

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

AMBULANCE PARAMEDICS OF BRITISH COLUMBIA	FIRE CHIEFS' ASSOCIATION OF BC
BC EMERGENCY HEALTH SERVICES	FIRST NATIONS EMERGENCY SERVICES SOCIETY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA
BC MUNICIPAL CHIEFS OF POLICE	GREATER VANCOUVER FIRE CHIEFS ASSOCIATION
BRITISH COLUMBIA POLICE ASSOCIATION	PROVINCE OF BC
BRITISH COLUMBIA PROFESSIONAL FIRE FIGHTERS ASSOCIATION	ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE
CANADA BORDER SERVICES AGENCY	TRANSIT POLICE
	VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS ASSOCIATION OF BC
	WORKSAFEBC

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

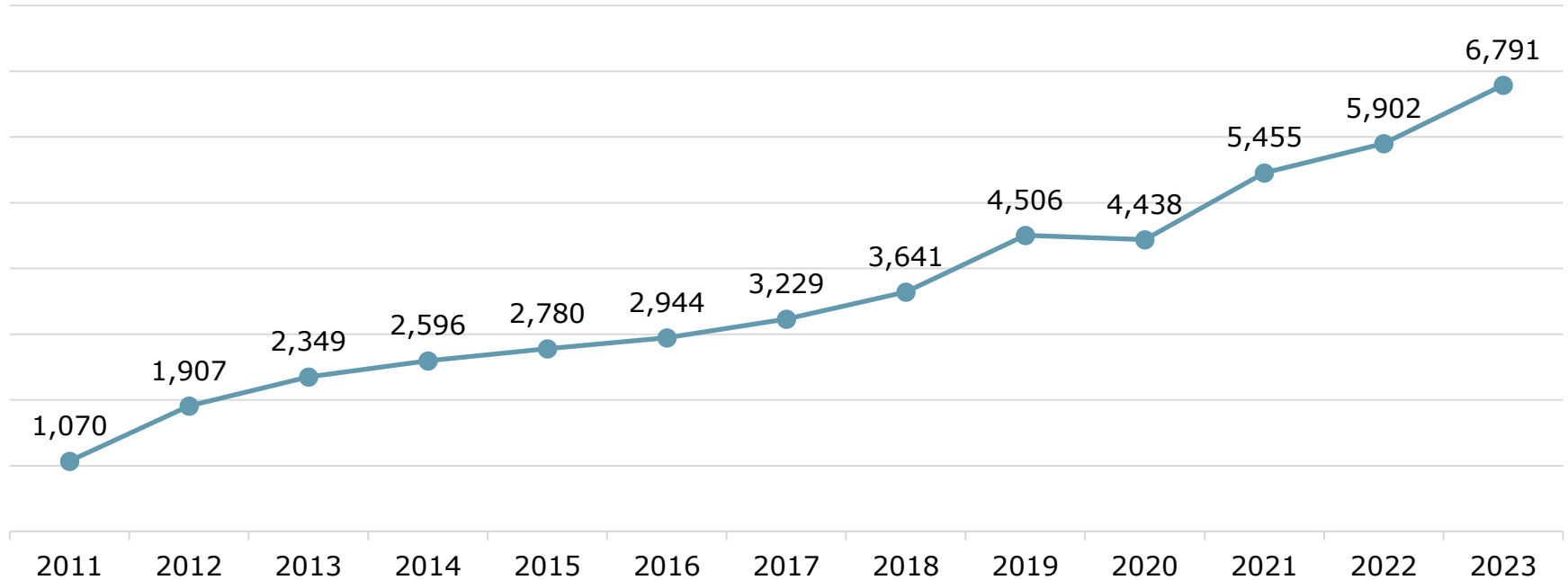
75% of working Canadians would be reluctant to disclose a mental health condition to their boss or co-worker

