



RESOURCE GUIDE

8 Practical Tips for Mentally Healthy Workplaces

A guide for organizations, highlighting key considerations, practical tips, and resources to help make mental health and well-being a meaningful part of everyday work.



This guide is adapted from a webinar delivered in partnership with Inclusivity and the Canadian Mental Health Association BC Division in October 2025.

www.inclusivityinsight.com



Creating a mentally healthy workplace isn't about adding tasks to your to-do list — it's about weaving well-being into how work gets done every day. Workplaces are shaped by complex economic, social, and environmental challenges, and employees are affected differently depending on their identity, community, and lived experience. Recognizing this diversity is key to fostering inclusion and psychological safety.

Mental Health & Mental Illness

The terms mental health and mental illness are often used interchangeably, but understanding the difference helps reduce stigma and normalize conversations about mental health.

- **Mental Health** is a state of well-being that we all have — it fluctuates, but it's always part of us.
- **Mental Illness** refers to a diagnosed condition, such as depression or anxiety, that significantly impacts daily functioning.

Did you know?

1 in 5 Canadians experience a mental health challenge each year. Yet, many employees don't disclose this to their supervisor or colleagues — often due to stigma or fear of negative impact.

A Safe Workplace Protects Mental Health Too

When we think about workplace safety, we often focus on physical hazards — things like loose cords or proper ergonomics. But psychological hazards, such as chronic stress, exclusion, bias or lack of support, can be just as harmful.

A psychologically healthy workplace is one where you experience:

- **Respect:** Everyone's voice is valued.
- **Valued Contribution:** People can see that their work matters.
- **Feedback:** You can give and receive feedback constructively, without defensiveness.
- **Belonging:** Employees feel included and connected.
- **Support:** Team members can ask for help when needed.
- **Being Your Whole Self:** People feel safe expressing their authentic identity, including aspects of themselves such as challenges to mental health, cultural background, or personal circumstances.

Psychological Safety in Canada

When we look at the state of psychological health in Canadian workplaces, recent national data shows a mixed picture.

- 50%** of employees say their employer is prioritizing burnout prevention
- 23%** of employees believe their workplace is not psychologically safe
- 77%** of managers are confident in their ability to support team members once distress is identified

This tells us there's meaningful progress — and still a gap. Many leaders are equipped and motivated to support mental health, but barriers persist, especially for people with racialized identities and diverse gender or sexual identities.

(Mental Health Research Canada, 2024)

Systemic Inequities, Bias & Microaggressions

Mental health challenges can affect anyone in an organization, but they are often amplified for people from marginalized groups because of systemic inequities, bias, and microaggressions. In the workplace, these issues often show up in subtle ways through assumptions we make, perhaps without even realizing it. For example:

"They are not very capable."

"They are just being lazy or unmotivated."

"They'll tell me if something's wrong."

"They are difficult to work with."

"They want special treatment."

These assumptions can shape how we interact with others and create barriers to a psychologically safe workplace. Even though they may seem minor, they add up — eroding trust, distracting people from their work, and making it harder for everyone to feel safe and valued. Awareness of bias and microaggressions is an important first step, but real change happens when we turn that awareness into everyday action.



8 Practical Tips for Mentally Healthy Workplaces

Creating a mentally healthy and high-performing workplace can include policies and the everyday ways we interact, support each other, and show respect. Below are eight concise, practical approaches you can start using right away.

1 Use Respectful, People First Language

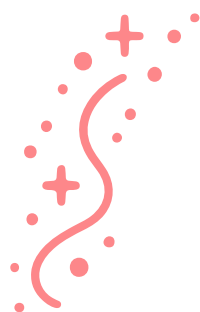
- Avoid casual phrases that stigmatize mental health (such as “crazy” or “insane”)
- Emphasize people-first language: “A person with a disability” vs. “a disabled person.” Remember, it’s always important to refer to people in the way they prefer — everyone is different!
- Encourage sharing feelings when comfortable.

2 Check In Regularly

Notice changes in colleagues’ behavior and check in with care, remembering that trust takes time to build and not everyone will respond right away. Keep in mind that your check-ins are meant to offer support, not to provide counseling.

Words have the power to harm or heal;
choose yours with care at work

A few considerations for checking in:



- | | |
|---------------------------|--|
| Prepare yourself | Choose an appropriate time and place, check your emotional capacity. |
| “I noticed...” | Approach any perceived changes objectively and gently |
| “I’m wondering...” | Be open to listening and understanding the situation |
| “How can I help?” | Ask what you can do to support the individual at this time |
| Take a moment | Check in with yourself and protect your own well-being |

3 Enhance Flexibility

Flexibility is key to a mentally healthy workplace, allowing people to manage personal needs and life’s unpredictability. This may include adjusting tasks or schedules for caregiving or health, planning for unexpected absences with clear points of contact, or recognizing faith-based or cultural holidays.

