

Addressing Mental Health Challenges in the Workplace

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Prevention Programs & Services

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WorkSafeBC – Who we are

- Promote occupational health and safety to create safer workplaces through consultation, education, enforcement, and investigation
- Support workers, provide compensation, facilitate recovery and safe return to work, and reduce disability
- Run a sustainable no-fault insurance system



At **WorkSafeBC** we partner with workers and employers to prevent injury, disease, and disability.

- **280,000+** registered employers
- **500,000+** workplaces in BC
- **2.7 million** workers covered



Prevention Programs & Services

The operational priority for Prevention Services is to prevent workplace injury, disease, and death by engaging employers and workers in workplace health and safety.

We engage employers and workers to reduce risks and keep workplaces healthy and safe through **education and consultation**.

BC First Responders Mental Health Committee

The mission of the Committee is to actively promote positive mental health and provide the leadership, best practices (resources, awareness, education, training, and supports) that first responders, their communities, and leaders need.



BCFirstRespondersMentalHealth.com



Current state of mental health

Mental health by the numbers

1 in 5

1 in 5 Canadians experience a mental health problem

500,000 a week

500,000 Canadians a week are unable to work due to their mental health

#1 cause

Mental health is the **#1 cause of disability claims** in Canada

\$50 billion

Poor mental health costs the Canadian economy over **\$50 billion a year**

75% of workers

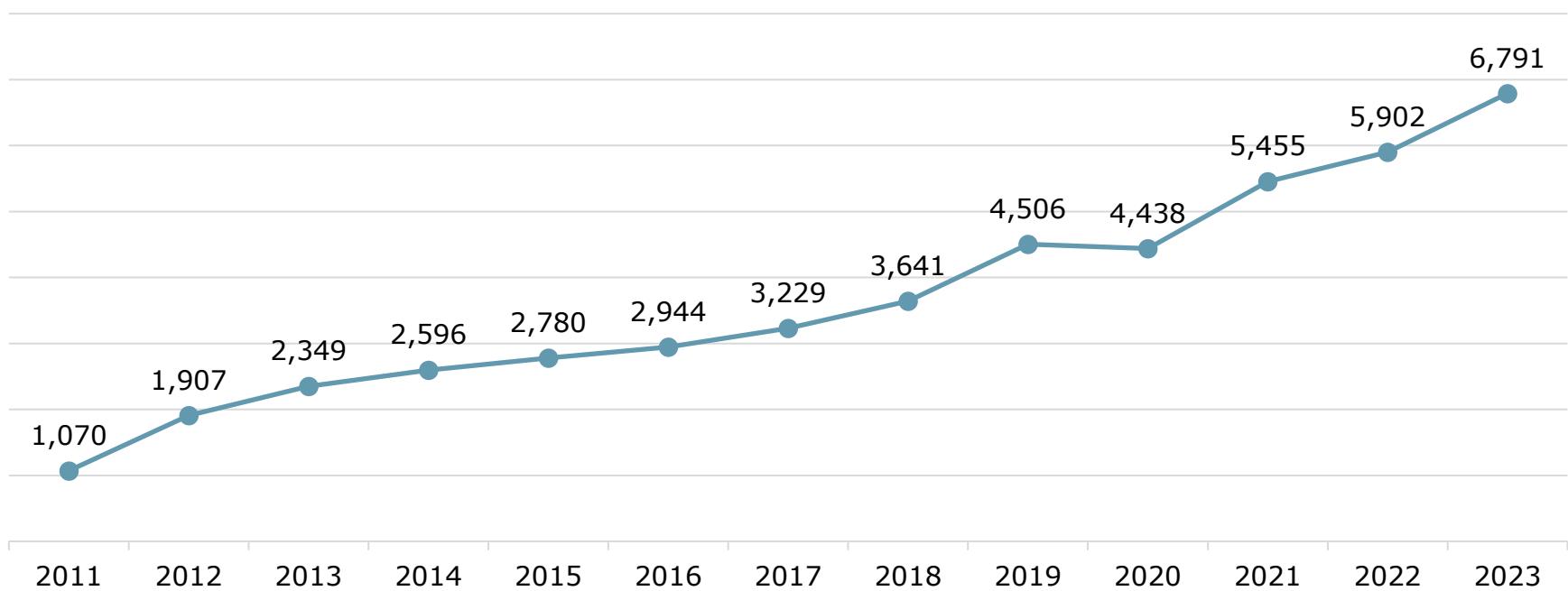
75% of working Canadians would be reluctant to disclose a mental health condition to their boss or co-worker

71% of employers

71% of employers with front-line employees believe they do a good job supporting mental health; **only 27% of front-line workers** agree

