



# GEARING UP FOR WORKPLACE MENTAL HEALTH

BEST PRACTICES AND RESOURCES FOR EMPLOYERS



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Trucking HR Canada has developed this guide to support trucking and logistics employers in addressing employee mental health.

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For more information about this report  
or Trucking HR Canada, please contact us:

(613) 244-4800  
theteam@truckinghr.com  
www.truckinghr.com

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## ABOUT TRUCKING HR CANADA

Trucking HR Canada advances modern HR solutions for the trucking and logistics workforce.

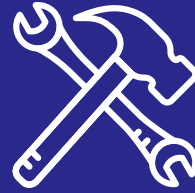
We collaborate, partner, and work with a dynamic network including industry associations, government departments and industry professionals to ensure Canada's freight transportation network has the skilled workforce needed for today and into the future.

We deliver evidence-based HR solutions that:

- Define occupations and skills requirements for modern trucking and logistics operations
- Provide accurate, timely, and relevant labour market information that supports employers; educates the general public; and, informs government on industry needs
- Explore and share industry specific best practices on HR and training
- Provide forums for gathering and exchanging knowledge on emerging HR issues
- Inform practical and innovative HR tools and supports for employers
- Promote the trucking and logistics industry as a great place to work



Trucking HR Canada offers practical **toolkits and reports** on a variety of HR issues facing the Canadian trucking and logistics industry.



We offer a wide range of trucking and logistics specific **HR focused webinars**.



Our **weekly e-newsletter** is free. Subscribe today to stay on top of the latest Trucking HR trends and learn practical tips.



We recognize employers with sound HR policies and practices through **The Top Fleet Employers** program with the goal of raising the bar in HR within the trucking and logistics industry.



Our **Women with Drive Leadership Summit** is the go-to event for anyone in the trucking and logistics industry looking to learn more about women in the industry.



Visit [www.truckinghr.com](http://www.truckinghr.com) to learn more

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## INTRODUCTION

The trucking and logistics sector plays a major role in the Canadian economy. Virtually all goods are on a truck at some point as they move from producers to consumers.

In Canada, the transportation industry employs 318,000 transport truck drivers (Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey data for NOC 7511 – Transport Truck Driver, 1998–2018).

Research suggests that drivers are at risk of several occupational-health-induced conditions. These include, but are not limited to, loneliness (27.9 per cent), depression (26.9 per cent), chronic sleep disturbances (20.6 per cent) and anxiety (14.5 per cent) ([Shattell M., Apostolopoulos Y., et al, 2012](#)).

Dispatchers, driver managers, HR, and safety and compliance staff are also at risk for occupational-health-induced conditions.

Getting help for mental illness should be no different than for any other health issue. However, there's long been a stigma associated with mental illness — prejudices held by others and a reluctance among people experiencing a mental illness to seek help. Fortunately, over the past two decades, employers, health care providers and others have been working to remove this stigma and to change attitudes about mental health — in the community and in workplaces.



The work to remove stigmas associated with mental illness has included the development of many resources to make it easier for people to get help.



## PURPOSE OF THIS GUIDE

To help fleet employers maintain healthier workplaces, Trucking HR Canada has developed *Gearing Up for Workplace Mental Health: Best Practices and Resources* – a practical guide that brings together best practices and resources to help fleet employers, whatever their size and service-delivery model, to provide mental health resources in their organizations – on the road, in the office and in the yard.

In this guide you will find:

- Information for learning more about workplace mental health and wellbeing, and developing an action plan to support and make it a priority in your fleet
- Best practices from Canada’s Top Fleet Employers
- A list of resources

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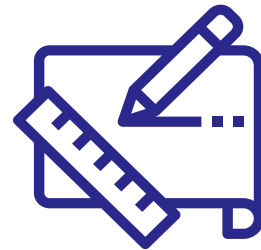
## GETTING STARTED

Implementing a well-rounded approach to mental health in the workplace involves two key steps:

### UNDERSTANDING



### ACTION PLANNING



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## STEP 1: UNDERSTANDING



Understanding is the first step in achieving workplaces that support mental health and wellbeing.

