

Cultivating an Environment of Psychological Health and Safety at KHSC

Welcome to our first Mindful Moments Blog at KHSC. This blog delves into the core essence of psychological health and safety, exploring its key components and significance, and is ultimately an avenue to begin the discussion on how we can work together to make changes to foster an increasingly supportive and nurturing workplace for our staff.

Psychological health and safety hold profound importance and is a topic close to my heart. I know there's a lot of buzz and confusion surrounding mental health, however, just as we diligently care for our physical well-being through exercise and nutrition, acknowledging and nurturing our mental health is equally vital. In today's fast paced work environment, focusing solely on physical safety is no longer enough to ensure the holistic well-being of staff. Psychological health and safety have emerged as integral components of a thriving workplace, highlighting the significance of building a workplace culture that fosters support for staffs' emotional and mental equilibrium.

In the healthcare field, ensuring psychological health and safety for healthcare workers is especially vital. Healthcare workers face unique challenges, and it's crucial for us at KHSC to recognize and address these issues, especially after the pandemic. Prioritizing our mental well-being helps us provide better care to our patients.

Understanding the Essence of Psychological Health and Safety:

In Canada, healthcare organizations are taking significant strides to prioritize the psychological health and safety of their workforce. An instrumental guide in this effort is the [National Standard of Canada for Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace](#) (the 'Standard'). This framework offers valuable insights into promoting mental well-being across various industries, including healthcare.

The heart of the 'Standard' is in its definition of a psychologically sound workplace: "*A workplace that champions the psychological well-being of employees and actively prevents any form of harm to their mental health, be it through negligence, recklessness, or intentional actions*".

Picture this, an environment where every staff feels secure, emotionally robust, and supported to build psychological resiliency. That's the essence of psychological health and safety. Just like we prioritize our physical safety, psychological well-being is all about understanding the factors that affect our mental well-being and then taking action to address them. These factors include things like the sources of stress in our environment and how we work collaboratively to manage it, the complexities of our workload, our relationships with others, and the overall atmosphere at work. In the healthcare field, the intricate nature of patient care can expose us to both psychological and physical challenges that are not always preventable. However, by cultivating a supportive work environment, we can strengthen our resilience and better equip ourselves to recover from or minimize the effects of these challenges. In truth, the significance of psychological well-being and safety extends its influence across every facet of the workplace, and the duty to uphold it rests on the shoulders of each one of us—be it front-line clinical staff, support staff, or our leaders. It centres on implementing strategies, approaches, policies,

and resources that promote the psychological well-being of our workforce and prevent harm to psychological health due to negligent, reckless or intentional acts.

The 15 Psychosocial Factors:

The Standard is composed of 13 key factors that collectively define a psychologically healthy and safe workplace with 2 additional factors specific to a health care environment:

1. **Organizational Culture:** A work environment where the shared values, beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors that shape the overall atmosphere and interactions within a workplace, influencing the psychological well-being of staffs.
2. **Psychological Support:** A work environment that promotes emotional well-being and psychological resiliency by offering resources, assistance, and interpersonal connections to help staffs cope with stressors and challenges.
3. **Clear Leadership & Expectations:** A work environment where there is effective leadership, support, and direction, that helps employees know what they need to do, how their work contributes to the organization, and whether there are impending changes.
4. **Civility & Respect:** A work environment that cultivates a workplace culture characterized by politeness, consideration, and valuing the opinions and contributions of all individuals.
5. **Psychological Job Fit:** A work environment where staff emotional and interpersonal skills align with the specific job requirements.
6. **Growth & Development:** A work environment that offers opportunities for staff to enhance their skills, knowledge, and career progression, thereby contributing to their sense of purpose and well-being.
7. **Recognition & Reward:** A work environment that acknowledges and celebrates staff achievements and efforts, providing positive reinforcement for their contributions in a fair and timely manner.
8. **Involvement & Influence:** A work environment that empowers staffs by involving them in decision-making processes and allowing them to have a say in matters that affect their work environment.
9. **Workload Management:** A work environment where g workloads are distributed in a balanced manner such that tasks and responsibilities can be accomplished successfully within the time available
10. **Engagement:** A work environment where staff are emotionally invested, motivated to do their job well, and connected and committed to their work.
11. **Work-life Balance:** A work environment where staff are encouraged to achieve a harmonious balance between their work responsibilities and personal life, supporting their overall mental health.
12. **Psychological Protection:** A work environment that creates an atmosphere to support staffs' psychological well-being by addressing sources of stress, promoting a sense of security, and reducing negative impacts.
13. **Protection of Physical Safety:** A work environment where there are measures to protect the physical safety and well-being of staff in their work environment.

Additional Psychosocial Factors specific to Health Care Workers:



- **Protection from Moral Distress:** A work environment that enables staff to perform their work with a sense of integrity that is supported by their profession, their colleagues, and their employer.
- **Psychological Self-Care:** A work environment that encourages staff to engage in deliberate practices and activities that are aimed at maintaining and enhancing one's own mental health and emotional well-being.

Elevating Psychological Health and Safety: A Win-Win for You and KHSC!

Embracing the core values of psychological well-being doesn't just benefit our exceptional staff—YOU—it's a victory for our entire organization. When we wholeheartedly champion these principles, KHSC is poised to nurture a culture teeming with vitality. In this thriving atmosphere, job satisfaction skyrockets, productivity thrives, and the connections binding us to our mission intensify.

As we dive further into the world of workplace well-being, it becomes crystal clear that psychological health and safety play a pivotal role in molding our shared journey. These elements stand as the very foundation, shaping an environment where positivity abounds, energy flourishes, and true fulfillment is within our grasp.

Your thoughts and perspectives are crucial in our journey to foster enhanced psychological health and safety at KHSC. I wholeheartedly invite you to join us as we cultivate resilience, champion each other's mental well-being, and foster a culture where our collective aspiration is boundless personal growth. This journey belongs to all of us, and its potential to positively shape our overall well-being is nothing short of remarkable. As the Workplace Mental Wellness, my role is to collaborate with individuals, teams, and leaders to assess and understand the challenges and stressors that affect Psychological Health & Safety, in order for us to tackle them together, one step at a time.

Feel free to reach out and email me directly or [click here](#) for a confidential, anonymous platform to share your thoughts. Together, our collective efforts have the power to create a profound impact.

References:

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