Psychological injury-only claims

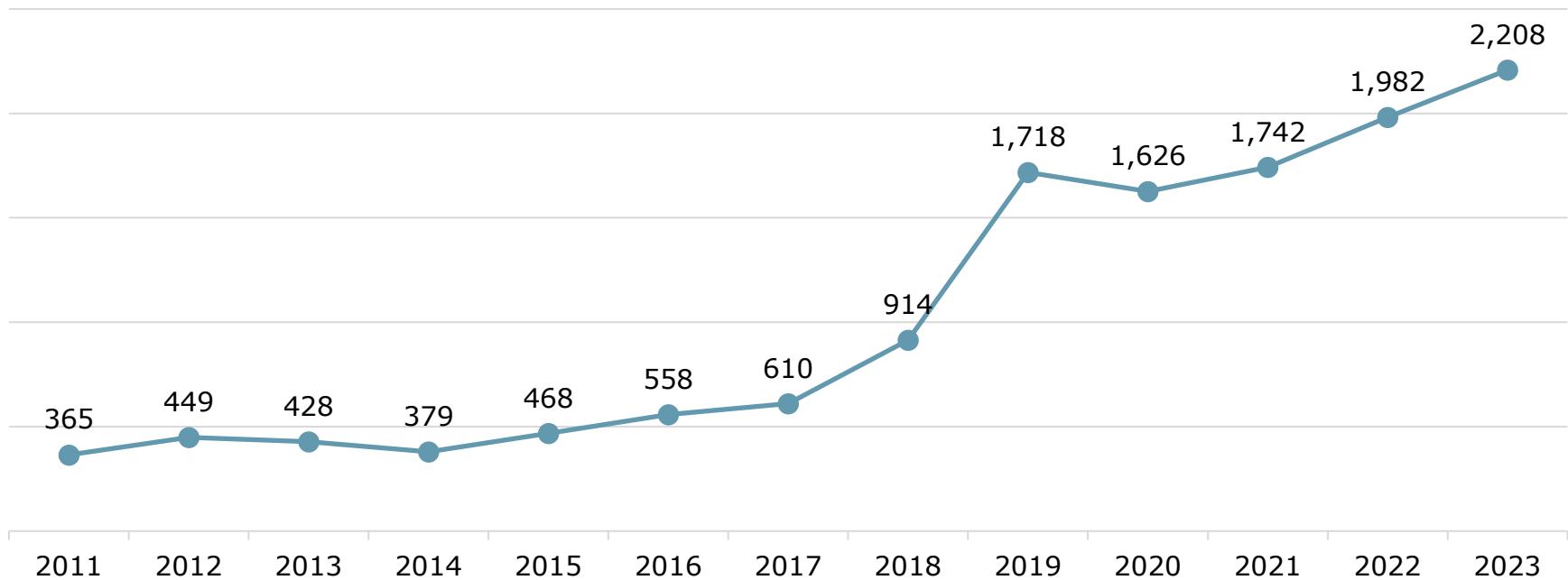
Reported



Psychological injury-only claims reported to WorkSafeBC are reported in the year that a first psychological injury is added on a claim.

Psychological injury-only claims

First Accepted



Psychological injury-only claims accepted are claims where the psychological injury is the only injury on the claim and are reported in the year the psychological injury is first accepted on the claim.

Psychological injury only claims

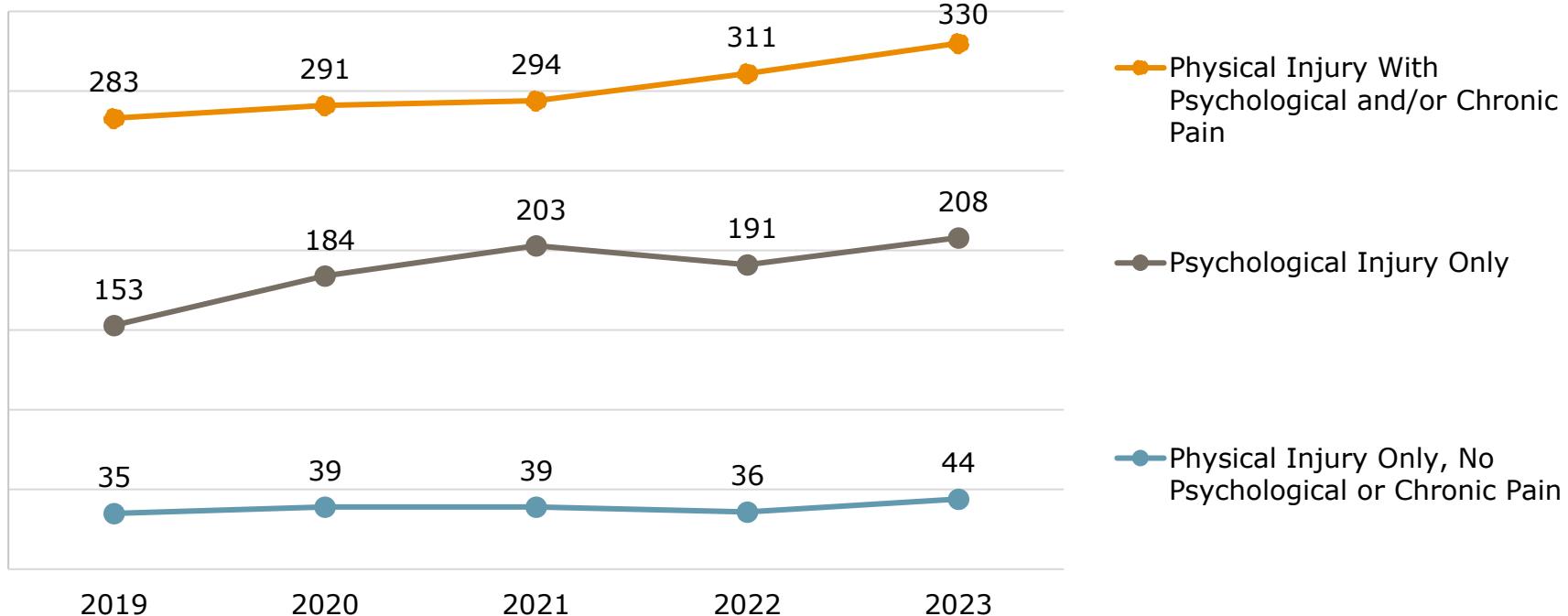
By occupation, 2020-2024

Five-Year Summary, listing occupations with more than 20 psychological injury only claims accepted in 2024.

