



2021-2022 ANNUAL REPORT

Office of the Ombud for Mental Health and Employee Well-Being

RECOVERY. REFLECTION. RENEWAL.

"It is one thing to talk about the importance of mental health in the Government of Canada, it is another thing to take actions to improve it.

The Ombud's Office is where the rubber meets the road."

An Ombud Client in 2021-2022



The Office of the Ombud for Mental Health and Employee Well-Being



Office of the Ombud for Mental Health and Employee Well-Being

We are:

A passionate team of informal conflict management and harassment prevention professionals who provide an accessible, safe space for ISED employees to address difficulties in the workplace. Our team also includes dedicated employees supporting the programming of the Canadian Innovation Centre for Mental Health in the Workplace.



Canadian Innovation Centre for Mental Health in the Workplace



Informal Conflict Management and Professional Coaching Services

Our principles:

- Confidentiality
- Impartiality
- Independence
- Informality

Our mission:

We strive to create a healthy, positive and productive work environment for all ISED employees, at all levels within the organization and from every part of Canada, and to share our best practices in mental health and employee well-being throughout the federal public service.

Our vision:

A federal public service that embraces dialogue on mental health issues that is authentic, open, free of stigma and based on compassion.

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A message from the Ombud for Mental Health and Employee Well-Being

Recovery. Reflection. Renewal.

For yet another year, the Ombud's Office, like all of our colleagues throughout ISED and across the public service, operated in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. It remained a key issue for all and was at the heart of many of our consultations with employees. As such, we continued to deliver confidential services in a safe space environment in which our clients could speak freely, not only about their workplace issues, but also open up about their mental health distress.

2021-2022 can be characterized as a year of recovery, reflection and renewal: we began to **recover** from the physical and emotional impacts of the pandemic, albeit some more quickly and more fully than others; the whole COVID-19 experience gave us much to think about and generated much **reflection** on life and work and the quality of each; and we turned our minds and efforts towards **renewal**—of relationships, values, ways of living and working—and we developed a “future of work” mindset that would ultimately guide us through a transition to our new, post-pandemic reality.



Many of our colleagues also expressed the need for a real connection with each other, as well as an increased ability to do so; being engaged and contributing to the overall mandate of the department were also important to them. They often expressed feeling alone, isolated, and sometimes ignored. Working from home had a major impact on other social connections we had enjoyed previously every day while at work—meeting and discussing issues in the corridors or engaging in “water cooler” conversations.

As we approach an eventual return-to-the-workplace in a hybrid model, it will be very important to not lose sight of employees who continue working from home, while others are at the work location. It will also be critical for management to be vigilant about how employees, or units, may compare each other's work situations.

Some experts in the field of human stress have already published articles about the risk of people speaking a language of “us versus them,” comparing individuals or groups of individuals living different situations, such as the number of days at home, versus number of days at their work location. To ensure that all employees feel included in this new environment, it will also be important to have regular team meetings, and to discuss the benefits of improving team dynamics, holding brainstorming sessions, providing everyone with the ability to participate in meetings face-to-face, and continue to be innovative—bring new ideas—as a team.

Our entire office, including the conflict management practitioners on our Informal Conflict Management and Professional Coaching Services (ICM & PCS) team, will support this transition to the workplace through the delivery of specific services to help smooth the transition, and we will remain available to anyone who wants to address any concerns or issues they might have in this regard.

This past fiscal year proved to be another difficult one for ISED employees, with some feeling highly distressed for varying reasons, the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic not the least of them. As such, we continued to use the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) contract with Health Canada to deliver specialized services to affected employees. Regardless of the issue or how we are impacted by our external environment, it is a great reminder to all of us that we should do regular “check-ins” and take immediate and proactive measures when we observe or detect a mental health condition affecting our employees, a colleague or a supervisor. Our interventions, our help, and our support for each other cannot be overstated.

The Ombud’s Office at ISED took a leadership role in the Government of Canada in delivering the Workplace Mental Health Leadership Certification Program; more than 100 managers and executives are now fully trained and certified to support their employees through the Mental Health Framework. The Ombud’s Office will continue to be part of the mental health solution at ISED.



We are also proud that the Canadian Innovation Centre for Mental Health in the Workplace, managed by ISED and a key element of the Ombud's Office, was a contributing factor to ISED being recognized as a Top 100 Employer in Canada for the fourth year in a row. At time of publication, the Centre also achieved a major milestone having registered its 100,000th participant in its learning events since its creation in 2018.

Safeguarding the mental health and wellness of ISED employees, at all levels, in all sectors, and in all parts of the country, will remain our raison d'être in the coming year—and for many more to come.



Mario Baril
Ombud for Mental Health and Employee Well-Being

- **84%** of clients said they were satisfied with the quality of the services offered by the Ombud, notwithstanding the outcome of their specific situation.
- **88%** indicated that they were confident that confidentiality was preserved during the whole process.
- **92%** reported that the Ombud/Associate Ombud took the time to explain their role.
- **80%** said that the Office of the Ombud provided a timely response to their request for a meeting.
- **88%** agreed that the Ombud/Associate Ombud made them feel comfortable and that it was easy to have a conversation.
- **88%** said they would recommend the Ombud's office as a resource.
- After meeting with the Ombud/Associate Ombud, **76%** of clients reported having a better understanding of the options [available to them] to resolve their workplace issue.
- **68%** reported that after personally and actively engaging in one of the options or advice given by the Ombud/Associate Ombud, they achieved positive results.
- **60%** said that following their meeting(s) with the Ombud/Associate Ombud, they felt that their well-being had improved.
- **77%** of clients remained at ISED after using the Ombud's confidential services (compared with 87% last year).



2021-2022: The year in review

Office of the Ombud for Mental Health and Employee Well-Being

In FY 2021-2022, the Ombud and Associate Ombud met with 67 ISED employees who were seeking help with a workplace issue. Of the 67, some 15 (or 22%) raised issues related to “management style,” in which they labeled their work environment and their relationship with their supervisor as “micro-management, non-inclusive, abrasive, non-engaging, non-collaborative, [and/or] non-transparent.” In other cases, 12 clients (18%) indicated “feeling harassed or bullied,” while 11 employees (16%) had issues related to interpersonal working relationships, meaning that they believed their relationships with their colleagues or supervisors were “strained, ineffective, and leading towards tensions, anxiety and stress for them, and within the workplace.”

“An employer or designated recipient, the principal party and, if contacted under section 22, the responding party, must make every reasonable effort to resolve an occurrence for which notice is provided under subsection 15(1) and those efforts must begin no later than 45 days after the day on which that notice is provided.”

Workplace Harassment and Violence Prevention Regulations (SOR/2020-130)
Section 23 (1), Canada Labour Code



