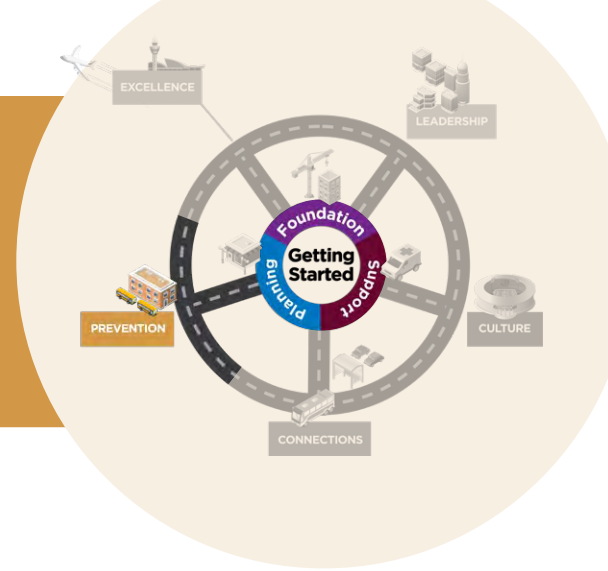
- **SUPPORT SOCIAL CONNECTIONS** – A core pillar for positive mental health is having authentic social connections in and out of the workplace. Explore options to support employees to build and maintain social connections in the workplace to reduce their risk of experiencing isolation and loneliness (e.g., [Hugr Authentic Connections](#)).
- **TRAIN PEERS TO SUPPORT** – Structure a peer support program where employees are trained and can have a positive impact on supporting colleagues experiencing mental health concerns or life challenges. Ensure all peer supporters are trained in an evidence-based program that is monitored and evaluated regularly.
- **ENCOURAGE SOCIAL NETWORKING** – Facilitate an opportunity for employees to have social networking experiences with peers, using a variety of options, from informal recreational and social activities to focus groups that examine the quality of social connections in the workplace.



BUILDING BLOCK 7

PREVENTION

Defines how the employer will help employees proactively gain knowledge and skills to reduce mental harm and promote mental health.



Key Performance Behaviours (KPBs)

- ☐ An active program is in place that facilitates mental health and substance use disorder awareness training.
- ☐ Campaigns are in place to eliminate the stigma associated with mental illness and substance use disorders.
- ☐ Regular evaluation and monitoring of communication effectiveness of psychological health and safety initiatives.
- ☐ Education on suicide ideation for persons at risk and access to support in the workplace.
- ☐ Proactive prevention programs such as promoting mental fitness and resiliency are in place.
- ☐ Constant evaluation and monitoring of the employee experience to uncover potential mental harm and mental distress.

Score: ____ /6

Three action steps for consideration:

- **PRACTISE MENTAL FITNESS** – Provide all employees an opportunity to develop a personalized mental fitness program to enhance their personal psychological protection. Like personal protective equipment, this is the last line of defence for psychological health and safety.
- **EDUCATE ON MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTIVE DISORDERS** – Provide employees with education and awareness to assist with removing stigma and facilitate help-seeking behaviours.
- **INCREASE AWARENESS OF SUICIDE IDEATION** – Suicide is one of the top three causes of death on the planet. Educate to normalize suicide ideation, provide pathways for help, and encourage talking and early intervention to save lives at work and in the community.





Level Three Raising the Bar

INCLUDES

One building block



EXCELLENCE

PURPOSE

Establish and maintain processes to ensure your workplace mental health programs are sustainable, integrated, and continually improving using the PDCA approach.

ACTION

Check all key performance behaviours (KPBs) that reflect the current state. Select the building block(s) to implement with the fewest KPBs.

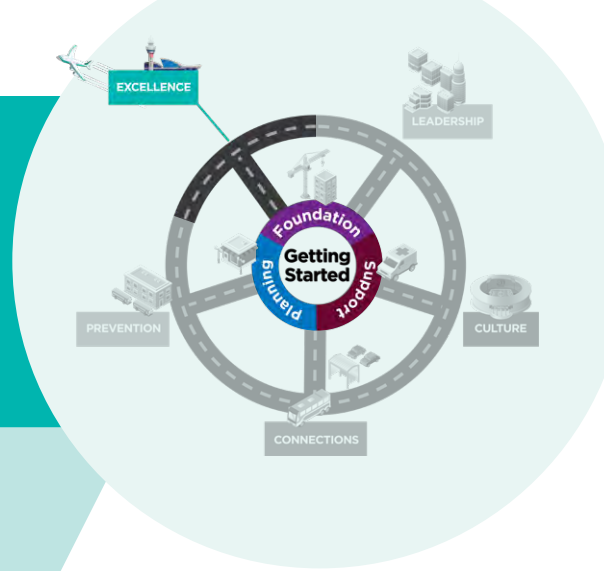


BUILDING BLOCK 8

EXCELLENCE

Defines the components needed to implement, sustain, and continually improve a psychological health and safety management system (PHSMS) aligned to the National Standard.

VALUE-ADD: Once organizations complete the core seven building blocks and are interested in benchmarking where they are against the National Standard, building block eight enables you to complete a comprehensive gap analysis that's aligned to the National Standard.



Key Performance Behaviours (KPBs)

- ☐ Has completed a gap analysis tool aligned to the National Standard (e.g., [WSPS Gap Analysis Tool](#)).
- ☐ Has implemented an audit process that validates programs and policies are doing what they are supposed to be doing.
- ☐ There is a process to facilitate corrective action.
- ☐ Processes are in place to report and investigate psychological health and safety incidents.
- ☐ Processes are in place that facilitate continual improvement of all programs and policies.
- ☐ Regular engagement of all key stakeholders to ensure consistent messaging of PHSMS goals and objectives.
- ☐ Defined escalation process is in place for how PHSMS violations will be reported and managed.

Score: ____ /7

Three action steps for consideration:

- **REVISIT AREAS TO FOCUS ON** – Complete the [WSPS Gap Analysis Tool](#) at least once a year. This will provide insight into the maturity of the organization's PHSMS implementation so far with respect to areas to strengthen and focus on.
- **INTEGRATE THE APPROACH ACROSS THE ORGANIZATION** – To remove silos, integrate the PHSMS and the OHS management system into one system that's aligned with human resource (HR) initiatives.
- **TRAIN PHSMS FACILITATORS** – Train individuals who have been tasked to lead the PHSMS initiative in the core competencies that will support their efforts to design, implement, and maintain a PHSMS.



Acknowledgements

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