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

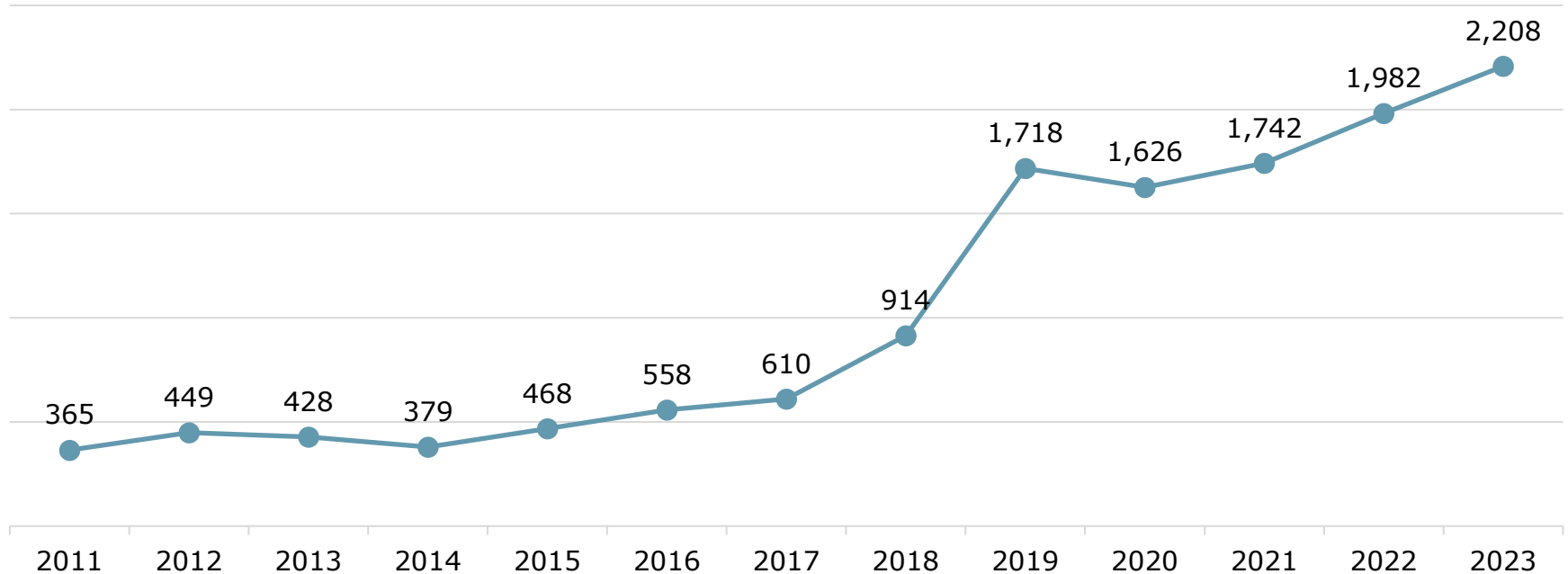
Reported



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

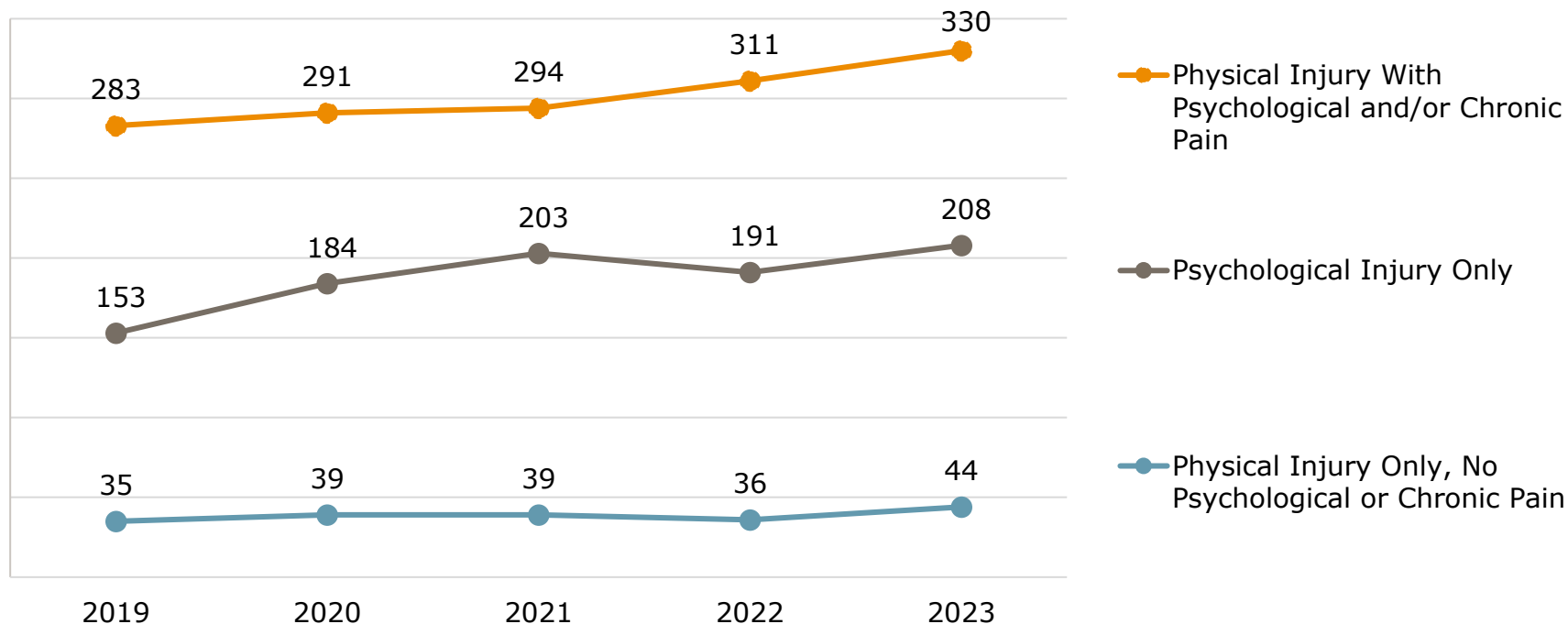
Five-Year Summary, listing occupations with more than 20 psychological injury only claims accepted in 2024.