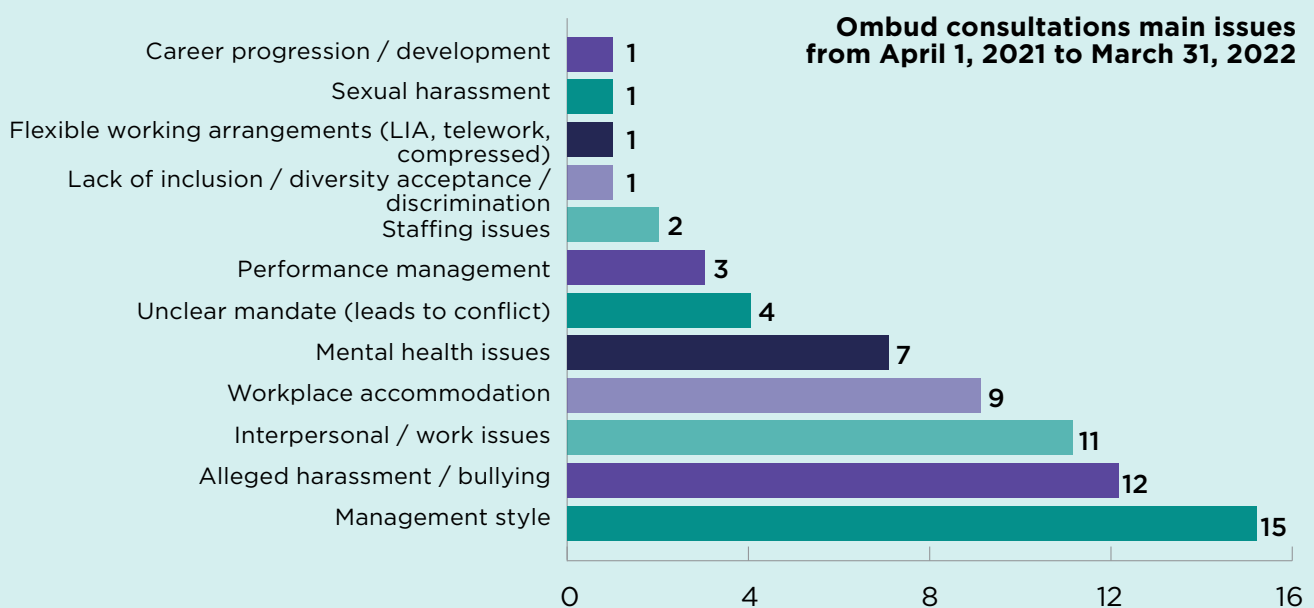
In many of these cases, when appropriate and applicable, our approach has been to offer the option of a facilitated discussion with a neutral third party—a discussion which is based on common interests and needs of each party—in order to restore the working relationship, based on trust and effectiveness. Of the nine cases where a facilitated conversation or a mediation took place, eight were successfully resolved while one resulted in a partial understanding between parties. We continue to achieve strong success results—more than 90% over the past three years—when both parties qualify for this informal process and participate in good faith.

It is important to note that the [Workplace Harassment and Violence Prevention Regulations](#) encourage parties to make a “reasonable effort” to resolve their situations through negotiated resolution. We encourage parties to consult with the Ombud and ICM & PCS services as quickly as possible when the notice of occurrence is delivered.

“Confidential, professional, prompt service that helped me understand both sides of the situation. The compassionate Ombud was also greatly appreciated.”

An Ombud Client in 2021-2022

It is also important to remember that the Ombud’s Office is an informal and impartial conflict prevention and resolution service. As such, we do not investigate nor determine who is right and who is wrong. We help clients by providing them with options and highly encourage them to execute the option that will best meet their specific objectives.



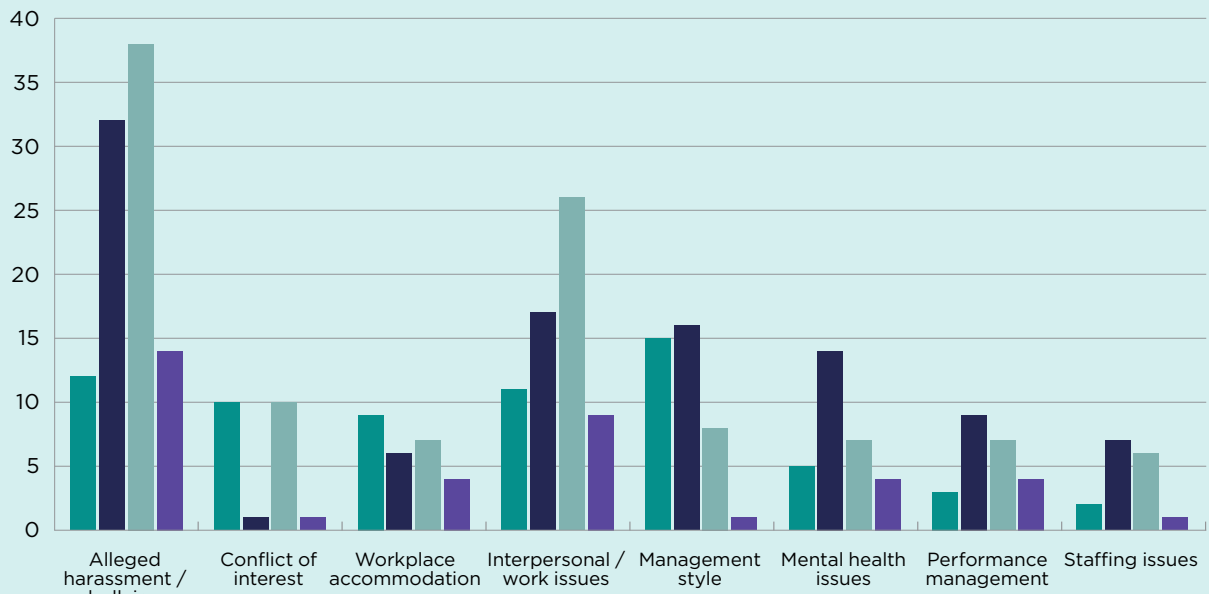
The initial intent of an Ombud client is often limited to “disclosing” their workplace issue to the Ombud and/or Associate Ombud. Once the issues are understood, clarified, reframed in a way that the client really understands all implications, it often becomes clearer that the client has a pivotal role to play in deciding on one or more of the options discussed with the Ombud’s Office.

In the spirit of our standards of impartiality and informality, we like to say that the Ombud’s client is in the “driver’s seat” and is totally responsible and accountable for taking action to resolve their issue. We recognize, however, that this requires access

to tools and resources, proper coaching, and different types of professional services. We are now seeing a trend of more and more employees seeking advice, development of more options, coaching sessions, and referrals to specialized services such as mediation, to equip them to address and successfully resolve their issues.

As such, close to 60% of our services will continue to focus on developing such options, along with coaching and specialized services. The other 40% will be mainly referrals to formal internal and external processes to help meet the client’s stated objectives in the consultation process.

Main issues per fiscal year



2021-2022	12	10	9	11	15	5	3	2
2020-2021	32	1	6	17	16	14	9	7
2019-2020	38	10	7	26	8	7	7	6
2018-2019	14	1	4	9	1	4	4	1

■ 2021-2022 ■ 2020-2021 ■ 2019-2020 ■ 2018-2019

One key performance indicator of success in an Ombud's Office is the retention rate of Ombud's clients. As in previous years, when most clients approach the Ombud's Office, they don't initially have a clear view of what they will do if their workplace issues are not resolved. We have identified these as "status quo/no specific intentions." It is important to note that at this early stage of consultation with the Ombud, it can be difficult for a client to see their specific situation clearly. It is often as a result of this first consultation that clients choose options that satisfy their specific objectives. The reality, however, is that all clients want the workplace situation to be resolved in a timely manner.

On the other hand, some clients come to the Ombud's Office with a clear idea of their intentions, regardless of whether their issue is resolved or not. In these cases, they have stated that their plan is to leave their current jobs, either by leaving the department for another one (22%), resigning or retiring (10%). Others had already found another job and simply wanted to do an "exit interview" to inform the Ombud of their experience (3%).

This means that more than one-third (36%) of our clients indicated, when they first consulted with us, that they intended to leave no matter what the outcome of their consultation process with the Ombud's Office. However, once these employees received proper coaching, or used other Ombud professional services, 77% decided to remain in the department, confident that their issues had been resolved.



Key recommendations from 2021-2022

Managers might consider making more regular check-ins with all of their employees and ask if there is anything that can be done differently to improve their mental health and overall well-being in the workplace. Previous Ombud Annual Reports also recommended this approach.

Managers should continue the best practice of showing active support for their employees' careers and professional development, especially during the return to the workplace transition where some employees might be less visible on a day-to-day basis.

One of the main reasons for increased incivility in the workplace is an organizational change—it is therefore important that managers communicate in a very transparent manner, and with clear leadership direction, the purpose and desired outcome of the transformation/change; employees should be engaged in such a way as to feel they have a voice, are involved in the process and decisions, and can influence the end result.