### WHAT IS MENTAL HEALTH AND WHAT CONTRIBUTES TO MENTAL HEALTH DISORDERS?

Just like physical illness, mental illness can take many forms. Many factors (or a combination of factors) have the potential to affect mental health and wellness. They include genetics (e.g., bi-polar disorder); stressful and traumatic life events (death of a loved one, divorce, domestic abuse, financial problems, sexual abuse); the stress of balancing work and personal commitments; and educational and income levels.

See [Resource List 1](#) to learn more about what may contribute to the development of mental health problems.

See [Resource List 2](#) for information on mental health words and terms.

### IT'S GOOD FOR PEOPLE AND GOOD FOR BUSINESS TO INVEST IN WORKPLACE MENTAL HEALTH

The [Mental Health Commission of Canada](#) reports that in a recent major Canadian study:

- 82 per cent of responding organizations ranked mental health conditions in their top three causes of short-term disability (72 per cent for long-term disability).
- 30 per cent of all short- and long-term disability claims are due to mental health problems and illnesses.
- The average responding organization reported spending more than \$10.5 million annually on absence claims.

"Mental health is health."

—Centre for Addiction  
and Mental Health





In 2011, lost productivity due to absenteeism and presenteeism (being physically present at work but less than fully productive) due to mental health problems and illnesses was approximately \$6 billion.

Return on Investment (ROI) is an important factor for all companies in deciding where to invest their time, money and talent. The accounting firm PriceWaterhouseCoopers (PwC) found an *average \$2.30 per return on every dollar invested* in creating a mentally healthy workplace.

[Resource List 3](#) has information on the business case for supporting mental health in the workplace.

### KNOW THE LAW

Canada's provinces, territories and federal government all have laws, regulations, standards and codes that relate to mental health. They cover:

- Accessibility for Persons with Disabilities
- Duty to Accommodate
- Employee compensation
- Human rights
- Labour and employment
- Occupational health and safety
- Violence and abuse prevention in the workplace

Make sure that you know the applicable laws in your jurisdiction. It's a good "best practice" to get Human Resources and legal counsel and guidance when you put policies and programs in place to support workplace mental health and wellness. This way you'll be sure that your company fully complies with all the laws in the jurisdictions where you have operations.





"The duty to accommodate means that sometimes it is necessary to treat someone differently in order to prevent or reduce discrimination."

—Canadian Human Rights Commission

## DUTY TO ACCOMMODATE

Federally regulated fleets and fleets operating in provinces with applicable provincial human rights legislation must ensure that they comply with the Employer Duty to Accommodate. The Duty to Accommodate is based on three principles:

- Respect for dignity
- Individualization
- Integration and full participation

It is important to remember that individual employees have unique needs. Consider these needs in a respectful, confidential and meaningful way so that they can fully participate in the workplace.

[Resource List 4](#) has more information on complying with the Duty to Accommodate.

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## STEP 2: ACTION PLANNING

### ASSESS YOUR WORKPLACE

Before you develop your plan, you need to take time to assess your company's current workplace mental health and wellness plan. This will tell you what's working well and you can build on, and identify any areas that you need to strengthen.



Throughout your planning process, be sure to make communications with employees an integral part of the process. Let your employees know what you are doing and why and ask for their ideas and suggestions. In doing so, emphasize the importance of privacy and confidentiality. While your planning work is underway, let your employees know what they can do if they want to speak in confidence with someone about anything that may be of concern to them — they don't have to wait until your plan is in place.

*Resource List 5* has a list of tools to help you assess your workplace's mental health and wellness.

### DEVELOP A PLAN

Like any other business activity, integrating mental health resources into your organization depends on having a well-thought-out action plan.

Your action plan will provide you with the map to promote, support and enhance resources to support your employees when they have mental health problems or concerns.

### CHOOSE ACTIVITIES

It's important that your action plan for mental health and wellness "fits" your fleet. There is no one action plan that will be right for every organization.