	Psychological injury only claims reported					Psychological injury only claims first allowed in year				
	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Total - All Occupations	4,437	5,449	5,889	6,773	7,258	1,624	1,739	1,977	2,192	2,437
Nurse	508	692	856	960	941	222	244	308	363	352
Social and community service workers	365	517	518	654	730	154	202	211	282	247
Paramedic	282	359	315	312	417	214	224	214	181	205
Correctional Officer	127	188	190	163	202	89	124	130	127	152
Teacher and assistant	203	287	257	324	325	75	74	96	110	118
Nurse aides, orderlies and patient service associates	183	196	232	308	331	75	67	76	100	115

Short-term Disability (STD) Duration

By claim types





Mental Health

Legislation & Policy History

May 17,
2018

- Bill 9: Mental Disorder Presumption Clause (Mental Disorder Policy)
 - Correctional Officer, Emergency medical assistant, Firefighter, Police Officer, Sheriff

April 16,
2019

- Expansion of Mental Disorder Presumption
 - Emergency response dispatcher, Health care assistant, Nurse

June 10,
2024

- Expansion of Mental Disorder Presumption
- Community Integration specialist, Coroner, Harm reduction worker, Parole officer, Probation officer, Respiratory therapist, Shelter worker, Social worker, Transition house worker, Victim service worker, Withdrawal management worker



Bill 41

Return to Work Obligations

New return-to-work duties for workers and employers



As of January 1, 2024, changes to the Workers Compensation Act legally require workers and employers to cooperate in timely and safe return to work. Some employers are also required to maintain employment with their injured workers in specific circumstances.

The new amendments are designed to:

- Encourage connection and collaboration between workers and employers by laying out formal return-to-work responsibilities in the event of a work-related injury or illness.
- Reinforce the value of return to work and promote positive outcomes for workers.



New return-to-work duty changes

Workers and employers: The **duty to cooperate** creates obligations for an injured worker and their employer to cooperate with each other and with WorkSafeBC to identify suitable work. The employer must make the suitable work available to the worker in a timely and safe manner, and the worker must not unreasonably refuse the work. The duty to cooperate applies to claims with injury dates on or after January 1, 2022.

Some employers: The **duty to maintain employment** applies only to certain employers. If an employer regularly employs 20 or more workers and has employed the injured worker for at least one year before their injury, the employer has an obligation to maintain that worker's employment, to the point of undue hardship. The duty to maintain employment applies to claims with injury dates on or after July 1, 2023.

Learn more

Visit worksafabc.com/returntoworkduties or scan the QR code to learn more about what these new duties mean for you, and to access resources related to return to work.



Questions?

Please visit gems.online.worksafebc.com/emailus and select "Duty to cooperate and Duty to maintain employment" to submit your questions.



Return-to-work (RTW) obligations

Duty to cooperate and duty to maintain employment

Recognizes the benefits of injured workers remaining connected to employment following a workplace injury or illness:

- Supports cooperation on timely and safe return to work
- Preserves or restores employment relationships
- Promotes greater worker and employer independence and engagement in the RTW planning process



Psychological health and safety

How do we talk about mental health at work?