4

Value Team Members' Contributions

Valuing team members' contributions is essential for a mentally healthy workplace. It helps people feel seen, appreciated, and motivated. Ask yourself:

- How do you recognize employee performance?
- Who is frequently acknowledged, and whose work often goes unnoticed?
- How do you celebrate success?

Remember, it's important to recognize not just outcomes, but also effort, attitude (think growth mindset!) and to celebrate accomplishments regularly

5

Create a Positive Work Culture

A positive workplace culture is key to a mentally healthy workplace. It helps employees feel supported and connected. Some simple ways organizations foster a culture of inclusion and connection include:

- Holding regular team meetings with time to check in before the formal agenda
- Starting a weekly gratitude practice
- Hosting virtual coffee breaks or in-person team lunches
- Role modelling work-life integration (e.g. taking vacation without staying constantly connected, and being transparent about boundaries)

These everyday practices show that well-being matters and help build a culture where everyone can thrive.

6

Include Psychological Health in Health & Safety Policies

Policies play a key role in shaping workplace culture. They set expectations for how people interact, signal which behaviors are acceptable, and show what the organization truly prioritizes. Integrating mental health alongside physical safety is one way to make psychological health a clear priority. Some practical steps include:

- Include mental health considerations in existing health and safety policies.
- Provide regular training so everyone knows how to respond to concerns or policy violations.
- Make clear who employees can go to for support and how to escalate issues.
- Reinforce consistent, fair, and supportive practices across the organization.

Embedding psychological health into policies helps create a safe and consistent environment where all employees feel supported.



FREE RESOURCES: Best practices for policies related to statutory holidays & promotions



Seek Support or Refer When Needed

Making help accessible and visible shows that well-being is a shared priority. All employees should feel encouraged to seek support for themselves or refer others when needed.

Ensure employees are familiar with and have easy access to:



Their organizations Employee Assistance Program (EAP)



BC Mental Health Support Line at 310-6789 (no area code needed).



Keep Learning

Mental health and inclusion are ongoing practices, and there's always room to grow. Take opportunities to expand your skills, whether that's exploring bias, understanding microaggressions, improving communication, or pursuing professional development. Staying curious and committed helps create a workplace where everyone can thrive.

Helpful Resources — for You and Your Team



Canadian Mental Health Association BC Division (CMHA BC) Workplace Mental Health
Education Programs: Mental Health at Work, Psychological Health & Safety...and more!
bc.cmha.ca/workplace-mental-health
workplace@cmha.bc.ca



Inclusivity

Organizational Assessments

Education Programs: Conflict Resolution, Growth Mindset, Intercultural Communication...and more!
hello@inclusivityinsight.com | www.inclusivityinsight.com



Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety (CCOHS)

Being a Mindful Employee (Free course)

https://www.ccohs.ca/products/courses/mindful_employee



Workplace Strategies for Mental Health

Free newsletter:

<https://www.workplacestrategiesformentalhealth.com/newsletter/subscribe>

Crisis & Immediate Support:

- Suicide Crisis Helpline: Call or text 9-8-8
- BC Mental Health Support Line: Call 310-6789 (no area code)

Provincial and National Organizations:

- Canadian Mental Health Association BC Division (CMHA BC) – bc.cmha.ca
- Mental Health Commission of Canada – mentalhealthcommission.ca

Workplace Guidance & Policy

- 13 Factors Addressing Mental Health in the Workplace: mentalhealthcommission.ca/13-factors-addressing-mental-health-in-the-workplace
- Workplace Strategies for Mental Health – workplacestrategiesformentalhealth.com

Strong Teams Start with Mentally Healthy Workplaces

Creating a psychologically safe and high-performing workplace is a journey. It takes strategy, persistence, and the support of networks across your organization. Remember, one-quarter of your team may experience mental health challenges—this impacts a significant portion of your workplace, making these efforts essential.

Take small, deliberate steps, reflect on your culture, and adapt along the way. Step by step, your commitment builds a healthy, inclusive workplace—a place where teams perform at their best and everyone feels supported.



Wyle Baoween
CEO
Inclusivity



Roselene Dhaliwal, PhD
Director, Equity and Inclusion
CMHA BC

This guide is based on the webinar ‘Mental Health at Work: A Safety Priority’, hosted by Inclusivity in partnership with the Canadian Mental Health Association in October 2025.

Inclusivity would like to sincerely thank Roselene Dhaliwal, Director of Equity and Inclusion at the Canadian Mental Health Association, for her expertise, insights, and valuable contributions on this topic.

Transform culture from the inside out by
empowering people to learn, lead, and belong.



At Inclusivity, we support organizations to build inclusive and high-performing workplace cultures.

Whether you're just getting started or ready to deepen your impact, we're here to help you build a culture where everyone can thrive.

Let's connect:



hello@inclusivityinsight.com



www.inclusivityinsight.com