Every year, Trucking HR Canada recognizes the importance of having sound HR policies and practices in the trucking and logistics industry. Our Top Fleet Employer program recognizes fleets that are meeting standards of excellence. They represent small, medium and large fleets and for-hire, private and fleet services.

Top Fleet Employers, whatever their size or service-delivery model, are making mental health and wellness a top priority, with the same significance and importance as physical health and wellness. They formally commit to enhancing the mental health and wellness of their workforces through a variety of supports, resources and initiatives. The next section of this guide has *best practices* that Top Fleet Employers are using.

## **MEASURE SUCCESS**

Be sure to include ways to measure the effectiveness of your plan so you'll know what is and isn't working.

Check out what resources may be available in your community to support workplace health and wellness.

If you have an Employee and Family/Employee Assistance Program (EFAP/EAP), find out what support the provider can offer as you develop your plan.

*Resource List 6* has tools to help you develop a plan and track progress that's right for your fleet.

## ENHANCING COMMITMENT TO WORKPLACE MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLNESS IN A SMALL FLEET



### ONE for Freight

Cross-Border

Small-Sized Fleet

Headquarters: Milton, ON

*Trucking HR Canada asked ONE for Freight for the best piece of advice they could give to another small fleet that is looking to enhance their commitment to workplace mental health and wellness.*

A healthy team is a productive team – investment in creating an environment that ensures the mental wellbeing of all within it is the single most important commitment any employer could make, no matter the size. The best piece of advice is to foster inclusivity, safety, and compassion within your space, as too often people are fearful of coming forward and asking for help. **Start by eliminating the stigma associated with mental illness through communication – it costs nothing to be open and understanding.**

By consistently educating your team members on the resources available to them through Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs) and the wider community, and creating avenues for people to communicate their needs privately and without judgement or reprisal, you will begin to assure those suffering that it is okay, and even encouraged, to speak out about what they are dealing with. Allow for modified work arrangements, make accommodations when you are able, commit to providing your team with a positive work/life balance, and always follow up with those who have found the courage to ask for help. **Oftentimes the smallest gesture of support has the most significant impact on someone's ability to heal and move forward.**

# BEST PRACTICES FOR SUCCESS

Here are some best practices that our Top Fleet Employers from across the country are doing to support workplace mental health.



## Did you know?

88 per cent of Top Fleet Employers (2019) have formal Employee and Family Assistance Programs (EFAPs).

## OFFER AN EMPLOYEE AND FAMILY ASSISTANCE/EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (EFAP, EAP)

Many fleets offer an Employee and Family Assistance (covers employees and family members – a spouse, partner, children) or an Employee Assistance (employees) Program as an employee benefit. EFAP/EAPs help people deal with personal issues (e.g., work-life stressors, family issues, financial concerns, relationship problems, drug and alcohol concerns) that might inadvertently affect their work performance. These programs are typically offered by a third-party organization such as an insurance company. All conversations between an employee with EFAP/EAP staff are confidential.

Most EFAP/EAPs provide the following services:

- 24/7 confidential services for employees – typically through a toll-free hotline, app., or website login
- Services related to various personal issues and circumstances including finances, work, life, family, and mental and physical health
- Wellness program offerings in your workplace(s) such as seminars, lunch and learns, and workshops on various topics

A recent study, *Investigating the Global Value of a Canadian Employee Assistance Program* (Arete Human Resources 2014), found that EAPs benefit employers, employees and society. They improve the quality of life, reduce economic challenges associated with lost productivity in the workplace, and ease pressure on the Canadian healthcare system.

[Resource List 7](#) has more information on E(F)APs and their benefits.



## DEMONSTRATE A WORK-LIFE BALANCE

According to the Canadian Mental Health Association, “58 per cent of Canadians report overload associated with their many roles – work, home and family, friends, physical health, volunteer and community service.” Achieving a work-life balance is important for mental health. You and your team can set an example for expectations by demonstrating a healthy work-life balance.

Learn more by visiting [Work-Life Balance – Make It Your Business](#).



## OFFERING FLEXIBLE WORK ARRANGEMENTS

Flexible work arrangements are a way that employers can support employee work-life balance. They should be negotiated on a one-on-one, per case basis and be beneficial for both the employer and the employee.