Definitions

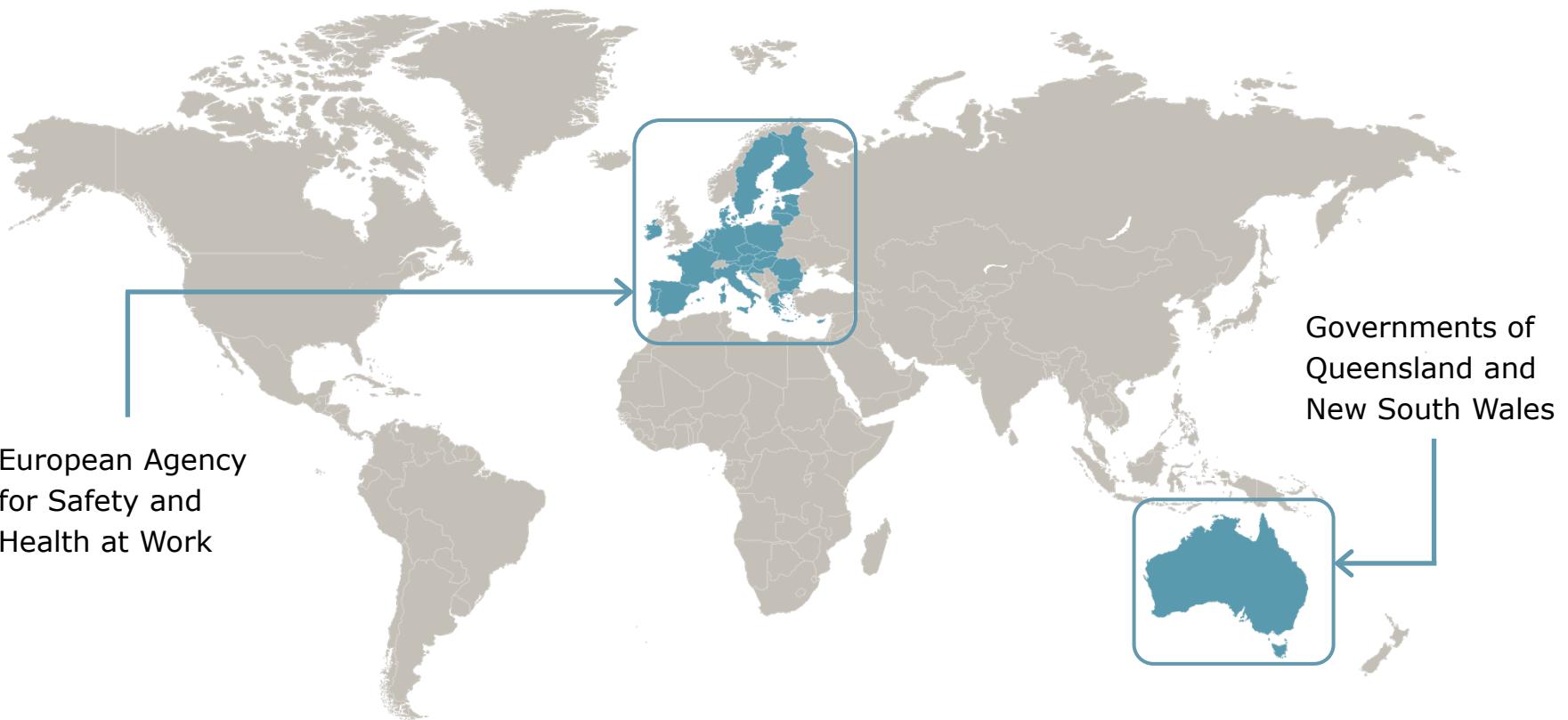
- **Psychological Safety**

- Show up authentically, push back and ask for support without fear of negative consequences

- **Psychologically Healthy and Safe Workplace**

- Psychological well-being is protected and promoted.
 - No harm to worker mental health is allowed to occur in negligent, reckless, or intentional ways.

Global landscape of psychological health and safety



What framework does Canada rely on?

CSA factor	ISO focuses
Organizational culture	Leadership, organizational/workgroup culture, recognition and reward
Clear leadership and expectations	Leadership, roles and expectations
Civility and respect	Civility and respect, violence at work, harassment, bullying and victimization
Psychological competencies and requirements	Job demands, workload and work pace
Growth and development	Career development
Recognition and reward	Recognition and reward, career development
Psychological support	Support
Involvement and influence	Job control or autonomy, interpersonal relationships, supervision
Workload	Work/life balance, workload and work pace
Engagement	Recognition and reward, career development
Balance	Work/life balance, workload and work pace
Psychological protection	Organizational change management
Protection of physical safety	Work environment, equipment, and hazardous tasks



Our Mental Health Strategy – Overview

Vision

WorkSafeBC will be a leader in promoting psychologically safe and healthy workplaces and compassionate recovery.

Focus areas



Bring a greater focus on prevention of psychological injuries



Engage proactively with workers and employers



Partner proactively with supporting organizations, agencies, and providers



Provide evidence-informed treatment and resources when psychological injuries occur



Be a visible leader as an employer

Intended outcomes

Short term:

Increased awareness of and support for the importance of building and maintaining a psychologically healthy and safe workplace, among employers and workers

Medium term:

Improved outcomes for psychological injury claims, including safe and timely return to work and reduced human and financial costs for workers and their employers

Long term:

Reduced claim volumes as workplace psychological health and safety culture matures

Framework for Success – Key Principles





Principle 1 - Show Leadership Commitment

- Leaders need to set the tone by demonstrating their commitment to psychological health and safety
 - PH&S Policy
 - Ensure access to necessary resources
 - Communicate openly and encourage worker participation
 - Integrate psychological health and safety policies into the overall occupational health and safety program required by sections 3.1–3.3 of the Regulation



Principle 2 - Develop Supportive Managers and Supervisors

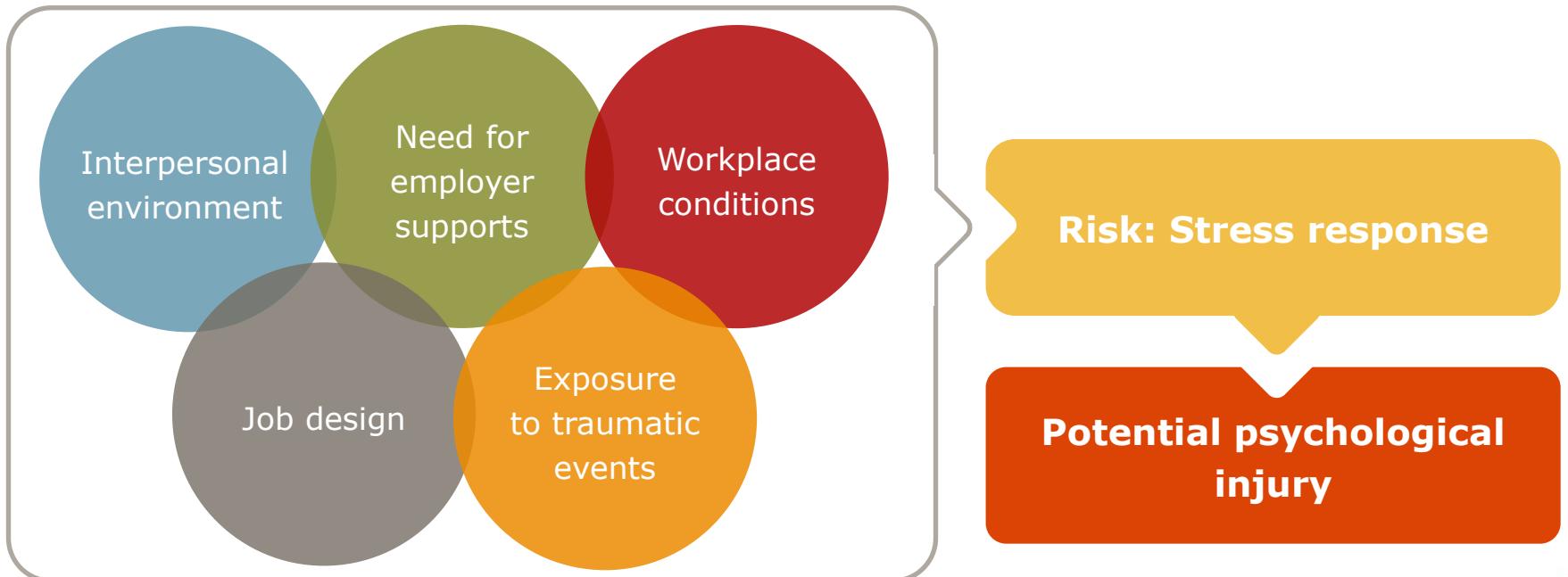
- Managers and supervisors often have the most influence in shaping workplace culture
 - Enhancing relationships with workers
 - The quality of relationships between managers and workers can make the difference in workers feeling comfortable voicing concerns or reporting mistakes or risks
 - Education and training to manage mental health in the workplace

