



Press Release

Workplaces that are Implementing the National Standard of Canada for Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace Described by Employees as Psychologically-Safer Environments

More Canadian Employees Knowledgeable (+13) about Mental Health, Fewer (-10) Describe their Workplace as Being Psychologically Unsafe

Toronto, ON. February 2, 2017 – In the last decade, fewer Canadians describe their workplace as being one that is psychologically unhealthy and unsafe, according to newly-released research.

The landmark Ipsos poll of psychological health and safety in Canadian workplaces was commissioned by the Great-West Life Centre for Mental Health in the Workplace and surveyed over 5,000 employees and managers across Canada, providing trends in workplaces dating back to 2009. A subset of questions on depression in the workplace provides tracking back to 2007.

Since 2009, the proportion of Canadians who disagree that their workplace is a psychologically healthy and safe environment to work in has been cut in half: just 10% 'disagree' (4% strongly/6% somewhat) that their workplace is psychologically healthy and safe, down from 20%. Conversely, 71% of Canadians 'agree' (27% strongly/43% somewhat) that their workplace is a psychologically safe and healthy environment, up 6 points since 2009. The remaining 19% (up 3 points) don't feel strongly either way.

Further, eight in ten (79%) working Canadians now say that they know (29% a lot/50% some) about mental health conditions like depression, which is up 13 points from the 66% of Canadians who said the same in 2007.

Impact of National Standard for Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace

One contributing reason for the overall improvement in the psychological health and safety of Canadian workplaces could be the existence of the National Standard of Canada for Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace ("the Standard"). The survey results show that, although only 12% of workers are aware of the Standard and only 6% know that they work for an organization that is implementing the Standard, those who indicate that they work at organizations implementing the Standard report psychologically healthier and safer environments.

For example, just 5% of employees who work for an organization that is implementing the Standard 'disagree' that their workplace is a psychologically healthy and safe environment to work in, compared to 13% of those who know that their organization is not implementing the Standard.

Moreover, among those who do or have experienced depression, the average number of days missed from



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work due to depression, stress or anxiety is 12.5 days in the past year. For those who work at an organization that is implementing the Standard, it falls to 7.4 days of missed work in the past year for those who are experiencing or have experienced depression.

The survey posed 65 statements to employees across 13 different areas of psychological health and safety. Responses were aggregated into a Psychological Factors Index which determined if an employee worked at a workplace that could be categorized as one having significant, serious or minimal psychological concerns in each area, or one where psychological health and safety was a relative strength of the workplace.

In each of the 13 factor categories, organizations which are implementing the Standard were significantly more likely to describe a workplace where the psychological environment was a relative strength, while those who know that their organization hasn't implemented the Standard were more likely to describe workplaces that are psychologically concerning.

For example, in the area of psychological support, just 10% of employees who work for an organization that is implementing the Standard describe a workplace that has serious or significant concerns, while 37% of those who work for an organization without the Standard describe a concerning workplace. Conversely, 56% of those whose organization is implementing the Standard describe the psychological environment as a relative strength, compared to just 31% of those whose organization hasn't implemented the Standard.

Psychological Factor Index Score

Psychological Factor Categories	Psychological Environment a Relative Strength		Psychological Environment a Serious or Significant Concern	
	Workplace Implementing the Standard		Workplace Implementing the Standard	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
	C	D	E	F
<i>Base: Those who know if their Org has implemented the Standard or Not</i>	290	101	290	101
PF1: Psychological Support	56%	31%	10%	37%
PF2: Organizational Culture	56%	31%	13%	33%
PF3: Clear Leadership & Expectations	60%	31%	10%	34%
PF4: Civility & Respect	60%	35%	10%	34%
PF5: Psychological Job Fit	63%	31%	9%	22%
PF6: Growth & Development	55%	30%	11%	31%
PF7: Recognition & Reward	58%	34%	10%	36%
PF8: Involvement & Influence	62%	38%	9%	34%
PF9: Workload Management	55%	33%	10%	23%
PF10: Engagement	70%	46%	6%	16%
PF11: Balance	58%	30%	9%	32%
PF12: Psychological Protection	58%	30%	10%	36%
PF13: Protection of Physical Safety	67%	37%	5%	32%

Tracking the results back to 2009, fewer employees describe a workplace that has been categorized as having serious or significant concerns. For example:

- Regarding **civility and respect**, 27% now work for an organization that has serious or significant psychological concerns, down 6 points since 2009.
- In terms of **balance**, 30% work for an organization that has serious or significant psychological concerns, down 5 points since 2009.
- In the area of **psychological support**, 32% now work for an organization that has serious or significant psychological concerns, down 3 points since 2009.



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Employees More Likely to Describe Concerning Environment

A broad trend that resonated through the data is that employees were more likely than managers to describe a psychologically unfavourable workplace environment. Employees were less likely than managers to say that they know 'a lot' about mental health conditions (34% of managers vs. 25% of employees).

Using the psychological support factors as an example, employees (35%) were more likely than managers (28%) to describe a workplace that was concerning, a trend that was found throughout most of the factors studied. It was most prominent in the areas of organizational culture (38% of employees describe it as concerning vs. 28% of managers), and growth and development (38% of employees vs. 26% of managers).

These are some of the findings of an Ipsos poll conducted between September 19 to 27, 2016, on behalf of the Great-West Life Centre for Mental Health in the Workplace. For this survey, a sample of 5,010 working Canadians was interviewed online via the Ipsos I-Say panel, of which 2,047 were manager/supervisors (or responsible for supporting psychological health and safety in their workplace), and 2,963 were employees. Weighting was then employed to balance demographics to ensure that the sample's composition reflects that of the adult population according to Census data and to provide results intended to approximate the sample universe. The precision of Ipsos online polls is measured using a credibility interval. In this case, the poll is accurate to within ± 1.6 percentage points, 19 times out of 20, had all working Canadian adults been polled. For the population of managers/supervisors, the credibility interval is ± 2.5 percentage points; for the population of employees, the credibility interval is ± 2.1 percentage points. The credibility interval will be wider among subsets of the population. All sample surveys and polls may be subject to other sources of error, including, but not limited to coverage error, and measurement error.

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