

# Are you protecting your most important business asset?

No matter how big or small, any company's biggest asset is its employees.

## Top 5 reasons to invest in employee wellness:

- 1 More productive and engaged employees
- 2 Improved workplace culture and staff morale
- 3 Reduced absenteeism
- 4 Less turnover and better ability to attract new talent
- 5 Good return on investment - wellness programs don't have to be expensive to show results

### Your workplace wellness is our business.

Thunder Bay District Health Unit is here to support you in building a workplace wellness program.

We offer guidance and various helpful tools and resources. Contact our team of workplace wellness experts today!

**All services are free!**



[TBDHU.com/workplaces](https://tbdhu.com/workplaces)



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# WHAT IS A HEALTHY WORKPLACE?

In a healthy workplace, organizational leaders, employees and other partners combine efforts to enhance the wellbeing of people at work.

## Healthy workers are good for business!

Organizations that support employee wellness create positive work environments. Not only does this enhance employee health, it also leads to workers being more engaged, satisfied with their jobs and devoted to company success. This, in turn, results in:

- increased productivity
- better staff morale
- reduced absenteeism
- higher retention
- fewer health-related costs
- improved company reputation



### Successful wellness programs ensure that:



**the workplace is free of hazards to physical safety**



**employee mental health is promoted and protected**



**healthy lifestyle choices are encouraged and supported**



**the organization is involved in supporting the community**



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## TBDHU is here to help!

We offer free guidance and resources.



Mobilize

Assess

Plan

Do

Evaluate

# MOBILIZE

Developing a workplace wellness program begins with gaining commitment from all workplace groups, especially management. This ensures that everyone is working towards the same goal and that the program has the resources needed to be successful over time.



## Key Steps

- Determine who needs to be involved (business owners, managers, human resources, unions, employee groups, etc.).
- Establish a Workplace Wellness Committee made up of members from various levels and sectors in the workforce, including at least one senior leader.
- Develop a Terms of Reference.
- Designate an Workplace Wellness Champion.
- Gather information and present a business case that outlines the potential benefits.
- Secure buy-in from management that goes beyond endorsement. Leaders should also allocate resources to the program, be actively engaged and encourage staff to participate.
- Put a written policy in place that formally adopts the program.
- Collaborate with the Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee, Psychological Health and Safety Committee, and other committees as appropriate.



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# ASSESS

One of the first tasks of the Workplace Wellness Committee will be to gather and analyze workplace data in order to understand the needs of employees and of the organization. This step is essential for making sure that the Workplace Wellness Program targets the most important areas. It also establishes baseline data to measure the impact of the program in the future.



## Key Steps

- Develop an assessment plan that outlines what data will be gathered and how.
- Examine information on absenteeism, benefits costs, etc.
- Conduct surveys and/or interviews with employee groups about what's important to them. Remember to protect confidentiality!
- Audit the work environment.
- Review current policies and practices.
- Reflect on previous health initiatives, considering what worked well and what didn't.
- Analyze the information gathered. Look for trends over time and areas for improvement.
- Make sure all employee groups have been included.
- Select the high priority areas that the workplace wellness program will aim to address.
- Summarize and communicate the main findings from the assessment and decisions on priority areas to all collaborators, including leadership and employees alike.



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# PLAN

A healthy workplace plan details how the Workplace Wellness Committee will address the priorities identified in the needs assessment. Thoughtful planning at this stage will help to avoid surprises and roadblocks later.



## Key Steps

Develop a strategic plan that outlines goals, objectives, activities, roles and responsibilities, timelines, budget, etc. The plan should:

- Combine organizational and individual approaches to address the unique needs and priorities identified during at the assessment stage.
- Integrate physical health, psychological health, personal health resources and community involvement.
- Build a corporate culture of health.
- Include input from leadership.
- Engage employees at all levels of the organization and from all work groups.
- Provide staff with incentives for participating.
- Include approaches for how to promote the program to all staff.
- Use evidence-based strategies and include activities that are technology-based.
- Consider what data to collect to monitor progress and evaluate the program later on.
- Involve external professionals, as appropriate.
- Recognize any training needs required for the program to be successful.



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Evaluate

## DO

Carrying out the Workplace Wellness Plan is what this step is all about. As the program is underway, keep in mind that it's important for organizational leaders to be continuously involved and employees to be engaged.