“I applied all the advice offered and was fortunately and positively surprised by the results obtained. I thought I was lining up for a derailment, but by applying your advice, the atmosphere quickly relaxed and I sincerely believe that the result would not have been positive otherwise.”

An Ombud Client in 2021-2022



Assessing and accessing the Employee Assistance Program

The Office of the Ombud for Mental Health and Employee Well-Being at ISED manages the



Employee Assistance Program

[Employee Assistance Program \(EAP\)](#), a

specialized contract with Health Canada for services to help all employees, and their families, address personal or work-related concerns that affect their well-being and/

or work performance. This confidential service is available 24/7/365. It is important to note that all ISED Employment Equity Groups can specifically ask for an EAP counselor of their specific community when they reach out to the EAP Program.

In January 2022, the Ombud's Office conducted a survey of all ISED employees to gain their views on how we might improve the delivery of counselling services available. Of those employees who had used EAP, we asked how effective their experiences were. We even asked those who hadn't used it to provide their views based on their experiences using similar services. We also asked what the reasons or barriers might be that are preventing people from using the services of EAP.

The confidential survey was designed to help shape our views and considerations with regards to any future improvements to the program or explore additional services to better meet employee needs. In FY 2021-2022, the Ombud joined the EAP Stakeholder Advisory Committee at Health Canada to provide guidance on areas for improvement.

One key measure of success is the take-up rate of the EAP service as a proactive measure in supporting mental health, well-being and productivity. We are proud to announce that the number of ISED employees using EAP rose from 9% in 2020-2021 to 11% in 2021-2022 (the public service average was 10.8%).



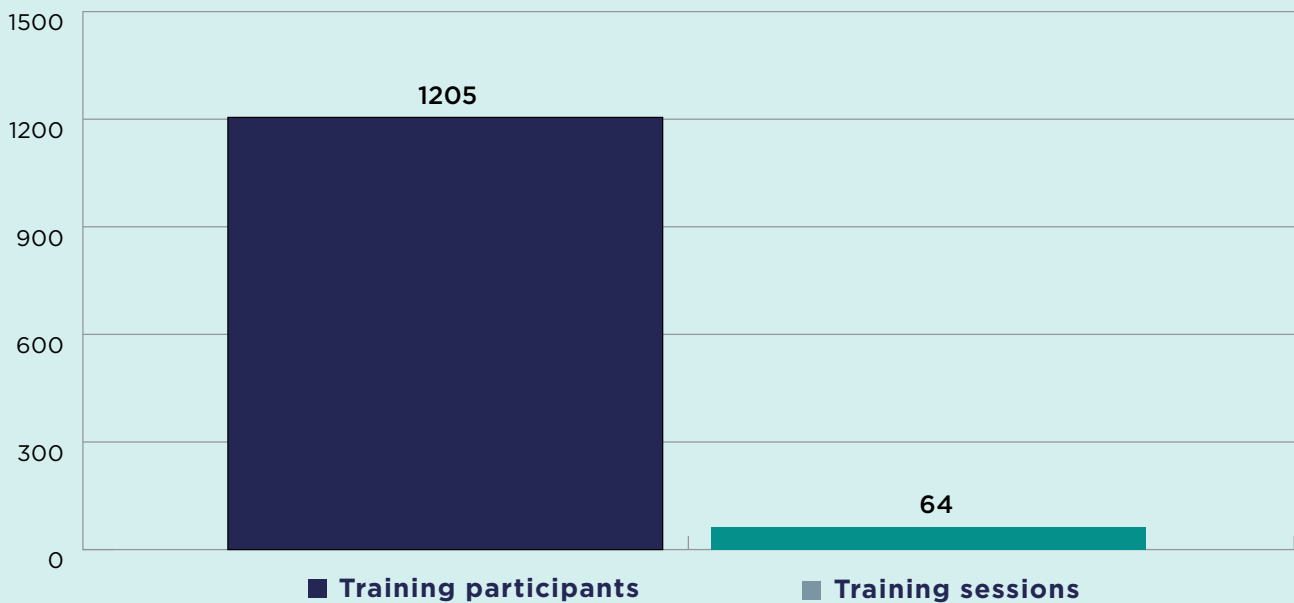
Informal Conflict Management and Professional Coaching Services (ICM & PCS)

In the context of COVID-19 and the realities of telework for the majority of ISED employees, the Informal Conflict Management and Professional Coaching Services (ICM & PCS) team was focused on proactive initiatives to prevent or address conflict, such as Emotional Intelligence (EQ-i) coaching and the delivery of workshops aimed specifically at addressing team effectiveness in adapting to the new working realities.

ICM & PCS served a total of 1,480 clients in 2021-2022: 275 individual clients and 1,205 employees who participated in 64 learning/training activities, or in any of the 505 professional services sessions which included consultations, coaching, group facilitation services and mediations.



**Training Sessions / Participants
From April 1, 2021 to March 31, 2022**



In terms of client satisfaction with ICM & PCS services, clients report agreeing or strongly agreeing with the following statements:

- **88.3%** said the service was provided in a prompt manner
- **94.1%** indicated that the conflict management practitioner clearly explained his/her role and the ICM & PCS services
- **100%** reported that the practitioner helped them better understand their issues
- **100%** said they were satisfied with the quality of the service(s), regardless of the outcome
- **94.1%** felt more effectively equipped to deal with their situation after using the service(s)

Following the successful EQ-i coaching pilot project in 2020-2021, ICM & PCS conducted a session specifically with ISED's National Managers' Community in 2021-2022 which attracted 45 participants. For each client, there is an average of four one-on-one meetings, which resulted in a total of 177 over the course of the fiscal year. The general principle behind these sessions is to empower individuals to grow their management skills, mindsets, and adopt new ways to interact with others in a more constructive manner. It is important to note that this program is intended as a way to support the growth of management skills, and not a program to "fix" management skills or performance issues. Participants in the program register on a proactive and voluntary basis as a way to build their skills and grow their career.

"I've spoken with both Michael [Nadon] and Joyce [Abarbanel] in the past about our ongoing issue with a lack of civility in the workplace on the part of two individuals ... and my concerns about the consequences. [Michael and Joyce] both provided excellent feedback and helped me to better consider my options. They are warm, open, direct and genuine in their desire to help. Joyce asks excellent questions that probe you to think further. In fact, through my experience with CPER (now ICM & PCS) over the years, I've learned and been able to apply conflict management tools and practices and share them with my staff as well. [ICM & PCS] has truly 'taught a man to fish.'"

An ICM & PCS Client in 2021-2022

“[EQ-i] was an excellent service. The discussion and support provided was thoughtful and welcoming. They were focused on talking through the issues and provided considerations to support reflection. I strongly recommend that those encountering challenging situations consider this service. It provides you with the tools that will help you get better at your job.”

An EQ-i participant in 2021-2022

Comments from the participants have been positive, with 76% strongly agreeing and 24% agreeing that the EQ-i assessment and coaching gave them new tools and new approaches to improve their EQ-i as it relates to leadership competencies.

The ICM & PCS team conducted 20 group interventions, or Workplace Assessments (WPA), over the course of the 2021-2022 fiscal year. A WPA is an impartial group process that enables a team to identify specific problems they have been experiencing so that team members working together can develop their own action plan (with or without professional support), and commit themselves to resolving these many and varied issues collectively.

During the process, individual perceptions are gathered in order to identify common themes of issues. A facilitator establishes an environment in which individuals can openly and honestly share their concerns and insights regarding the workplace situation. The process helps employees and managers identify recurring issues, challenges and interests, as well as the main needs of the team. Through a facilitated group discussion, a Conflict Management Practitioner helps the group to prioritize issues that will lead the group to an action plan.