	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.

WORK SAFE BC

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 worksafebc.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.

WORK SAFE BC



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?

Psychological injury

Mental health

Psychosocial factor

Psychologically healthy and safe workplace

Burnout

Occupational stress injury

Psychosocial risk

Psychosocial hazard

Psychological safety

Psychological well-being

Psychosocial safety climate



Definitions

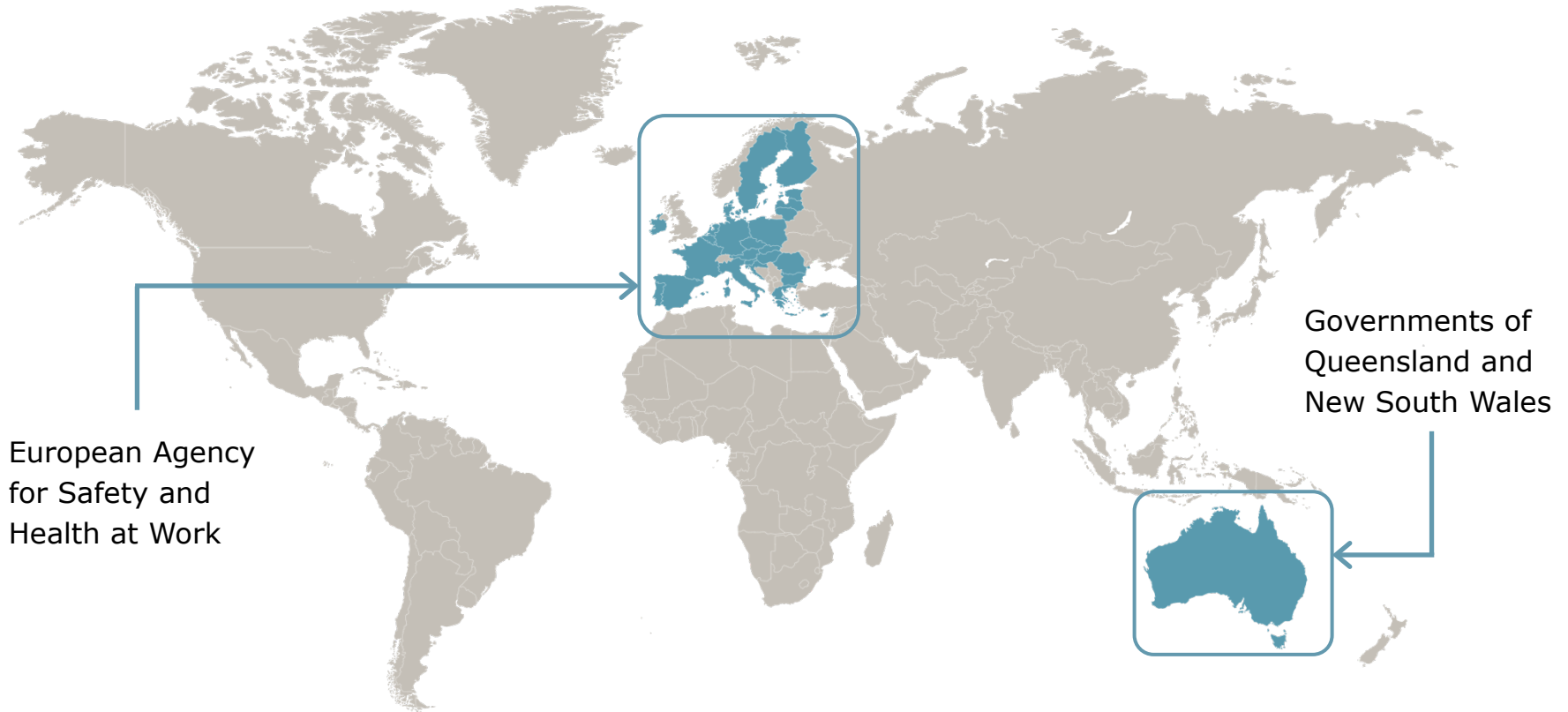
- **Psychological Safety**

- 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

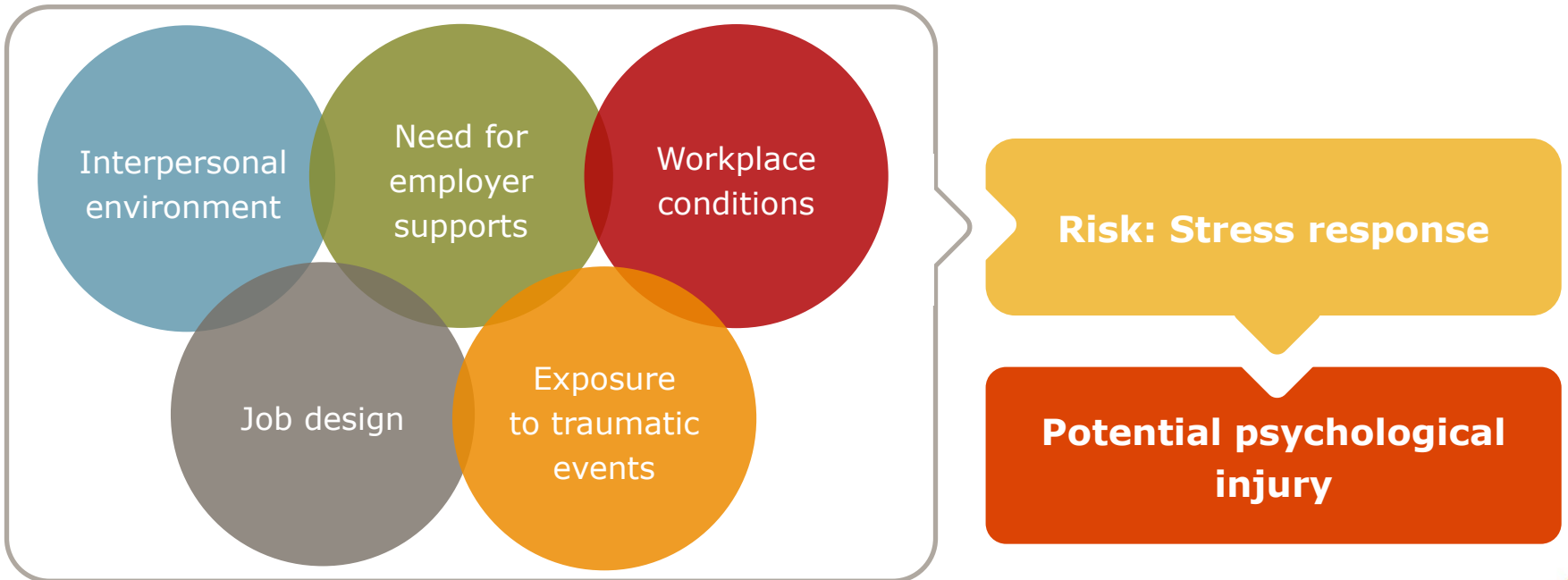
Principle 3 - Ensure Worker Participation