Principle 3 - Ensure Worker Participation

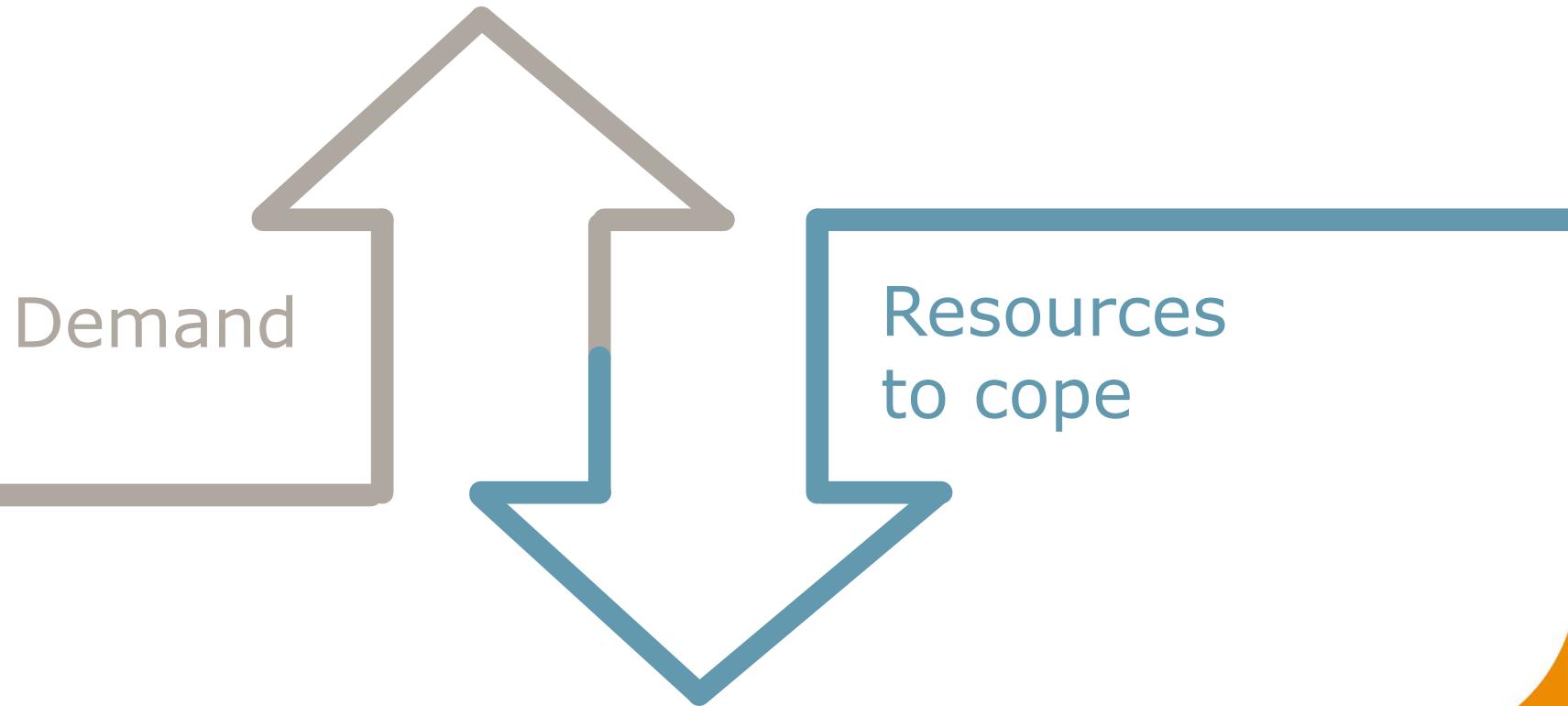
- Worker participation means employees are included in discussions, decisions, and initiatives about workplace factors that affect their mental well-being
 - Participating in prevention activities
 - Voicing concerns with the joint health and safety committee or worker representative
 - Contributing to psychosocial risk assessments
 - Peer support
 - Providing time, training, and resources to actively participate

From psychosocial hazard to psychological injury

Psychosocial hazards often stem from:



Psychological injury





Recognize Stigma & Promote Resilience

- **Stigma**: “a mark of disgrace associated with a particular circumstance, quality, or person”
 - Self-stigma – negative views about self around mental health
 - Social stigma – negative stereotypes held by society about mental health issues and the people who have mental health issues
- **Resilience**: “The process of adapting well in the face of adversity, trauma, tragedy, threats or significant sources of stress and the ability to “bounce back” from difficult experiences”

Anti-stigma Campaign

Share It. Don't Wear It.