Some examples of why teams ask to participate in this process:

- A team has been working on a number of issues or problems over a period of months, or even years, resulting in dysfunctional or polarized relationships between certain employees
- Some teams have been exposed to different managers during a short period of time, during which a reorientation of their role or mandate has resulted in confusion, gossiping, existence of cliques and disengagement
- One sector/team perceives a lack of support from another, which hampers them from successfully accomplishing their mission

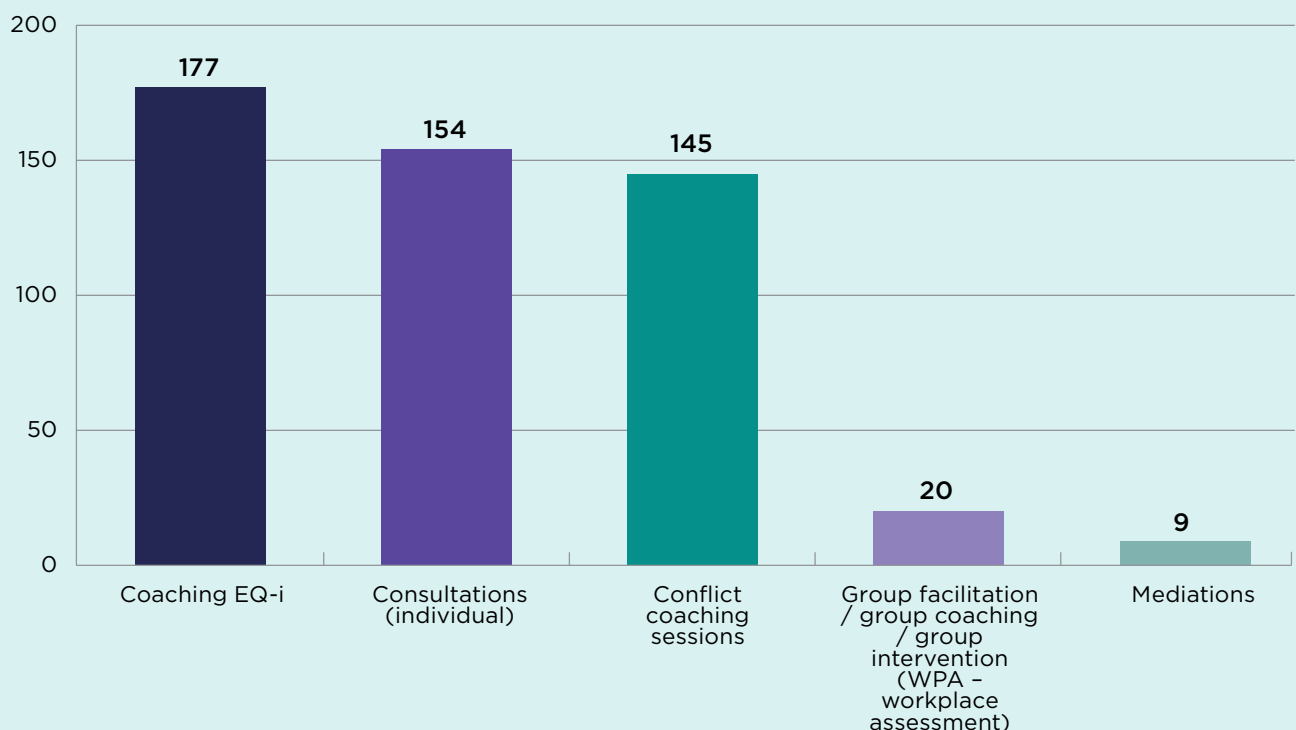
Most of the ICM & PCS services delivered through 2021-2022 were in the context of addressing interpersonal conflict/issues between employees and their supervisors. Interpersonal work issues (communication, personality-work style, workplace

relationships) accounted for 31% of issues addressed by ICM & PCS, with management practices (Employee Performance Management Agreements (EPMA) discussions, unclear defined roles) representing 25% of conflict resolution services delivered, followed by alleged harassment/bullying at 14%.

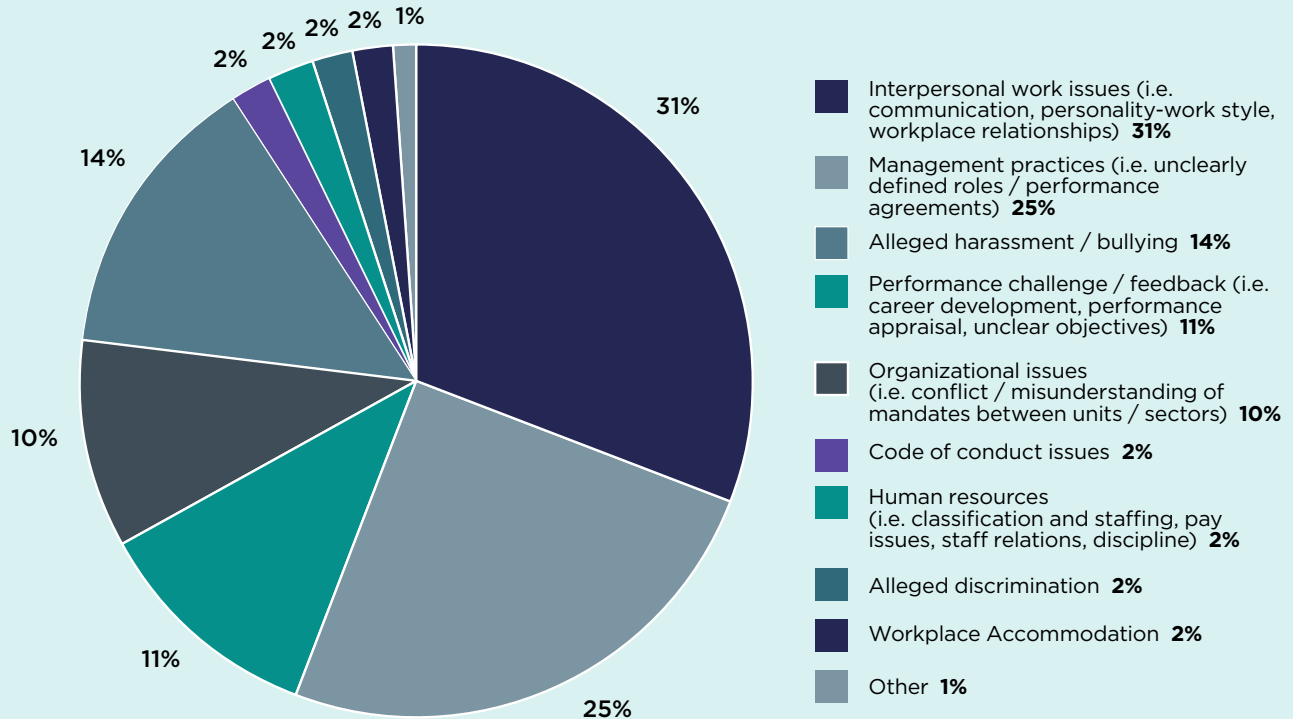
“An independent third party can help bring out realizations that other involved parties may not be able to see or to help understand the importance of some factor at play.”

An ICM & PCS Client in 2021-2022

Consultations Main Issues Informal Conflict Management & Professional Coaching Services from April 1, 2021 to March 31, 2022



**Informal Conflict Management & Professional Coaching Services
From April 1, 2021 to March 31, 2022**



“[ICM & PCS] was instrumental in providing a safe space for both parties to have a respectful and productive conversation with the guidance of the facilitator. Many of the techniques provided will be immensely helpful in improving communication in the workplace.”