Examples of flexible work arrangements in the driving occupation are:

- Compressed work schedules
- Load sharing
- Route scheduling
- Team driving
- Other arrangements that drivers feel would enhance their work-life balance and productivity on the job

Examples of flexible work arrangements for non-driving occupations are:

- Compressed work schedules
- Flexible work hours
- Part-Time work
- Telework

### TOP FLEET FLEXIBLE WORKING ARRANGEMENTS

For Drivers:

- Offering Part-Time Work Upon Request – 87 per cent
- Accommodating Individual Requests – 77 per cent

- Allowing Drivers to Select their Schedules — 75 per cent
- Allowing Drivers to Select Routes Close to Home — 73 per cent
- 56 percent of Top Fleet Employers offer at least one of the follow accommodations: load-sharing, team driving or having a family member in the cab

For Non-Driving Occupations:

- Schedule Selection — 71 per cent
- Offering Part-Time Work Upon Request — 71 per cent
- Allowing Telework/Working from Home — 65 per cent



## PROVIDE MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID (MHFA) TRAINING

Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) provides help to a person having a mental health problem or crisis. MHFA is given until appropriate treatment is found or until the crisis is resolved, just like administering physical first aid to a physically injured person until medical help can be obtained.

The MHFA Canada program aims to improve understanding about mental health and provide people with the skills and knowledge to better manage potential or developing mental health problems in themselves, a family member, a friend or a colleague.

With MHFA training, people learn how to:

- Recognize a change in behaviour
- Respond with a confident conversation
- Guide someone to appropriate resources and support

More than 300,000 people across Canada in workplaces, schools and communities have received MHFA training, resulting in positive and long-lasting effects.

[Resource List 8](#) has more information about MHFA.



## THE IMPORTANCE OF TRAINING



### Challenger Motor Freight

Cross-Border

Large Sized Fleet

Headquarters: Cambridge, ON

*Trucking HR Canada asked Challenger Motor Freight what sparked them to formally commit to supporting employee mental health and wellness and where they started.*

Challenger understands that, unfortunately, there remains a stigma when discussing mental health. As leaders in the transportation industry, we need to work together to beat the stigma and recognize that **mental health issues are all real illnesses, and that employees suffering from these illnesses need our help and support.** With the demographics of our workforce, we recognize that our drivers are often alone and removed from their families and, therefore, are at risk of suffering from mental health challenges.

Challenger offers several programs, policies and initiatives to support the overall mental health of our teams and de-stigmatize mental illness. For us, this process has involved policy development, training and communication about mental health. Challenger's formal commitment to mental health includes: offering "Mental Health in the Workplace" training to all leaders and employees as well as monthly training sessions for all people leaders on topics related to employee health and wellness; providing employees with access to online training geared towards health and wellness; enforcing policies that outline our specific commitments to mental wellness (including Accommodation, Disability Management, Leave of Absence); offering a comprehensive Employee & Family Assistance Plan and a variety of work options for lifestyle balance including Part-Time hours, flexible work arrangements and compressed work schedules. We believe that this is an area that needs to be more visible and are proud of the efforts we have taken as a Company to remove the stigma associated with mental health illness.



## DEVELOPING WORKPLACE MENTAL HEALTH POLICIES

Many Top Fleet Employers have workplace mental health policies to ensure the psychological health and safety of their employees. Policies like these set the tone for how their fleet addresses employee mental health and treats employees. These policies outline the “what” and the “how” of workplace mental health. For example, providing employees with:

- A safe and supportive environment by fostering a workplace culture and cooperation that creates an overall sense of wellness in the workplace
- A workplace mental health policy clearly outlining the rights and responsibilities of employers and employees
- Counselling and support to employees who experience mental health issues in the workplace
- Resources and information about mental health in the workplace to increase awareness
- Support and reasonable accommodation when returning to work following a period of absence due to stress and/or mental health issues
- Supporting skill-building by recommending lifestyle programs such as stress management, smoking cessation and drug and alcohol abuse awareness programs

Trucking HR Canada recommends getting support from Human Resources professionals and legal counsel when developing and implementing any workplace policies and procedures, to make sure your fleet fully complies with the current legislation in the jurisdictions where you operate.