- anti-stigma campaign to help address and reduce stigma



SHARE IT. DON'T WEAR IT.
IT'S TIME TO SPEAK UP ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH.

AMBULANCE
PARAMEDICS
OF BRITISH
COLUMBIA | BC SURVEYING
HEALTH
SERVICES | BC HIGHWAY
CHIEFS
OF POLICE | BRITISH
COLUMBIA
POLICE
ASSOCIATION | BRITISH
COLUMBIA
PROFESSIONAL
FIRE FIGHTERS
ASSOCIATION | CANADA-BORDER
SERVICES
AGENCY | FIRE
SHIFTS
ASSOCIATION
OF BC | FIRST
NATION
EMERGENCY
SERVICES
SOCIETY OF
BRITISH COLUMBIA | RELATED
VANCOUVER
FIRE CHIEFS
ASSOCIATION | PROVINCE
OF BC | RCM,
CANADIAN
MOUNTED
POLICE | TRAILER
POLICE | YOUNG
FIREFIGHTERS
ASSOCIATION
OF BC | WORKSAFEBC

BCFirstRespondersMentalHealth.com

ROI of a culture of psychological health and safety

\$1.62

Average ROI
of mental health programs

235%

Amount company stocks appreciated — versus 159% — over 6 years

Non-financial benefits

- Retention rates
- Talent attraction
- Employee engagement
- Effective risk management
- Alignment with shareholder priorities

International evidence

Studies from around the world consistently show that promotion, prevention, and early intervention **can provide positive ROI**

Building a culture of psychological health and safety



Key takeaways



Mental health costs and consequences are increasing



Psychological health and safety is everyone's responsibility



Engage your workforce in identifying risks and solutions



We are all on this journey together

Resources

WorkSafeBC resources

- **Crisis Support Line:** support for if you or your family is in emotional crisis available 24 hours/7days a week. 1-800-624-2928
- **Critical Incident Response Program:** support for if you witnessed a workplace accident or fatality. Available 9am-11pm, 7 days/week.
1-888-922-3700
- **Claims Call Centre:** if you have experienced a workplace injury; access to information on eligibility and claims processes. 1-888-WORKERS
- **Prevention Information Line:** access to information about occupational health and safety law and processes. 1-888-621-7233



Managing psychological health & safety



The image shows the header and navigation bar of the WorkSafeBC website. The header features the 'WORK SAFE BC' logo. Below the logo is a navigation bar with links: 'Forms & Resources', 'Law & Policy', 'About Us', 'Contact Us', and a button 'Log in to online services'. The main navigation menu includes 'Health & Safety', 'Insurance', 'Claims', and 'I Am a...'. A search bar with the placeholder 'Search worksafabc.com' and a magnifying glass icon is also present.

[Home](#) > [Health & Safety](#) > [Create & manage a healthy & safe workplace](#) > Managing psychological health & safety

Managing psychological health & safety

Definitions

Related topics

Managing psychological health & safety

Managing psychological health and safety in the workplace is as important as managing physical health and safety. A psychologically healthy and safe workplace prevents harm to workers' mental health and promotes mental well-being.

While many factors outside the workplace can affect mental health, it is an employer's responsibility to address the factors that are within the control, responsibility, or influence of the workplace. These three principles help to create, support, promote, and maintain a psychologically healthy and safe workplace:

1. Show leadership commitment
2. Develop supportive managers and supervisors
3. Ensure worker participation

Many employers already operate according to these principles, which are outlined in detail in our [framework for success](#). Those who effectively promote psychological health and safety have greater productivity and employee engagement. Their workers experience less conflict and higher morale, and are less likely to leave.

New psychological injury support resources for employers

We've developed two new resources (one long form, and one short form) to help employers support workers who experience psychological injuries.

These resources include:

- Strategies on how to support workers who experience commonly occurring psychological injuries.
- Abilities-focused language that highlights what a worker is able to do, not what they are unable to do.
- An emphasis on the importance of collaboration and communication between the worker and employer.

1

Return-to-work strategies to support workers who experience psychological injuries
A resource for employers

WORK SAFE BC

2

How to support workers who experience psychological injuries

This document lists ways to support and protect workers who may be experiencing a work-related psychological injury. It's designed to help employers support workers on approaching stay-at-work or return-to-work decisions. It focuses on what the worker is able to do so you can tailor the support to their needs. Different strategies will work for different people, so ask the worker what types of supports they think will help, using the table below as a starting point.