An ICM & PCS Client in 2021-2022

Canadian Innovation Centre for Mental Health in the Workplace

Fiscal year 2021-2022 was a record-breaking year for the Canadian Innovation Centre for Mental Health in the Workplace (the Centre) which:

- **delivered 129 events**
- **registered 69,915 participants**
- **increased the number of strategic partners** from eight, when the Centre opened in 2018, to 28 in 2021-2022
- **adopted a new long-term funding strategy**
- **established an Advisory Group** comprised of strategic partner representatives, mental health experts outside of government, and members from national and international organizations, along with other key players in the federal mental health arena (Health Canada, Canada School of Public Service, and the Centre of Expertise for Mental Health in the Workplace at the Office of the Chief Human Resources Officer (OCHRO) at Treasury Board Secretariat (TBS))
- **secured the support** of the Public Sector Management Advisory Committee (PSMAC), a committee of senior officials from various departments and agencies
- **approached registering its 100,000th participant** since opening in 2018 (achieved by time of publication)

“This has been such an amazing and productive year for the Centre. You have brought so much to us and through the pandemic it has uplifted, supported and inspired many of us. Thank you.....I am forever grateful for your leadership and your ongoing workplace workforce wellness work. With gratitude...”

Leslie Newell

Manager, Centre for Abilities and Workplace Wellness

**Human Resources and Workplace Services,
Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada**



The Canadian Innovation Centre for Mental Health in the Workplace is a collaborative, government-wide initiative managed by ISED. The Centre offers webinars on topics related to mental health, diversity and inclusion, and employee well-being. Its role is to make mental health matter, influence organizational culture, and build healthy, inclusive, diverse and equitable workplaces that are a positive force in people's lives. Its programming is available to all federal public servants across Canada.

The variety of innovative 60-to-90-minute workshops delivered by the Centre feature Canadian and international experts, academics and persons with lived experience. These presenters come from national and international associations, as well as the public and private sectors. The workshops equip employees and managers with knowledge and best practices in support of mental health and well-being.

The Centre's focus in 2021-2022 remained on helping federal public servants cope with the mental health effects of the coronavirus pandemic and supporting their wellness throughout. The Centre's programming also included preparing for return-to-work and future-of-work discussions and initiatives, including helping to ensure that we build and maintain a "skilled, diverse, and productive workforce, with an improved employee experience, a healthy and inclusive workplace and an agile organization of work that consistently delivers results for Canadians."¹

"I was in a dark place today. This session saved me. I'm going to seek help."

Participant in "Stigma Ends With Me" with Gord Garner (CAPSA- Community Addictions Peer Support Association), November 23, 2021

In FY 2021-2022, the Centre delivered 129 events covering themes such as leadership, nurturing a growth mindset, communications skills, resiliency, self-care, and workload management, all with a particular focus on the impacts of COVID-19.

Thank you to our Strategic Partners in 2021-2022!

- Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada
- Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency
- Canadian Heritage
- Canada Border Services Agency
- Correctional Service of Canada
- Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada and Indigenous Services
- Employment and Social Development Canada
- Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario
- Finance Canada (Department of)
- Financial Transactions and Reports Analysis Centre of Canada
- Fisheries and Oceans Canada
- Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada
- Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada
- Justice Canada (Department of)
- Library and Archives Canada
- National Research Council Canada
- Natural Resources Canada
- Ombuds of Mental Health and Well-being for Small Departments and Agencies
- Privy Council Office
- Public Service Commission
- Public Services and Procurement Canada
- Royal Canadian Mounted Police
- Shared Services Canada
- Statistics Canada
- Transport Canada
- Treasury Board Secretariat of Canada
- Veterans Affairs Canada
- Western Economic Diversification Canada

¹ People Management Strategy for the Public Service, Office of the Chief Human Resources Officer (OCHRO), Treasury Board Secretariat (TBS), 2021

Top 10 English sessions by number of registrants

April 1, 2021 to March 31, 2022

Session presenter and title	
1	Panel Discussion - <i>The Mental Health Priority: Beyond the Pandemic</i>
2	Dr. Julie Beaulac - <i>Upgrade Your Sleep: Beyond Basic Sleep Hygiene</i>
3	Dr. Bill Howatt - <i>Leading and Managing Hybrid Teams in the New World of Work</i>
4	Anne Perrault - <i>Managing Your Money: Planning for the Future</i>
5	David Cory - <i>Emotional Intelligence and Mental Health in the Workplace</i>
6	Daniel Nadon - <i>Burnout Prevention</i>
7	Andréanne Martin - <i>Choose the Right Ingredients for Your Mental Health</i>
8	Chanel Brown - <i>A Mentally Healthy Workplace: The 13 Psychosocial Factors</i>
9	Nathalie Laurin - <i>Psychological Resilience</i>
10	Vicky Brown - <i>Empathy: A Strength to be Developed to Optimize Our Relationships</i>

“One of the best events!! A big thank you to the speaker, who did not just list scientific facts. He shared his own experiences, resilience and the resilience of his daughters in the face of adversity. This session will have a positive impact on my life and that of my family. Thank you :)”

Participant in “Juggling Work, Parenting, and Life Through a Pandemic”
with Dr. Ian Manion, September 21, 2021

Top 10 French sessions by number of registrants

April 1, 2021 to March 31, 2022

Session presenter and title	
1	Sénatrice Chantal Petitclerc – <i>La clé du succès de la Sénatrice Chantal Petitclerc - Attitude, passion et détermination</i>
2	Daniel Nadon – <i>Prévenir l'épuisement professionnel</i>
3	Dr Ian Manion – <i>Jongler le travail, la parentalité et la vie pendant une pandémie</i>
4	Dre Julie Beaulac – <i>Améliorez votre sommeil : au-delà de l'hygiène du sommeil</i>
5	Nicole Normand – <i>Gérer des équipes hybrides dans le nouveau monde du travail</i>
6	Andréanne Martin – <i>Nourrir ma santé mentale</i>
7	Nathalie Laurin – <i>Résilience psychologique</i>
8	Catherine Morisset – <i>Équilibre vie-travail</i>
9	Anne Perrault – <i>Mieux gérer votre argent : Pensez à demain</i>
10	Catherine Lepage – <i>Favoriser l'équilibre travail-vie personnelle en mode de travail hybride</i>

“I really enjoyed listening to Kaye Low’s presentation and appreciate her open sharing. Excellent opportunity for me to continue my education on gender and the experience of being trans. What a great opportunity to learn so I can ensure that I continue to be respectful, understanding, and supportive (aka decent human being) to those living a different experience than me. As a parent of a non-binary teenager, I appreciate every chance to listen and learn from kind, brave, and fierce women like Kaye. Thank you so much for the opportunity.”

Participant in “Strategies for LGBTQ2+ Inclusion” with Kaye Low, November 18, 2021

The Centre's Advisory Group (noted above) convened in June and September 2021 and January 2022 to ensure strong linkages between the mental health support needs across departments during the pandemic and the delivery of workshops at the Centre; this expert advice informs workshop programming. In June 2021, members of the Public Sector Management Advisory Committee (PSMAC) joined in support of the Centre.

“I think more than just a workplace presentation, it was a life presentation. What I took from it was yes, it applied to work, but it also touched me in a much broader sense as well.”

Participant in “Creating Hope Through Action: Doing Things Differently to Prevent Suicide” with Julie-Kathleen Campbell, September 9, 2021