## GEAR DOWN CAMPAIGN — PROVIDING KINDNESS & UNDERSTANDING



### Joseph Haulage

Cross-Border

Medium Sized Fleet

Headquarters: Stoney Creek, ON

*Joseph Haulage recently began the **Gear Down Campaign** — a mental health initiative that encourages all employees to learn about mental health and partake in mentally healthy practices.*

*Trucking HR Canada asked Joseph Haulage how they developed this program and what lessons they have learned along the way for implementing and managing an organization-wide mental health strategy.*

We developed our *Gear Down Campaign* through numerous hours of research, first-hand Driver interactions, and in consultation with industry experts and our benefit providers. Our mission was to ensure that we had a practical program that is not only useful, but easy to absorb in a minimal amount of time. Ultimately, we knew that the success of the program would be in providing bite-sized content surrounding mental health and explaining how that information can provide a real benefit to our staff and their loved ones.

The most powerful lesson we learned was that of empathy. **Not all mental health challenges are the same and many are invisible. The willingness to have trust in our employees and that, if they've been brave enough to share an issue with us, we owe it to them to help in any way we can.** That may be lending an ear, providing some time off (for appointments or otherwise), or it may be having a pool of resources that we can offer and explain how they could provide some relief. If an employee approaches us for help, we know that they are not asking us to fix their problems, but they are counting on us to care. It is the kindness and understanding of our people that continues to make our mental health program a success.



## **INTEGRATE MENTAL HEALTH INTO THE ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE AND WORKPLACE**

Since we established the Top Fleet Employer program in 2014, more and more Top Fleets are making deliberate efforts to integrate mental health and wellness into their operations and organizational culture. They know that their workplaces thrive when employees' mental health is a priority, alongside physical health and wellbeing.

Ways that our Top Fleet Employers are integrating mental health into their organizational cultures and workplaces include:

### **USE EMPLOYEE NEWSLETTERS TO HIGHLIGHT MENTAL HEALTH TOPICS**

Many Top Fleets have newsletters that go out to employees on a regular basis to help them stay up to date on what's happening in the company, their communities and the industry. Newsletters are an excellent way to provide information about mental health in the same way that they promote physical health and wellness, such as:

- Tips and strategies for stress relief
- Stories and testimonials (while protecting confidentiality and privacy)
- Reminders about the company's support for employees who may need help (e.g., EFAP, EAP)
- Recognition of World Mental Health Day (October 10, annually)

### **TAKE ADVANTAGE OF ALL THE SERVICES YOUR E(F)AP OFFERS**

The majority (88 per cent) of our 2019 Top Fleet Employers have formal Employee and Family Assistance Programs (EFAPs). However, many employers (both within and beyond the trucking and logistics industry) don't take full advantage of E(F)AP services such as:

- Workplace seminars, lunch and learn sessions, and webinars on a variety of physical and mental wellness topics
- Newsletters and resources related to mental health on their websites that employees can access and/or you can incorporate into your employee communication programs

- Mobile apps with access to videos, tips, and resources – ideal for drivers on the road

#### PARTICIPATE IN NATIONAL HEALTH INITIATIVES, LIKE HEALTHY TRUCKER

Highlighting the link between physical and mental wellness is key to recognizing the importance of mental health in the trucking industry.

National health and wellness organizations, like the Healthy Trucker, provide wellness resources, education, and challenges to drivers, owner/operators and office staff across the industry. Many Top Fleet Employers actively participate in the [Healthy Trucker Program](#), including the 10 Pound Fleet Challenge. It brings friendly competition to the workplace, all in the spirit of enhancing the hearts, minds and bodies of all employees – from drivers to dispatchers.

#### DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT CORPORATE MENTAL HEALTH PROGRAMS

Several large Top Fleet Employers have corporate mental health programs and initiatives to support the mental health and wellbeing of all employees. These programs provide a way to provide information to all employees on various mental health supports within the fleet – like newsletters, seminars, challenges, wellness days, and other resources.