Someone experiencing a psychological injury may have difficulty with:

Deadlines, time pressures, and performance expectations	Tolerating stress	Multi-tasking	Maintaining sustained attention and concentration
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• More time is required to complete priority tasks at higher quality• Supportive employment services (e.g., work modifications) are helpful• Increased resources if speed is crucial• Checklists of tasks to be completed in order of priority	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increased support during stressful times• Team building focused on resilience, emotional intelligence, civility, and respect• Permission for some work to be done from home	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fewer tasks at a time until capacity is reached• Modifications to work environment to reduce stress for the employee to focus on one task at a time• Checklists of tasks with measurable expectations for tasks• One-on-one or group training to support proficiency and time management• Short breaks when working on complex tasks (even standing up for 10 seconds can help)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A flexible schedule• A quiet work environment• The ability to listen to music or wear noise-cancelling headphones• A clutter-free work area• Short breaks when working on complex tasks

WORK SAFE BC

(23 pages)

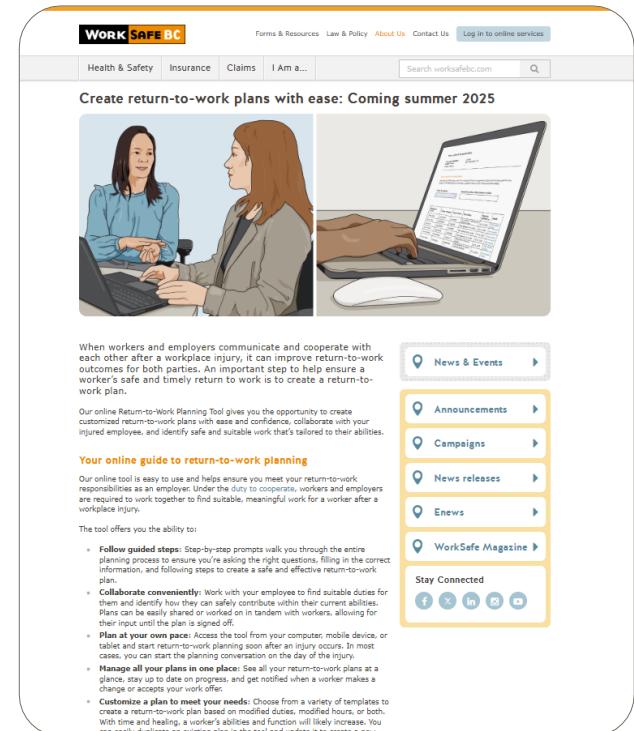
(2 pages)

RTW planning tool

Online self-serve tool that allows you to:

- Create customized return-to-work plans
- Collaborate with your injured employee
- Follow step-by-step prompts that walk you through the entire planning process
- Manage all your plans in one place

The RTW tool, and any claims information, can be accessed through your online services account.



The screenshot shows the WorkSafeBC website with a banner for the 'Create return-to-work plans with ease: Coming summer 2025'. Below the banner, there are two illustrations: one of a worker and employer talking, and another of a person using a laptop with the RTW planning tool interface. The main content area discusses the benefits of communication and the tool's features, including guided steps, collaboration, and managing plans. A sidebar on the right lists news and events, announcements, campaigns, news releases, news, and WorkSafe Magazine, along with social media links.

WORKSAFE BC

Forms & Resources | Law & Policy | About Us | Contact Us | Log in to online services

Health & Safety | Insurance | Claims | I Am a... | Search worksafecbc.com

Create return-to-work plans with ease: Coming summer 2025

When workers and employers communicate and cooperate with each other after a workplace injury, it can improve return-to-work outcomes for both parties. An important step to help ensure a worker's safe and timely return to work is to create a return-to-work plan.

Our online Return-to-Work Planning Tool gives you the opportunity to create customized return-to-work plans with ease and confidence, collaborate with your injured employee, and identify safe and suitable work that's tailored to their abilities.

Your online guide to return-to-work planning

Our online tool is easy to use and helps ensure you meet your return-to-work responsibilities as an employer. Under the duty to cooperate, workers and employers are required to work together to find suitable, meaningful work for a worker after a workplace injury.

The tool offers you the ability to:

- **Follow guided steps:** Step-by-step prompts walk you through the entire planning process to ensure you're asking the right questions, filling in the correct information, and following steps to create a safe and effective return-to-work plan.
- **Collaborate conveniently:** Work with your employee to find suitable duties for them and identify how they can safely contribute within their current abilities. Plans can be easily shared or worked on in tandem with workers, allowing for their input until the plan is signed off.
- **Plan at your own pace:** Access the tool from your computer, mobile device, or tablet, and work on the plan at any time after an injury occurs. In most cases, you can start the planning conversation on the day of the injury.
- **Manage all your plans in one place:** See all your return-to-work plans at a glance, stay up to date on progress, and get notified when a worker makes a change to their plan.
- **Customize a plan to meet your needs:** Choose from a variety of templates to create a return-to-work plan based on modified duties, modified hours, or both. With time and healing, a worker's abilities and function will likely increase. You can easily duplicate an existing plan in the tool and update it to create a new

News & Events

Announcements

Campaigns

News releases

News

WorkSafe Magazine

Stay Connected

Facebook | Twitter | LinkedIn | YouTube | Instagram

Employer supports

- RTW resources for employers at worksafebc.com/returntowork
- Return to Work Services Consultation and Education Services Team
 - RTW-CES@worksafebc.com
 - 604.279.8155 (Lower Mainland)
 - Toll Free: 1.877.633.6233

The screenshots illustrate the resources available on the WorkSafeBC website for employer supports, specifically focusing on Return to Work and psychological health and safety.

Top Screenshot: Return to work

This page provides information for workers recovering from injuries. It emphasizes that returning to work while recovering is a healthy and safe approach for most people with work-related injuries. Working is good for physical and mental health, and often supports healing. Making safe, sustainable work arrangements for people who were injured at work takes time and effort, but both workers and employers have important contributions to make.