Top 10 Departmental registrations from April 1, 2021 to March 31, 2022

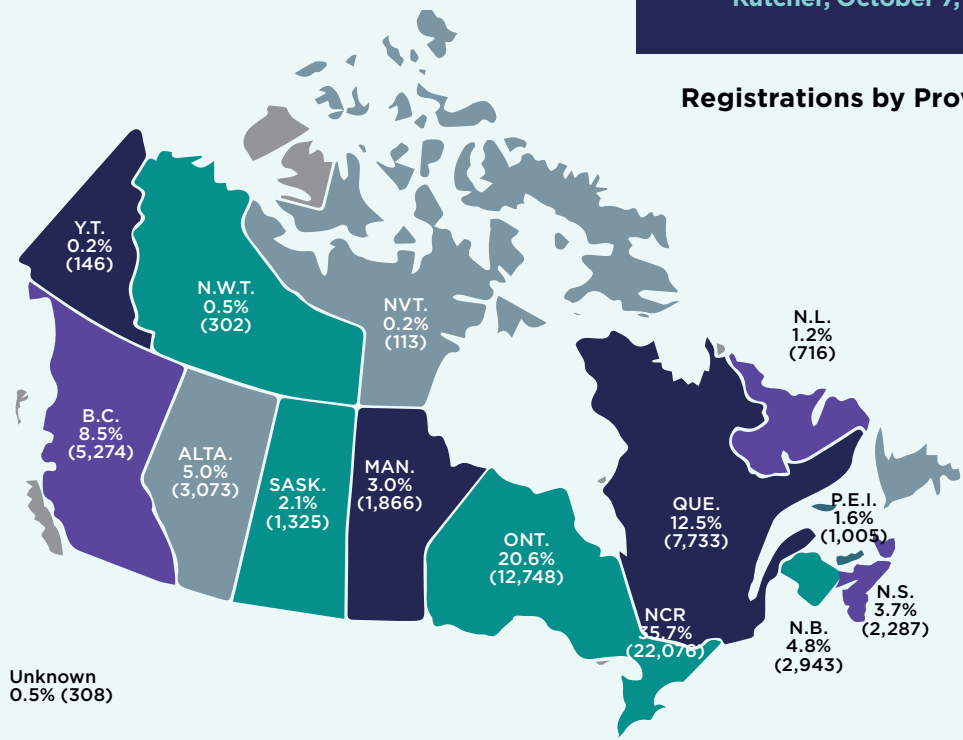


Participants across federal departments, agencies and organizations continue to show their appreciation for the Centre and its programming with satisfaction rates remaining high. Of participants who responded to post-event satisfaction surveys:

- **91.6%** found the speakers were relevant
- **79.5%** said that the information provided was useful for applying in the workplace
- **87%** were satisfied overall with the sessions they attended
- **82.4%** would recommend the workshops they attended to their colleagues
- **73.1%** indicated that the session provided them with best practices, practical tools and resources to support their overall mental well-being
- **69.8%** said that what they learned would also help them support the mental well-being of their colleagues

“This guest speaker was absolutely amazing. He was extremely knowledgeable, the information he provided was relevant, he was well-spoken and used a level of language that was easy to understand. I thoroughly enjoyed this session and would recommend it highly to others. Please, please have this guest speaker back again to discuss anything related to psychology/mental health!”

Participant in “Understanding Key Concepts of Mental Health” with Senator Dr. Stan Kutcher, October 7, 2021



Registrations by Province and Territory

Communications, engagement and outreach

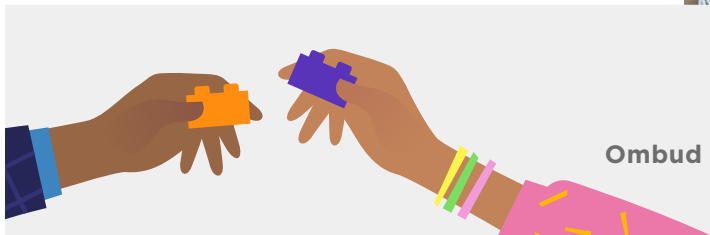
Awareness. Access. Action.

Ensuring that the Office of the Ombud has ongoing and focused communications, engagement and outreach activities has been a key element of our operations since we were created in 2018. Our plan has been to raise **awareness** of the Office of the Ombud and the services we provide, give employees **access** to us and to those services, so that we might direct those in need to take the most appropriate **action** to help themselves.

Our efforts have paid off: ISED employees learn of our programs and services regularly through a host of ISED communications channels—thanks to the support and collaboration of our colleagues in Corporate Communications and the Strategic Communications and Marketing Sector (SCMS). A new look and feel were created to help the Ombud’s Office stand out and a single and distinct window was established on the ISED intranet site, providing a direct link on the home intranet page. The positioning of the Ombud’s intranet presence allows for easier and faster access (less clicks) to Ombud’s services.

The 2021-2022 fiscal year also saw the Office of the Ombud adopt a new corporate identity to better reflect workforce diversity and inclusion at ISED. Of the ISED employees who took part in the November 2020 check-in survey, 83% considered it important that ISED have a skilled and diverse workforce that

is representative of the population the department serves, while 76% placed the same importance on representation in the executive cadre. Designed by SCMS’s Creative Services team, the rebranded Office of the Ombud look conveys a fresh new approach to building a healthy and respectful workplace by



Office of the Ombud

Ombud for Mental Health and Employee Well-Being

recognizing the multitude of experiences, ideas and solutions that ISED's diverse workforce brings to the workplace.

The same approach and colour scheme were also applied to the Canadian Innovation Centre for Mental Health in the Workplace. The new look reflects the Centre's philosophy of promoting a growth mindset through workshops delivered by experts, academics, people with lived experience and field researchers who provide practical tools and insight on mental health and employee well-being. It also recognizes the Centre as a collaborative Government of Canada initiative that is managed by ISED.

The Ombud's Office also participated in corporate events such as town halls, sector and management team meetings, and collaborative activities with key departmental stakeholders in the employee wellness arena, including working with community and network champions both within ISED and across the federal public service. Through fiscal year 2021-2022 such activities included:

- 23 outreach/training activities
- the government-wide panel on "Psychological and Wellness Support Services for the LGBTQ2+ Community"
- Spectrum and Telecommunications Services (STS) town hall meeting
- BC Open Doors for Mental Health

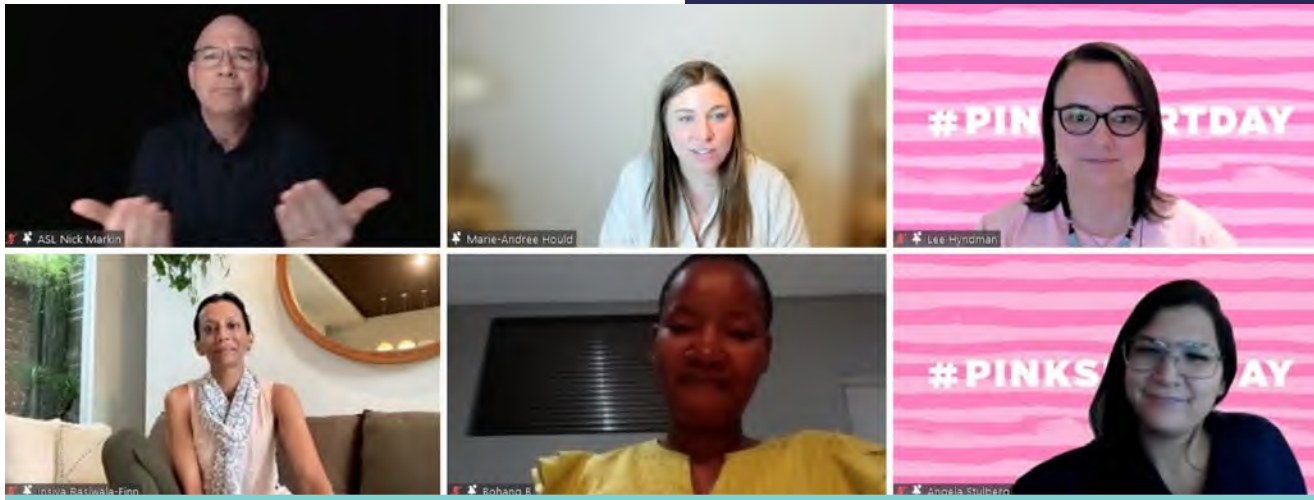
The Ombud and Associate Ombud also co-delivered two workshops entitled: "What Does a Healthy and Productive Workplace Look Like?" and provided advice to ISED Sectors on how to improve their PSES 2020 results based on the application of specific psychosocial factors as outlined in the [National Standard for Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace](#).

The Ombud continued to support Government-wide mental health initiatives by participating in governance committees, including as Board Advisor to the Centre of Expertise for Mental Health in the Workplace at Treasury Board Secretariat, and as a member of the Interdepartmental Committee on Mental Health Performance Measurement at Statistics Canada.