## Key Steps

- Implement the Workplace Wellness Plan ensuring that offerings are available to all workers.
- Provide ongoing communication that promotes the wellness activities, the benefits of participating, changes to any policies, etc. It is ideal to have this communication come from leadership as it demonstrates that employee wellness is important to the organization.
- Respect each employee's choice to participate.
- Track participation in wellness activities and collect other helpful information for measuring progress later on.
- Make program adjustments as needed. If the program appears to be faltering, examine reasons as to why and how it could be improved.
- Maintain strong linkages with the Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee, the Psychological Health & Safety Committee, and other groups as appropriate.
- Encourage employees to provide ongoing feedback and ideas to the Workplace Wellness Committee, either formally or informally.
- Orient any new staff to what the organization offers to support employee wellness.



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# EVALUATE

Evaluating the Workplace Wellness Program shows what difference it is making and helps to maintain management support. Measuring progress helps to identify how the program can be refined. Improvements can be captured in an updated plan that continues to build a healthier workplace.



## Key Steps

- Review data already gathered and collect any new information needed to measure the quality and impact of the wellness program. This could include an employee survey to assess satisfaction with activities. Participant testimonials can also help demonstrate program success.
- Analyze the information collected. Compare data to what was collected at the start of the program, if possible.
- Consult with employees for their perspectives to better understand evaluation data, if needed.
- Reflect on what is working well and what can be enhanced.
- Celebrate achievements.
- Disseminate evaluation results to organizational leadership and to employees at all levels. Highlight successes of what is working well to promote employee wellness.
- Refine the plan as needed to improve the program.
- Continue with efforts to build a healthier workplace.



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## Lead positive change at work because healthy minds matter!



### The mental wellness of workers is crucial to the performance of any organization.

Workplaces from all sectors are recognizing how the mental wellness of employees can have an impact on absenteeism, presenteeism, job performance and ultimately, staff turnover.

Getting started on promoting and protecting employee mental wellness can seem overwhelming at the start. However, you likely don't have to start from scratch. Review what you are already doing. Use existing resources to strengthen your efforts. Look to [Canada's National Standard for Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace](#) as a framework to guide you.

### What is the National Standard?

The National Standard for Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace is a set of guidelines to advise workplaces in promoting mental health and preventing psychological harm at work.

Implementing "the Standard" is voluntary, but there are several branches of law that emphasize an employer's duty to protect, promote and accommodate psychological health and safety. It's also the right thing to do!

Visit [superiormentalwellnessatwork.com](http://superiormentalwellnessatwork.com) to learn more about "the Standard."

### Recommendations for Canadian Business Leaders

The Centre for Addiction and Mental Health recommends the following evidence-based actions for leaders to champion mental health in their workplace.

#### Create a long-term organizational business strategy

This strategy should work hand-in-hand with your overall business strategy.

#### Institute mandatory mental health training for leadership

Effective leaders must be trained, invested in, and sensitive to workplace mental health.

#### Develop tailored mental health supports

There is no one-size-fits-all solution. Effective programs are evidence-based, targeted, and inclusive.

#### Prioritize and optimize your return-to-work process checklist

Return to work should not mark the end of support for the employee; it's a critical stage in the support process.

#### Track your progress

Performance measurement is the keystone of a sound workplace mental health strategy.

*Source: CAMH's Mental Health Playbook for Business Leaders*





# Key Resources

Several great resources are available for free to any organization looking to promote and protect employee mental health. Below are some key resources that provide helpful guidance right from the start.

To help you find what you're looking for, links to these and many more resources are listed all in one place at [superiormentalwellnessatwork.com](https://superiormentalwellnessatwork.com)

## Think Mental Health

[ThinkMentalHealth.ca](https://ThinkMentalHealth.ca) provides informative and actionable mental health resources, with the goal of helping you create a psychologically safe and healthy workplace. This site provides access to reputable and tested tools, models and frameworks. The tools on this site were reviewed to ensure they provide sound and practical advice for reducing stigma and managing mental health hazards in your workplace. Check out the interactive "Roadmap" tool that provides guidance and resources based on where you are at.

Source: [ThinkMentalHealth.ca](https://ThinkMentalHealth.ca)

## CAMH Workplace Mental Health Playbook for Business Leaders

This user-friendly [playbook](#) provides a path to more effective solutions and better outcomes for employees and for businesses. The Centre for Addiction and Mental Health's (CAMH's) powerful recommendations are based on the best available evidence, and were shaped by feedback from business leaders, as well as researchers, clinicians and experts. It is an invaluable tool to help business leaders take on the cause of employee mental wellness with confidence.