- 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



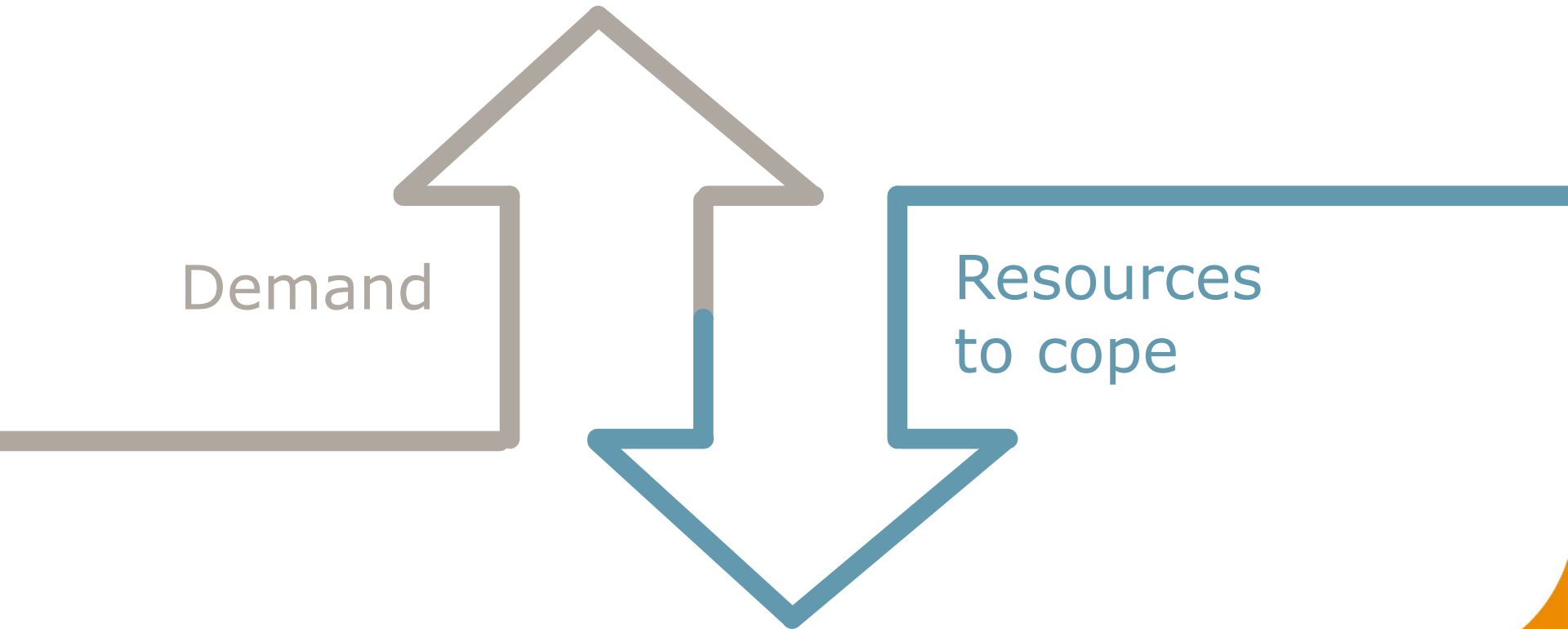
From psychosocial hazard to psychological injury

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



The poster features five first responders (two EMTs and three others) with their faces covered in handwritten text expressing mental health struggles. The text on their faces includes: "IT'S HARD TO SHUT IT OFF THE STUFF WE SEE", "I FEEL WORSE DOWN OVERWHELMED", "I JUST FEEL THIS HEAVY WEIGHT AND I CARRY IT EVERYWHERE", "I CAN'T REMEMBER WHEN I NOTICE THE CHANGE IT JUST SEEMS TO BECOME NORMAL GUESS", and "I FEEL THIS HEAVY WEIGHT AND I CARRY IT EVERYWHERE".

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

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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

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[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.