#### INCORPORATE MENTAL WELLNESS INTO CORPORATE VALUES AND VISION

A fleet's values are its foundation. They guide the daily activities of every employee and set the tone for customer service. Many fleets include the physical safety of their employees as a key value for operations. Increasingly, Top Fleet Employers are adding support for employee mental health and wellness as a core corporate value.

A corporate value statement on employee mental health and wellbeing provides the basis for the fleet's approach to workplace mental health – a company culture in which both mental and physical health are promoted and protected. This includes developing a Workplace Mental Health Policy, enhancing and improving HR practices and approaches such as adopting flexible work arrangements, and offering an E(F)AP.



## SIGN THE MINDFUL EMPLOYER CHARTER

Any employer in Canada can sign the [Mindful Employer Charter](#). It's free and voluntary, and there's no pre-requisite to sign. Signing the charter tells your employees, customers and community that your fleet is committed to supporting workplace mental health. Signing the Charter also gives your fleet access to resources to help you accomplish this.

To learn more about the Charter and Mindful Employer Canada visit: [Mindful Employer Canada](#)



## ADOPT THE NATIONAL STANDARD OF CANADA FOR PSYCHOLOGICAL HEALTH AND SAFETY IN THE WORKPLACE

The free and voluntary [National Standard of Canada for Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace](#) is the first of its kind in the world. The standard has systemic voluntary guidelines to help Canadian employers develop and continuously improve psychologically healthy and safe workplaces. The Mental Health Commission of Canada (MHCC) supported the development of the Standard in collaboration with the Canadian Standards Association (CSA) and the Bureau de normalization du Québec (BNQ).

[Resource List 9](#) has more information on the Standard



## PARTICIPATE IN THE WORKING MIND PROGRAM (TWM)

Developed by the Mental Health Commission of Canada, The Working Mind (TWM) program offers training on addressing and promoting mental health and reducing the stigma of mental illness in the workplace. There are customized courses for trainers, managers/supervisors, and employees/frontline staff. The courses are practical, participative and include guides and other handouts.

Learn more by visiting: [Working Mind Program](#)



## **PARTICIPATE IN NOT MYSELF TODAY®**

The Canadian Mental Health Association's Not Myself Today® program helps companies build more awareness, reduce stigma, and foster safe and supportive cultures. It uses a variety of activities, tools and resources.

Participating companies receive their own comprehensive Not Myself Today toolkits, access to the members-only portal, national recognition and ongoing support.

Learn more by visiting: [Mental Health Is Everyone's Business: Not Myself Today. Canadian Mental Health Association®](#)



## **PARTICIPATE IN THE “ELEPHANT IN THE ROOM” CAMPAIGN TO FIGHT STIGMA**

The Mood Disorders Society of Canada's Elephant in the Room campaign is a national anti-stigma campaign: “Stigma is the elephant in the room.” Its goal is to address the stigma associated with mental illness. This internationally recognized program provides free-downloadable posters and other tools to communicate that your fleet cares about the wellness of others and offers a safe place for people to talk about mental illness, without fear of being viewed differently.

Learn more by visiting: [Elephant in the Room](#)

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## OTHER RESOURCES

Trucking HR Canada is just one of the many organizations and associations working to support mentally healthy workplaces.

See [Resource List 10](#) for help in finding more best practices and resources.

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## RESOURCES

Here are some resources to better support and address mental health in your workplace.