Source: <https://www.camh.ca/en/health-info/workplace-mental-health-playbook-for-business-leaders>

## WSPS Mental Harm Prevention Roadmap

The [Mental Harm Prevention Roadmap](#) is a free tool that was developed by Workplace Safety and Prevention Services (WSPS) in collaboration with Howatt HR Consulting. It offers an evidence-based approach that helps employers create and implement strategies, programs and policies related to psychological health and safety. The Roadmap is designed to complement the National Standard for Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace.

Source: <https://mentalhealthroadmap.wsps.ca/>

## Workplace Strategies for Mental Health

The [Workplace Strategies for Mental Health website](#) is where you'll find tools and resources for workplace mental health and psychological safety. Everything is available at no cost, compliments of Canada Life. The tools and resources on a wide range of mental health topics are evidence- and practice-based, easy to use, customizable, produced in English and French, and available to download or print.

Source: <https://www.workplacestrategiesformentalhealth.com>

## CMHA Takeaways Toolkit

The Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) and the Mental Health Commission of Canada (MHCC) collaborated to create [The Takeaways Toolkit](#). The toolkit was informed by the MHCC's 2018 Case Study Research Project on how 40 workplaces have implemented the National Standard for Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace. Offering best practices and activities, The Takeaways Toolkit is meant to guide other workplaces to help put the Standard into practice.

Source: <https://cmha.ca/what-we-do/national-programs/workplace-mental-health/takeaways/>

## Local resources are here to help too!

The Superior Mental Wellness @ Work project aims to promote workplace environments that reduce psychological hazards and maintain positive mental health for employees in Thunder Bay and across the District.

Visit [SuperiorMentalWellnessatWork.com](https://superiormentalwellnessatwork.com) for:

- **FREE LOCAL RESOURCES**  
to promote mental health and reduce stigma in your workplace.
- **LINKS TO USEFUL INFORMATION**  
on various mental health topics for workplace leaders and employees.
- **UPCOMING EVENTS**  
and details on local workplace mental health training, webinars and opportunities to participate in research.
- **HELPFUL MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES**  
nearby and online.
- **WELLNESS @ WORK E-BULLETIN**  
Sign up to get timely workplace health promotion news.

# WORKPLACE MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES

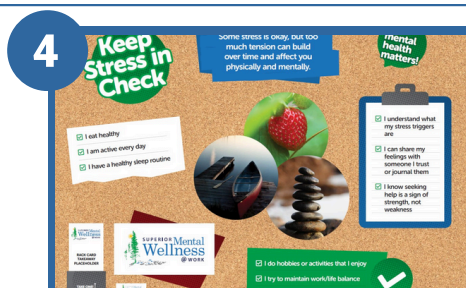
Promote positive mental health to your employees with these resources that are available to any workplace in Thunder Bay and District.



## Help Cards

Place these help cards in common areas or on a supervisor's desk. They list key services for anyone who needs mental health support. Card holders can also be provided.

*Free!*



## Bulletin Board Kits

Choose from seven designs. Kits come with pieces ready to be cut out and posted. Resource cards are also provided with holders that easily attach to a bulletin board. See the reverse side for the other six designs.

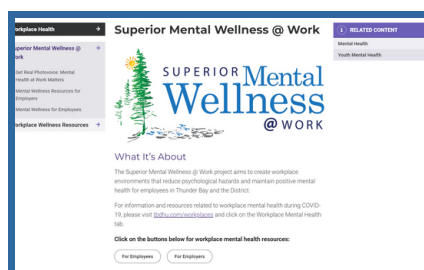
*Free!*



## Get Real Photovoice

Put this mobile art exhibit on display at your workplace. It features creative local photos that spark conversation about mental health at work. View the virtual exhibit at [superiormentalwellnessatwork.com](http://superiormentalwellnessatwork.com)

*Free!*



## Website

Visit the “one-stop-shop” for links to various credible resources on workplace mental health located at: [superiormentalwellnessatwork.com](http://superiormentalwellnessatwork.com). Portals for employees and workplace leaders guide you to easily find what you're looking for. New resources are added frequently, so keep checking back to see what's new!