Canadian Innovation Centre for Mental Health in the Workplace

Managed by ISED



Opening the Door to Mental Health 2022 Symposium, February 23, 2022: “Healing for Mental Health: An Inter-Cultural Perspective,” a panel discussion moderated by **Marie-Andrée Hould** from the Canadian Innovation Centre for Mental Health in the Workplace. The one-day event also featured ISED’s Ombud, **Mario Baril**, and Associate Ombud, **Eve Nadeau**, in a panel discussion entitled “Workload and Burnout: How to Take Action.”

On a more personal level, we also connected with some of ISED’s sector ADMs to both take the pulse on how they were managing individually and seek their views and feedback on the professional services offered by the Office of the Ombud.

“The culture at ISED should not be presumed to be that of the culture experienced within any agency or branch, [but] rather a mosaic of many different and even diverging styles. The Ombud’s Office (and every member on the team [with] whom I have had the opportunity to interact) seem to value a safe, healthy and productive public service. They have reignited my conviction in the value of our workforce and leaders that can be found within.”

An Ombud Client in 2021-2022

CaféOmbud



Our signature employee engagement program, CaféOmbud, continues to attract interest and active involvement from ISED employees across all sectors and regions. In fiscal year 2021-2022, we held eight CaféOmbuds, including two “special editions,” the total of which attracted 342 participants. The January 2022 session included three other federal ombuds in a panel discussion to mark Bell Let’s Talk Day and in February 2022, we held a session with Dr. Keith Dobson to support ISED employees affected by the truckers’ protests in Ottawa and across the country.

CaféOmbud is the monthly, interactive series hosted by ISED’s Ombud for Mental Health and Employee Well-Being and members of the Ombud’s Office. During each session, ISED employees discuss workplace issues with the Ombud and share new and innovative ideas, and best practices, for a healthy workplace. From time to time, guest speakers in the area of mental health and employee well-being, as well as Sector Mental Health Champions, also participate, allowing participants to interact and learn from these exchanges and best practices.

In response to the [Call to Action on Anti-Racism, Equity, and Inclusion in the Federal Public Service](#), the following CaféOmbuds explored issues related to equity, diversity and inclusion: :

- What does Diversity and Inclusion mean to you? (April 2021)
- What does Accommodation mean to you? (May 2021)
- Exploring barriers to disability inclusion at ISED (June 2021)
- Sharing Circle for National Indigenous History Month (June 2021)
- How to support the LGBTQ2+ Community (November 2021)



CaféOmbud: Special Edition

Let's talk mental health!

by Michaela Harkin, Canadian Innovation Centre for Mental Health in the Workplace

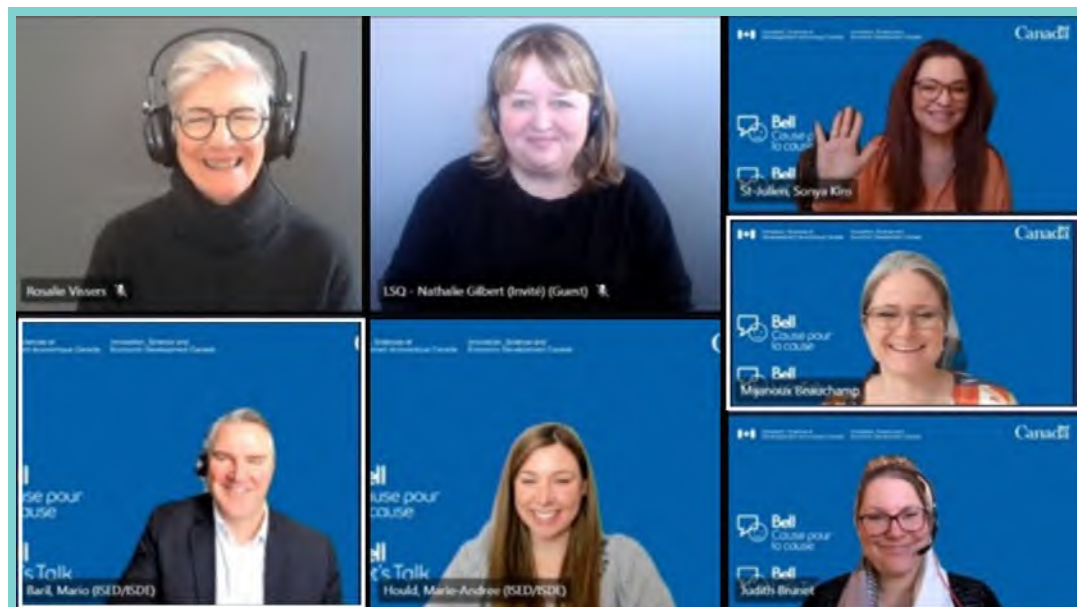
On January 26, 2022, also known as Bell Let's Talk Day, CaféOmbud brought together a virtual panel of four ombuds from within the Government of Canada to engage in an open dialogue about mental health.

Bell Let's Talk Day is an annual campaign that has become the world's biggest conversation about mental health and an opportunity for ombuds across the public service to bring this important discussion to public servants. CaféOmbud is an ongoing, interactive discussion series hosted by Mario Baril, Ombud for Mental Health and Employee Well-Being at Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada (ISED). It is a safe space forum where employees can discuss workplace issues and share new ideas and best practices for a healthy workplace.

Supported by the Canadian Innovation Centre for Mental Health in the Workplace, which is managed by ISED, this extended Bell Let's Talk Day edition of CaféOmbud brought together Mario Baril and three

other ombuds from federal organizations: Mijanoux Beauchamp, from the Financial Transactions and Report Analysis Centre of Canada (FINTRAC); Sonya-Kim St-Julien, from Department of Justice; and Judith Brunet, from the network of small departments and agencies.

During this hour-long session, the ombuds offered compassionate insight and recommended key resources, such as the 13 factors from the [National Standard for Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace](#) and the [PocketWell](#) mental health self-assessment app. They also spoke about the importance of taking time for yourself and not overlooking coffee breaks, lunchtime, outdoor time and a good night's rest to help navigate some of the mental health challenges being faced by employees in the workplace today. The ombuds' key message was: "A healthy work-life balance is essential to the success of an employee, and their team."



Attendees were also able to ask questions, openly share their concerns and participate in an anonymous poll using Slido, which created an element of real-time connectivity as each response was compiled and displayed—it became apparent that none of us are alone.

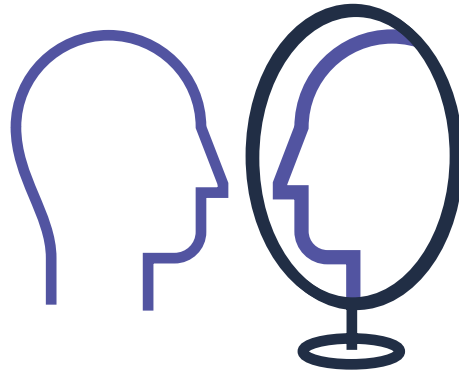
The interactive discussions and the Slido survey revealed several common themes of interest and areas of concern for the participants, including the importance of setting boundaries, the need to prioritize self-care, the fear of being stigmatized, and a clear recognition that nothing will improve unless employer and employee are committed to co-creating a safe environment to share.

Overall, the CaféOmbud session was an overwhelming success, and participants and panelists alike left feeling more informed and better equipped to take on the day-to-day mental health challenges they face in the workplace.

There is no work that will ever take precedence over our mental health and well-being, so let's keep listening, keep talking and keep being there for ourselves and others.

We'd like to keep the conversation going. Ask yourself:

- What boundaries do I need to create so I can take care of myself while working from home?
- How do I create a safe space for an open conversation regarding mental health struggles?



Findings from 2021-2022 and recommendations for the future

Grounded in solid standards

When the Ombud function was created at ISED in 2018, we established a methodology to capture the main issues for which our clients were reaching out for confidential consultations; we continue to cross-reference these issues with the 13 factors that make up the [National Standard of Canada for Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace](#) (the Standard).