### RESOURCE 1

#### LEARNING MORE ABOUT WHAT MAY CONTRIBUTE TO MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEMS

- [Is the Workplace a Factor in Developing Mental Health Problems? Think Mental Health](#)
- [A Workplace Guide to Psychological Health and Safety-Know the Psychosocial Factors. Guarding Minds at Work](#)
- [Mental Health-Psychosocial Risk Factors in the Workplace: Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety](#)

### RESOURCE 2

#### DEFINITIONS

For definitions of mental illness and addiction terms, see:

- The [Centre for Addiction and Mental Health Mental Illness and Addiction Index](#)
- The Canadian Mental Health Association website:
  - [Anxiety Disorders](#)
  - [Depression and Bi-Polar Disorder](#)
  - [Eating Disorders](#)
  - [Obsessive Compulsive Disorder \(OCD\)](#)
  - [Phobias and Panic Disorders](#)
  - [Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder \(PTSD\)](#)
  - [Preventing Suicide](#)
  - [Schizophrenia](#)



### RESOURCE 3

#### THE BUSINESS CASE FOR SUPPORTING WORKPLACE MENTAL HEALTH

- *Hiring Aspiring Workers Living with Mental Illness Makes Cents: Mental Health Commission of Canada*
- *The Business Case for Investing in Workplace Mental Health: Think Mental Health*
- *Understanding Mental Health, Mental Illness and Their Impacts in the Workplace: Mental Health Commission of Canada*
- *What Is Psychological Health and Safety and Why Is It Important? Guarding Minds at Work*
- *Why Should You Care and Invest in Workplace Mental Health? Think Mental Health*

### RESOURCE 4

#### LEARN MORE ABOUT THE DUTY TO ACCOMMODATE

- *Policies and Procedures on the Accommodation of Mental Illness: Canadian Human Rights Commission (2008)*
- *What Is the Duty to Accommodate? Canadian Human Rights Commission*
- *Workplace Strategies for Mental Health: Accommodation—Compliments of Canada Life*

Federally regulated employers and employers operating in provinces with applicable provincial human rights legislation must ensure compliance with the Employer Duty to Accommodate. For both the Canadian Human Rights Act, as well as provincial human rights legislation, the Duty to Accommodate is informed by three principles: respect for dignity, individualization, and integration and full participation. (*Canadian Human Rights Commission*).

## **EMPLOYER OBLIGATIONS, AS NOTED BY THE CANADIAN HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION**

Sometimes people need to be treated differently in order to be fair to them. As an employer or service provider, you have an obligation to eliminate negative treatment of individuals, based on prohibited grounds of discrimination.

This is called your duty to accommodate and it is your obligation to accommodate a person when their needs are based on the grounds in the Canadian Human Rights Act. This may require that alternative arrangements be made to ensure full participation of a person.

Organizations should build accommodation into the way they do business as much as possible. You should have policies in place to make your environment accessible, in order to prevent barriers from occurring, rather than removing them retroactively.

The duty to accommodate has limits. Sometimes accommodation is not possible because it would cause an organization undue hardship.

An employer or service provider can claim undue hardship when adjustments to a policy, practice, by-law or building would cost too much, or create risks to health or safety. There is no precise legal definition of undue hardship, each situation should be assessed individually. To prove undue hardship, you will have to provide evidence as to the nature and extent of the hardship.

—*Canadian Human Rights Commission*

## RESOURCE 5

### ASSESSING WORKPLACE MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLNESS

- *A Workplace Guide to Psychological Health and Safety: Determine Assessment Resources. Guarding Minds at Work*
- *Assess Readiness. Think Mental Health*
- *Workplace Strategies for Mental Health: Auditing Tool for Assessing Workplace Mental Health. Compliments of Canada Life*
- *How's Your Workplace Doing? An Online Workplace Assessment Tool. Minds Matter* (requires registration at no charge)
- *Workplace Strategies for Mental Health: Identifying Workplace Issues. Compliments of Canada Life*
- *National Standard of Canada for Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace: Sample Assessment Tool. Mental Health Commission of Canada, CSA Group, BNQ*

## RESOURCE 6

### DEVELOPING YOUR WORKPLACE MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLNESS PLAN

- *Checklist for a Psychologically Safe Workplace: Strategies for Mental Health. Compliments of Canada Life*
- *Workplace Strategies for Mental Health: Develop a Workplace Plan. Compliments of Canada Life*
- *Workplace Strategies for Mental Health: Towards a Psychologically Safer Workplace: An Employer's Guide, Martin Shain S.J.D. Compliments of Canada Life*
- *Track Results and Take Action. Guarding Minds at Work*
- *Psychological Health and Safety: An Action Guide for Employers (2012). Mental Health Commission of Canada and the Centre for Applied Research in Mental Health & Addiction*