To access the help cards, bulletin board kits or the Get Real photovoice exhibit, email [workplacewellness@tbdhu.com](mailto:workplacewellness@tbdhu.com)






# WORKPLACE MENTAL HEALTH BULLETIN BOARD KITS

1


# Get Real Photovoice

The Superior Mental Wellness & Work project asked the community to portray their mental health at work through creative photography. REAL images and stories were shared by REAL people who bravely and honestly answered two questions:


## How do you really feel at work?




I am a counselor and medicate to keep my anxiety away.



Two weeks of the quarantine. Love, pride and joy but extreme isolation and boredom. The list on this one is both beautiful and dangerous.




Somebody at work (I think it was my boss) was really nice, thoughtful, and kind. I think I'll be head and I think I'll be head.




I feel really good about the day and the work I do. I feel good about the day and the work I do. I feel good about the day and the work I do.


## How do you take care of your mental health at work?




Sometimes, I'm alone and sometimes I'm not. I'm alone and sometimes I'm not.



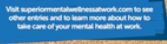
I make sure to get outside and walk or run or bike. I make sure to get outside and walk or run or bike. I make sure to get outside and walk or run or bike.



BACK CARD  
REWARDS  
PLACEHOLDER



Take Care



Take Care

**2**

# Mental Health in the Workplace

**My mental health matters!**

Mental health issues are a reality for many. A better understanding helps to reduce stigma and encourages people to get the help they need.

**MYTH:** Mental illnesses aren't real illnesses.

**FACT:** Mental illnesses create distress, don't go away on their own, and are real health problems with effective treatments.

**MYTH:** Mental illnesses are just an excuse for poor behaviour.

**FACT:** Some people with a mental illness may act differently. But, remember that it's the illness behind these behaviours, not the person, and they may feel quite embarrassed or ashamed about them.

**Be a Mythbuster!**

**MYTH:** People who ask for help in dealing with a mental illness are weak.

**FACT:** Asking for help when you need it is a sign of strength, not weakness.

**MYTH:** People with mental illnesses are violent and dangerous.

**FACT:** People with a mental illness are no more violent than others. They are actually much more likely to be victims of violence.

**Also available in French**




BACK CARD  
TALKBACK  
PUSHFORWARD

TAKE CHARGE

TAKE CHARGE

3

# Promoting Good Mental Health

Healthy habits are important for a healthy body and a healthy mind too!

**Your mental health matters!**

## Keep stress in check

- Set priorities and stay organized
- Try deep breathing
- Take breaks
- Talk to your supervisor if you need support

## Sit less and move more often

- If you work at a desk, set a timer to remind you to move every hour.
- When a meeting or standing meeting.
- Take as often breaks – go for a brisk walk instead of sitting.
- Do activities you enjoy.

## Eat well

- Eat more vegetables, fruits, whole grains.
- Cut down on sugar
- Pack a healthy lunch at home
- Choose water when you're thirsty

## Don't miss out on sleep

- Avoid caffeine before bed.
- Screen devices at least an hour before bed
- Be active during the day
- Keep consistent sleep times even on weekends.

RACK CARD  
TAKING  
PLACE

THANK YOU

**5**

**Work Life Balance**

**Your mental health matters!**

Staying in balance helps you manage the demands of each day.

- Make time to do the things you enjoy.** (Icon: paint palette and brush)
- Be realistic about what you can achieve in one day.** (Icon: three horizontal lines with circles at the end)
- Take your breaks to do something for yourself (stretch, walk, listen to music).** (Icon: musical notes)
- Personalize your workspace if allowed.** (Icon: desk with chair and a red heart)
- Stick to set work hours. Avoid checking on work when you're at home.** (Icon: speaker with an 'x' over it)
- Eat well. Get enough sleep. Drink water. Be active.** (Icon: apple)
- Build downtime into your schedule.** (Icon: person jumping)

Workday Wellness  
BACK CARD  
TAKENOTES  
BLACKBOARD

Workday Wellness  
TAKENOTES  
BLACKBOARD

**SUPERIOR Mental Wellness @ WORK**

**6 ways to reduce mental health stigma**

- Stand up to mental health stigma**  
 Image: Back Card Stigma Placard (SAFE CMO) and Stigma Card (SAFE CMO)
- Ending mental health stigma encourages people to reach out for support when they need it.**
- Your words and actions matter!**  
 Image: Head with lightbulb icon
- Have open conversations**  
 Image: Group of people talking icon  
 Tip: Create a culture where it's safe to speak freely about mental health.
- Educate yourself about mental health**  
 Image: Head with lightbulb icon  
 Tips:
  - Check your internal biases
  - Challenge myths and stereotypes
- Support your coworkers**  
 Image: People helping each other icon  
 Tips:
  - Listen with compassion
  - Share helpful resources
  - Align seeking help with strength, not weakness

