

What is Mental Health?

Just like physical health, we all have mental health. Mental health is a state of well-being that includes our thoughts and emotions. Our mental health can affect our ability to solve problems and overcome difficulties. It affects our social connections, how we “show up” at work, and even our physical feelings. We all experience changes in our mental health (e.g. feeling low after a very stressful week), but if those changes have an impact on our daily life, it may be a sign of a mental illness (e.g. depression that lasts more than two weeks).

Our workplace can play an important part in promoting positive mental health and supporting people when they are going through a tough time.

Risks to Mental Health at Work

- Inadequate health and safety policies
- Poor communication
- Lack of breaks and time to debrief
- Low input into how or why work is done
- Unreasonable or unclear expectations
- Not enough job training or preparedness
- Gossip and excluding others
- Bullying and harassment

Why Does This Matter?

When we don't have mental health awareness at work, it can negatively affect individual employees and organizational capacity.

These effects may include:

- Increased physical illnesses (e.g. flu)
- Higher rate of accidents and injury
- Low morale
- Higher turnover and absenteeism

Wellness Tips

It is important that we create a supportive culture and check in with each other on a regular basis. You don't have to wait until someone is in a crisis to be a caring co-worker.

Speak up when you have concerns. If you think there is a health hazard, a better way to do your work, an unreasonable expectation, or you're worried about someone's well-being, speak to your supervisor. If you are a supervisor, be patient and respectful when receiving this feedback, and go to your own manager if you need help.

Take your breaks and talk to your supervisor if you're having trouble finding the time or coverage to do so.

Learn more about free mental health resources available and access them as needed.

Additional Resources

Crisis Lines: 1-800-784-2433 or 9-8-8

Mental Health Support Line: 310-6789

Drug and Alcohol Info and Referral: 1-800-663-1441

Mental Health Services: helpstartshere.gov.bc.ca

Mental Health Information: heretohelp.bc.ca

Free Wellness Program: bouncebackbc.ca