## THE BENEFITS OF EAPS

A recent study, *Investigating the Global Value of a Canadian Employee Assistance Program* (Arete Human Resources 2014), found that EAPs benefit employers, employees and society. They improve the quality of life, reduce economic challenges associated with lost productivity in the workplace, and ease pressure on the Canadian healthcare system. The study's results noted significant improvements in the mental health of employees who had access to workplace EAP; specifically, three months after the last counselling session provided through the EAP there were reductions in rates of depression, anxiety and stress levels.

The study interviewed participants before and after they used EAP services. 66 per cent said they had moderate, severe or extremely severe problems with stress, anxiety or depression. Three months after completing a counselling program offered through their EAP, the percentage of employees reporting issues in the same categories dropped to less than 32 per cent. Also, when employees use an E(F)AP this reduces visits to specialists (e.g., psychologists and psychiatrists) and the costs to the public health care system. For more information about this study and what it found about the benefits of EAPs, see [Arete Human Resources, 2014](#).

## MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID (MHFA)

MHFA key outcomes:

- Significantly greater recognition of the most common mental health illnesses and problems
- Decreased social distance from people with mental health illnesses or problems
- Increased confidence in providing help to others
- Demonstrated increase in helpful actions

According to the Mental Health Commission of Canada, there are three main reasons why employers decide to engage in Mental Health First Aid:

### REDUCE STIGMA

There is stigma associated with mental health problems. Evidence shows that MHFA training makes it easier to communicate with someone experiencing a mental health problem.

### INCREASE AWARENESS

One-in-five people will experience a mental health problem this year. Evidence shows that MHFA course participants increase their awareness of signs and symptoms of the most common mental health problems.

### BUILD CONFIDENCE

The most difficult part of intervening is knowing what to say. Evidence shows that taking an MHFA course increases the confidence participants have in engaging with someone experiencing a mental health problem or crisis.

*[Information about MHFA Training](#)*

## RESOURCE 9

### NATIONAL STANDARD OF CANADA FOR PSYCHOLOGICAL HEALTH AND SAFETY IN THE WORKPLACE

- *The National Standard. CSA Group (Free download)*
- *The National Standard News Release 2013. CSA Group*
- *Frequently Asked Questions about the National Standard. Mental Health Commission of Canada, CSA Group, BNQ*
- *CSRP Implementation Questions and Answers. Mental Health Commission of Canada*
- *Implementing the Standard. Mental Health Commission of Canada*
- *13 Factors: Addressing Mental Health in the Workplace: Video Series and Facilitator's Guide. Mental Health Commission of Canada*

## RESOURCE 10

### MORE BEST PRACTICES AND RESOURCES TO SUPPORT WORKPLACE MENTAL HEALTH

- *Bell Let's Talk - Bell Canada*
- *Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety*
- *Canadian Mental Health Association*
- *Centre for Addiction and Mental Health*
- *Government of Canada: Mental Health in the Workplace*
- *Great-West Life Centre for Mental Health*
- *Guarding Minds at Work*
- *Healthy Trucker*
- *Healthy Minds at Work*
- *Mental Health Commission of Canada*
- *Mental Health First Aid Canada*
- *Mental Health Works*
- *Mindful Employer Canada*
- *Mood Disorders Society of Canada*
- *Workplace Mental Health. Morneau Shepell*

- *Think Mental Health*
- *The Working Mind (TWM) Program*
- *The Working Mind (TWM) First Responders Program (formerly Road to Mental Readiness)*
- *Working Through It: Stories of Reclaiming Wellbeing at Work, Off Work and Returning to Work (videos). Compliments of Canada Life (freely shared with credit to Canada Life as source)*
- *Workplace Solutions for Mental Health: Tips, Tools and Resources for Employers. Manulife*
- *Workplace Strategies for Mental Health: Improve Psychological Health and Safety in Your Workplace. Compliments of Canada Life*