**Choose your words wisely**  
 Image: Lightbulb and speech bubble icon  
 Tips:
 

- Be mindful that words like "crazy," "psycho" or "nuts" reinforce stigma.
- Use positive language that avoids labeling a person.

**Resources:**  
 Superior Mental Wellness @WORK  
 QR code: Scan this QR code to learn more

**7**

# Is Substance Use Affecting Your Life?

**Where are you?**

- Abstinence**  
Not using substances at all
- Beneficial Use**  
Use that can have positive effects on social, physical, and spiritual health
- Non-Problematic Use**  
Recreational use and has minimal impact
- Problematic Use**  
Use that is starting to negatively impact your life
- Chronic Dependence**  
Habitual and compulsive use despite negative effects

**If substances are causing you problems and you often experience most of these ...**

- Missing or arriving late to work
- Poor concentration
- Hard time making decisions
- Worsening job performance
- Mood changes
- Physical effects  
(i.e., hangover, withdrawal)

**...What can you do?**

- ☒ Assess your substance use
- ☒ Talk to someone you trust
- ☒ Seek professional mental health services
- ☒ Ask your supervisor for support
- ☒ Focus on your self-care

**Resources:**

- International Women's Wellness: BACK CARD, TIME CARD, PLACEHOLDER
- TIME CARD
- TIME CARD
- Superior Mental Wellness @WORK
- SCAW TIME CARD, PLACEHOLDER



# WHAT IS SUPERIOR MENTAL WELLNESS @ WORK?

*Healthy Minds Matter  
at work!*



## WHO WE ARE

Superior Mental Wellness @ Work is a collaborative project that aims to promote workplace environments that reduce psychological hazards and maintain positive mental health for employees in Thunder Bay and across the District. It is coordinated by the Thunder Bay District Health Unit and supported by an Advisory Group. The Advisory Group is made up of over 20 community partners from local public and private-sector organizations who work together to provide the supports needed for local employees to have optimum mental wellness.

The list of current Advisory Group members is available at [superiormentalwellnessatwork.com](http://superiormentalwellnessatwork.com)

## WHAT WE DO

The Superior Mental Wellness @ Work Advisory Group recently updated its strategic action plan. Over the next few years, the project will focus on fulfilling objectives that fall under the following four main pillars.



Coordinate mental health training for leaders



Reduce and prevent mental health stigma in the workplace



Develop and share accessible workplace mental health tools and resources



Implement and evaluate evidence-based interventions



[superiormentalwellnessatwork.com](http://superiormentalwellnessatwork.com)

### Check out our website to:

- Find credible information on various workplace mental health topics for employers and employees
- Access free resources to promote mental health and reduce stigma
- Register for webinars, training and other upcoming events
- Find helpful mental health services nearby and online
- Learn about workplace mental health research opportunities



## INTERESTED IN THE ADVISORY GROUP?

Membership on the Superior Mental Wellness @ Work Advisory Group is open to individuals from private and public sector organizations with a desire to promote mental wellness for employees in Thunder Bay and District worksites.

Email [workplacewellness@tbdhu.com](mailto:workplacewellness@tbdhu.com) to learn more or inquire about joining.



# Sign up for the **WELLNESS @ WORK E-BULLETIN**

Receive regular updates on news related to local workplace wellness sent directly to your inbox!

## Be first to know about:

- ☒ Upcoming education and training events
- ☒ New workplace wellness resources
- ☒ TBDHU workplace wellness challenges and contests
- ☒ Local workplace wellness research

Visit **[TBDHU.com/workplaces](https://www.tbdhu.com/workplaces)**


to sign up. Updates are sent approximately once a month and you can unsubscribe at any time.



