

Mental health at work

Mental health in the workplace is becoming an increasingly important consideration for employers. Mental health is closely tied to a worker's overall well-being. If a worker has poor mental health it not only hurts the individual, but it hurts a workplace as well. It can reduce productivity, negatively impact relationships, contribute to addictions and worker absenteeism. We all have a shared responsibility for health and safety and that includes mental health.

What does mental health at work look like and what signs should you watch for?

Mental health concerns can affect employees in many different ways. Some signs to watch for are:

- Loss of interest at work.
- Change in physical appearance.
- Change in routine – coming in late, leaving early.
- Change in productivity or effectiveness.
- Difficulty concentrating, making decision or memory problems.
- Increase health complaints, including fatigue.
- Decreasing socialization.
- Avoiding situations.
- Lack of cooperation or decreased ability to work with coworkers.
- Anxiety or being overwhelmed by small tasks.

Strategies that employers can use to encourage positive mental health

1. Encourage active employee participation and decision making when possible.
2. Clearly define employees' duties and responsibilities.
3. Promote work-life balance.
4. Encourage respectful and non-derogatory behaviours.
5. Manageable workloads.

6. Allow opportunities for continuous learning.
7. Have conflict resolution practices in place.
8. Recognize employees' contributions effectively.

Balancing job demands with mental health

Job stress increases the risk for potential absences from work. This can be prevented by making sure the job demands are understood and matched well with the employees' capacity and resources available. When employees are allowed more control over their role it leads to positive energy and feeling of ownership over workload management. This can be achieved by:

- Allowing self-management of workload when appropriate – (for examples employees have a say in break times).
- Building a strong relationship with your employees so they feel comfortable giving feedback at work.
- Allowing employees a safe method to provide feedback and business recommendations.
- Providing employees with the opportunity to discuss aspects of their role that may cause conflict between personal beliefs and professional demands whenever possible.
- Messaging work/changes to the organization that affect staff as early as possible.
- Providing training for staff at times of change to work practices or when new policies or system changes are being introduced.
- Encouraging employees to set work-related goals and provide appropriate feedback along the way.

Together we can improve mental health in our workplaces and our communities.



Resources

[Achieve Center for Leadership – Managing Mental Health in the Work Place](#)

[Workplace Strategies for Mental Health – Canada Life](#)



www.wcb.ab.ca



• contactcentre@wcb.ab.ca



• 1-866-922-9221 (within AB)

1-800-661-9608 (outside AB)