

Psychosocial Hazards

The CSA Standard for Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace defines psychosocial hazards as “elements of the work environment, management practices, or organizational practices that pose a risk to mental health and well-being.” If psychosocial hazards at work are not recognized or identified, they could potentially create an unsafe work environment for everyone.

There are resources available, such as online training, seminars, the CSA Standard, etc. When implemented, these resources can help bring awareness to yourself and others. An organization's ability to integrate psychosocial hazard prevention into its occupational health and safety program will help workers understand their roles and responsibilities when it comes to psychosocial hazard awareness.

Why It Is Important

Workers who feel they have a good support network have greater job attachment, commitment and overall job satisfaction. Organizations will benefit from developing programs and training to support workers who may be experiencing psychosocial trauma. Benefits can include lower turnover rates, boosted worker morale, fewer attendance issues, increased worker efficiency and greater success amongst leadership teams.

Things To Look For

We need to remember that every worksite is different and there is no single way to identify the risks. However, look out for:

- Someone being bullied or harassed by their peers
- Too much work and not enough time
- Workers feeling unsupported by supervision or management
- Workers being asked to do certain tasks that may be dangerous to their safety
- Threats of physical violence
- Witnessing a traumatic event
- Unfulfilling work or no development opportunity

No two workers are the same, and each individual may respond differently to certain risks. Identification of these risks is key to solving the issues.

The regular routines of morning coffee and conversation in the lunchroom or trailer could be the first steps to becoming aware that something may be “off”. You may begin to notice things like:

- Poor work attendance
- Withdrawal behaviours
- Conflicts with others
- Overreaction to certain situations
- Headaches
- Burnout
- Anxiety
- Increase in careless or reckless behaviour
- Change in eating habits
- Signs of substance abuse

What Do I Do When I Recognize the Signs?

Speak out – The best thing to do is not to stay quiet. A simple conversation with someone could be all it takes to assist them to get the help they need. Using active listening, you may be able to give someone a chance to talk about it. If you feel you can't speak to them directly, speak to a supervisor or a manager.

What Do I Do If I am Experiencing Symptoms?

Sometimes, it may be difficult to open up to someone at work due to feelings of insecurity or embarrassment. If you feel as though you need help or are just looking to talk to someone without judgment, you can call or text 811 for mental health or addictions support in Saskatchewan. You can also call or text 988 to access a suicide crisis helpline. Someone will provide you with assistance to get the services you need.



For more resources, visit: <https://www.ccohs.ca/workplace-mental-health-toolkit>

Sources:

https://www.ccohs.ca/oshanswers/psychosocial/mentalhealth_risk

<https://mentalhealthcommission.ca/national-standard/>