**CONTACT US**

[workplacewellness@tbdhu.com](mailto:workplacewellness@tbdhu.com)

## Employee Mental Wellness Rack Card



### Take care of yourself

- Set priorities and be realistic about what you can achieve each day.
- Take regular breaks at work.
- Practice relaxation and breathing techniques.
- Be kind to yourself. Avoid the pitfalls of self-criticism or striving for perfection.
- Aim to balance work and home life. Detach from work when you are done your work day
- Eat well, stay active, drink water and get enough sleep.
- Seek help if you are struggling to cope.

### Help your co-workers

- Encourage each other to take breaks.
- Express specific and genuine gratitude for your colleague's efforts.
- Contribute to a positive workplace culture.
- If a coworker seems troubled, let them know you are there for support. Listen without giving advice. Ask what you can do to help. Support them to get professional help, if needed.

If you, or someone you know, is experiencing a mental health crisis, call 911, go to the nearest emergency room, or call the **Crisis Response Hotline** at (807) 346-8282 in Thunder Bay or 1-866-888-8988 toll-free in the District.

### Lead positive change

Workplace leaders are encouraged to:

- Learn more about implementing the National Standard for Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace.
- Have zero tolerance for disrespectful behaviours.
- Ensure staff is clear about what is expected of them and how their work contributes to the organization.
- Provide opportunities for employees to develop their skills.
- Support employees that come forward with mental health concerns.
- Encourage and listen to staff ideas.
- Be as flexible as you can with work schedules.
- Make consistent and fair decisions.
- Celebrate achievements and recognize staff commitment.
- Ensure employees have the resources they need to do their job well.
- Promote healthy choices and encourage breaks.
- Encourage staff to work safely and to report any hazards in the work environment.

Visit **SuperiorMentalWellnessAtWork.com** for:

- Helpful mental health services nearby.
- More information and resources on promoting mental health in the workplace.

The **Superior Mental Wellness @ Work** project aims to create workplace environments that reduce psychological hazards and maintain positive mental health for employees in Thunder Bay and the District.

## Mental Health Services Information Card



Find a full range of mental health resources for employees and for workplace leaders at: [SuperiorMentalWellnessAtWork.com](http://SuperiorMentalWellnessAtWork.com)



### MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS?

Options for getting help:

-  Call 911
-  Go to the nearest emergency room
-  Contact Crisis Response  
Thunder Bay, call: 807-346-8282  
Thunder Bay District, call: 1-866-888-8988  
Text from anywhere: 807-346-8282
-  Call or text 988 to reach the Suicide Crisis Helpline
-  Call the Connex Ontario Mental Health Helpline at 1-866-531-2600
-  Chat online at [HopeforWellness.ca](http://HopeforWellness.ca) or call 1-855-242-3310 (for all Indigenous People across Canada)
-  Visit a walk-in counselling clinic in Thunder Bay  
Call 807-684-1880 for times and locations
-  Visit [TBDHU.com/mentalhealthsupport](http://TBDHU.com/mentalhealthsupport) for a full list of local mental health services nearby
-  Inquire if your company offers an Employee Assistance Program (EAP). Contact #: \_\_\_\_\_

### NEXT STEPS:

These free cards are available for workplace leaders to order in bulk for distribution among their employees.

Free webinar!



Facilitator: Krystina Hunter of  
K. Hunter Workplace Consulting



# Creating a Psychologically Healthy Workplace

*Simple steps for workplace leaders*

Learn about:

- The importance of taking intentional steps to support the mental health of your workforce - and the costs of doing nothing
- Simple steps any workplace leader can take, even those with competing priorities, to start or continue building a psychologically healthy work environment
- Practical approaches in the areas of training, stigma reduction, strategy development, and communications
- General tips informed by best practices and backed by experience to ensure your efforts are worthwhile, valuable, and effective



Wednesday, December 4, 2024 from 10:00 - 11:00 am



Register at [SuperiorMentalWellnessAtWork.com](https://www.SuperiorMentalWellnessAtWork.com)



Interested, but can't attend? No problem! A link to the webinar recording will be sent to those who register.



Lakehead  
UNIVERSITY



EPID  
at work

## CALLING ALL WORKERS AND EMPLOYERS IN NWO:

### WE WANT TO HEAR ABOUT YOUR MENTAL HEALTH

Tell us about your experiences of mental health in the workplace for a groundbreaking new study in Northwestern Ontario.



For more info, contact  
[workinghealth@lakeheadu.ca](mailto:workinghealth@lakeheadu.ca)  
or visit [workinghealth.ca](https://www.workinghealth.ca)