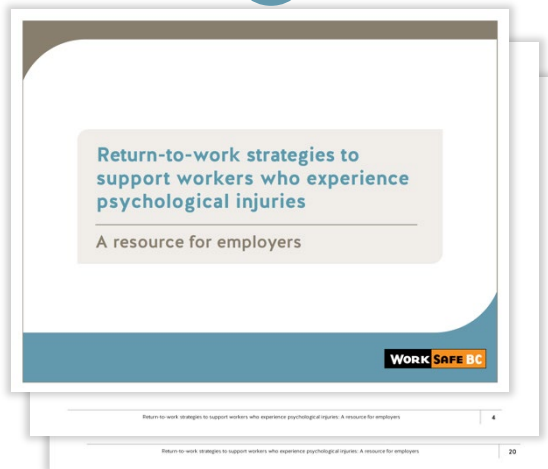
New psychological injury support resources for employers

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:

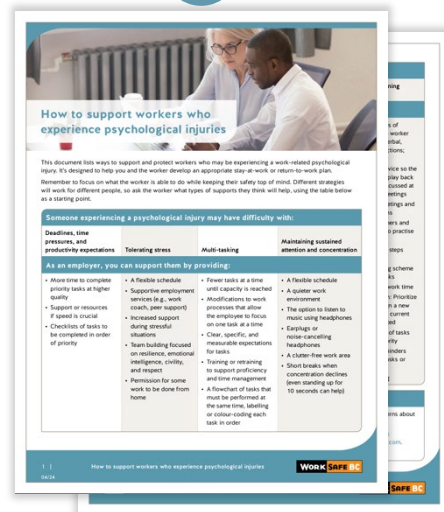
- Strategies on how to support workers who experience commonly occurring psychological injuries.
- Abilities-focused language that highlights what a worker is able to do, not what they are unable to do.
- An emphasis on the importance of collaboration and communication between the worker and employer.

1



(23 pages)

2



(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.



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 image displays three overlapping visual elements related to WorkSafe BC resources:

- Top Screenshot:** The WorkSafe BC website's 'Claims' page under the 'Return to work' section. It features the title 'Return to work' and a paragraph stating: '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, but all have important contributions to make.' Navigation links include 'Home', 'Claims', and 'Return to work'.
- Middle Screenshot:** The 'Managing psychological health & safety' page. It includes the title 'Managing psychological health & safety' and a sub-header 'Managing psychological health & safety in the workplace'. It mentions the 'Workers' Compensation Act' and states that affected workers have a legal duty to return to work following an injury.
- Bottom Brochure:** A brochure titled 'Managing a Safe Return to Work'. It features three photographs: a construction worker, a woman at a desk, and a man at a desk. The brochure includes the heading 'How to support workers who experience psychological injuries' and a table with strategies for supporting workers.

Someone experiencing a psychological injury may have difficulty with:			
Deadlines, time pressures, and productivity expectations	Tolerating stress	Multi-tasking	Maintaining sustained attention and concentration
As an employer, you can support them by providing:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• More time to complete priority tasks at higher quality• Support or resources if need is crucial• Checklists of tasks to be completed in order of priority	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A flexible schedule• Supportive employment services (e.g., work coach, peer support)• Increased support during stressful situations• 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 processes that allow the employee to focus on one task at a time• Clear, specific, and measurable expectations for tasks• Training or retraining to support proficiency and time management• A list of tasks that must be performed at the same time, labelling or colour coding each task in order	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A flexible schedule• A quieter work environment• The option to listen to music using headphones• Earplugs or noise-cancelling headphones• A clutter-free work area• Short breaks when concentration declines (even standing up for 10 seconds can help)

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BC First Responders' Mental Health

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I JUST FEEL THIS
GANT 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
IMAGINE

SHARE IT. DON'T WEAR IT.

IT'S TIME TO SPEAK UP ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH.

[Learn More](#)

Self-Assessment

Sometimes it's helpful to take a personal mental health check—to see how you're managing with the stress and pressure of work (and life!).

[Learn More](#)

Ways To Help

Is someone you work with struggling with their mental health? Do they seem stressed? Are they acting differently—or is there something a little "off" in the way they're behaving? Here are things you can do to offer support.

[Learn More](#)

COVID-19 Resources

These resources are intended to help first responders and first responder organizations better understand how the pandemic can have an impact on mental health, and to offer suggestions on how to support the mental health of first responders.

[Learn More](#)

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Questions?