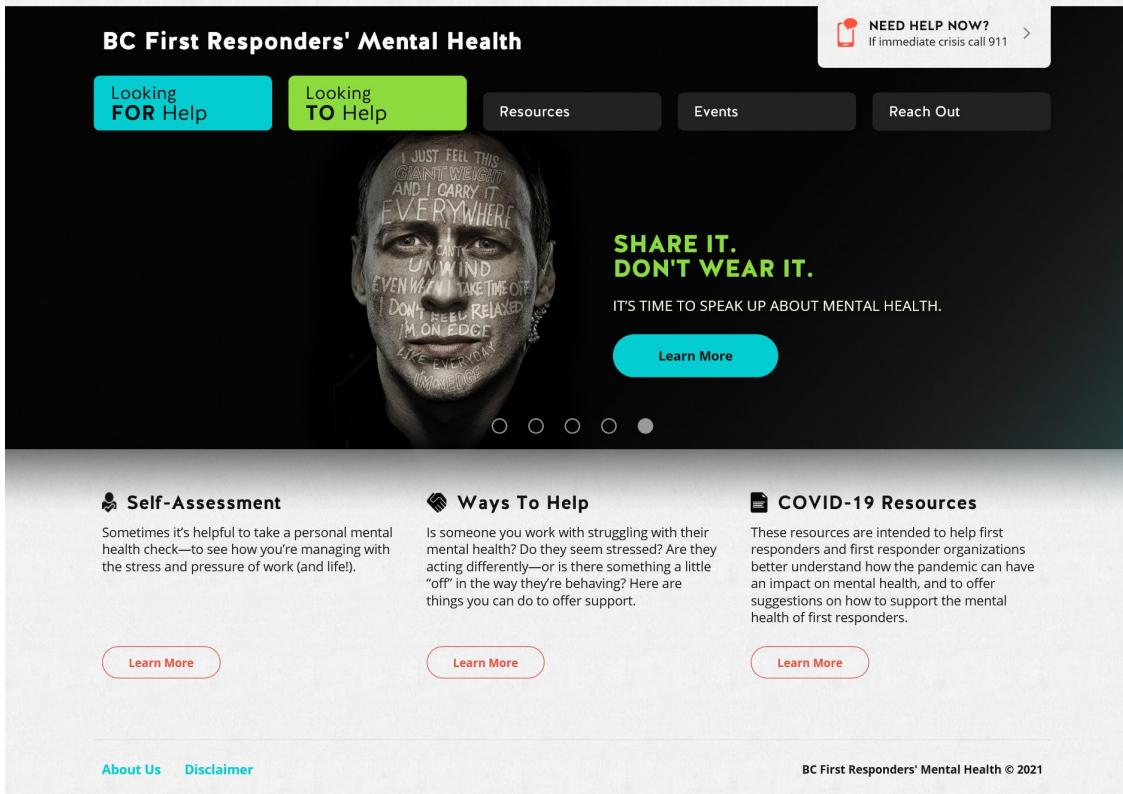
Middle Screenshot: Managing psychological health & safety

This page provides guidance for managing psychological health and safety in the workplace. It highlights the importance of creating a healthy and safe workplace for all workers. The page includes a section on managing psychological health and safety, which provides practical advice and resources for employers.

Bottom Screenshot: Managing a Safe Return to Work booklet

This booklet is designed to help employers manage a safe return to work. It includes a section on supporting workers who experience psychological injuries. This section provides strategies for employers to support workers who may be experiencing a work-related psychological injury. It suggests ways to support workers, such as providing a flexible schedule, modifying work tasks, and providing resources. It also provides a table for employers to use when supporting workers with psychological injuries.

BCFIRSTRESPONDERSMENTALHEALTH.COM



The image shows the homepage of the BC First Responders' Mental Health website. The header features the website's name in large, bold, white letters. Below the header is a navigation bar with five buttons: "Looking FOR Help" (blue), "Looking TO Help" (green), "Resources" (grey), "Events" (grey), and "Reach Out" (grey). To the right of the navigation bar is a "NEED HELP NOW?" button with a phone icon and the text "If immediate crisis call 911". The main content area has a dark background with a portrait of a man. Overlaid on the portrait is a block of text: "I JUST FEEL THIS GIANT WEIGHT AND I CARRY IT EVERYWHERE I CAN'T UNWIND EVEN WHEN I TAKE TIME OFF I DON'T FEEL RELAXED I'M ON EDGE LIKE EVERYONE I'M NOT". Below this is a "SHARE IT. DON'T WEAR IT." section with the text "IT'S TIME TO SPEAK UP ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH." and a "Learn More" button. At the bottom of the page are three columns: "Self-Assessment", "Ways To Help", and "COVID-19 Resources", each with a "Learn More" button. The footer contains links for "About Us" and "Disclaimer", and a copyright notice: "BC First Responders' Mental Health © 2021".

BC First Responders' Mental Health

Looking FOR Help

Looking TO Help

Resources

Events

Reach Out

NEED HELP NOW?
If immediate crisis call 911

I JUST FEEL THIS
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AND I CARRY IT
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EVEN WHEN I TAKE TIME OFF
I DON'T FEEL RELAXED
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SHARE IT.
DON'T WEAR IT.

IT'S TIME TO SPEAK UP ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH.

Learn More

Self-Assessment

Ways To Help

COVID-19 Resources

About Us

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Questions?