You can download the Standard for free and learn more about the 13 factors and how to apply them to your workplace.

Commissioned by the Mental Health Commission of Canada and developed by Le Bureau de normalisation du Québec and the CSA Group, the Standard “is the first of its kind in the world. [It] is a set of voluntary guidelines, tools and resources intended to guide organizations in promoting mental health and preventing psychological harm at work.”

Use of the Standard allows the Ombud’s Office to make sound recommendations and offer solutions and initiatives that continually improve the psychological health and safety of our workplaces.

This will help the department:

- **identify and eliminate hazards** that pose a risk of psychological harm to our employees
- **assess and control the risks** associated with hazards that cannot be eliminated, such as stressors related to organizational change or job demands
- **implement structures, processes and practices** that promote and facilitate psychological health and safety in the workplace
- **foster a culture** that promotes and embraces positive psychological health and safety throughout the ISED organization

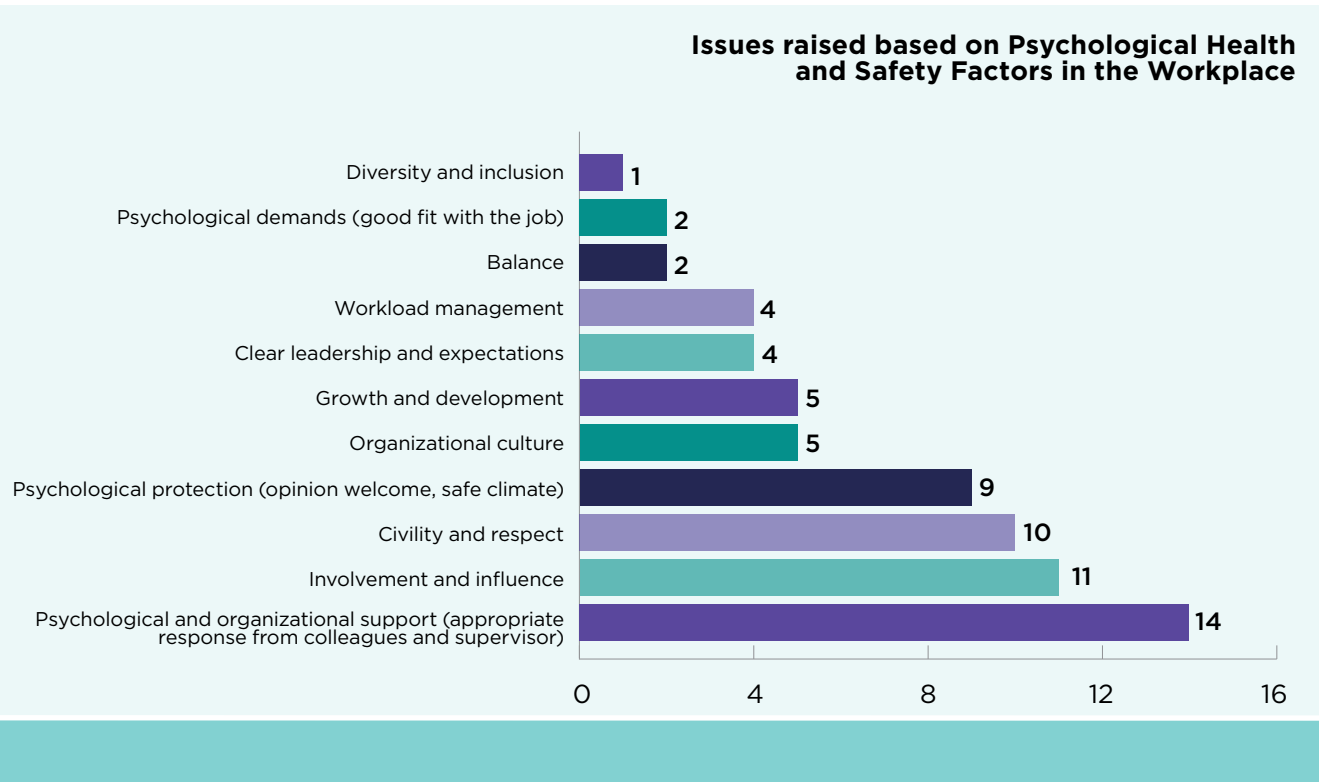


There are 13 psychosocial factors outlined in the Standard that allow organizations to measure the level of psychological health and safety within their workplace. These factors are:

- 1. Organizational Culture
- 2. Psychological and [Organizational] Support
- 3. Clear Leadership and Expectations
- 4. Civility and Respect
- 5. Psychological Demands
- 6. Growth and Development
- 7. Recognition and Reward
- 8. Involvement and Influence
- 9. Workload Management
- 10. Engagement
- 11. Balance
- 12. Psychological Protection
- 13. Protection of Physical Safety

The chart below cross-references the issues raised during the 67 confidential consultations in 2021-2022 with the Standard, thus revealing the top three areas of vulnerability to our organization as:

- 1. Psychological and [Organizational] Support
- 2. Involvement and Influence
- 3. Civility and Respect



It is worthy to note that for three of the past four years of our operations, the top two factors/issues raised with the Ombud have alternated between Psychological and [Organizational] Support and

Civility and Respect, while for the first time, we see Involvement and Influence appear as the second most important issue raised in 2021-2022.

Top five issues based on psychological factors by fiscal year in percentage (%)

2018-2019		2019-2020		2020-2021		2021-2022	
Factor	%	Factor	%	Factor	%	Factor	%
1. Psychological and Organizational Support	25	Civility and Respect	26	Psychological and Organizational Support	24	Psychological and Organizational Support	21
2. Civility and Respect	20	Psychological and Organizational Support	20	Civility and Respect	17	Involvement and Influence	16
3. Psychological Protection	18	Organizational Culture	11	Organizational Culture	14	Civility and Respect	15
4. Organizational Culture	13	Psychological Protection	11	Clear Leadership and Expectations	13	Psychological Protection	13
5. Engagement / Growth and Development	8	Clear Leadership and Expectations	10	Growth and Development	11	Organizational Culture	8

Clients told us that they want to be more engaged and involved in shaping the work and cultures within their teams/units/sectors. This was particularly relevant in 2021-2022, especially in the context of transition from primarily working remotely at the beginning of the year, to exploring and planning for the eventual implementation of a hybrid working model as the fiscal year drew to an end.

The following recommendations reflect our observations based on our consultations and are aligned with the factors from the National Standard, with the aim of helping our organization meet the ideals of the Standard.



Finding #1: Psychological and [Organizational] Support²

Definition:

“Psychological and [organizational] support comprises all supportive social interactions available at work, either with co-workers or supervisors. It refers to the degree of social and emotional integration and trust among co-workers and supervisors. It refers also to the level of help and assistance provided by others when one is performing tasks. Equally important are the workers’ perceptions and awareness of organizational support. When workers perceive organizational support, it means they believe their organization values their contributions, is committed to ensuring their psychological well-being, and provides meaningful support if this well-being is compromised.

“An organization with good psychological and [organizational] support would be able to state that:

- a. the organization offers services or benefits that address worker psychological and mental health
- b. workers feel part of a community and that the people they are working with are helpful in fulfilling the job requirements
- c. the organization has a process in place to intervene if an employee looks distressed while at work
- d. workers feel supported by the organization when they are dealing with personal or family issues
- e. the organization supports workers who are returning to work after time off due to a mental health condition
- f. people in the organization have a good understanding of the importance of worker mental health.”

Factor #2, National Standard of Canada for Psychological Health and Safety: Psychological and [Organizational] Support.

1.1 Our observations

For the second year in a row, the Psychological and [Organizational] Support factor accounts for the number one psychosocial factor identified by the Ombud (21%) during confidential consultations with clients. This reveals the impact that the COVID-19 pandemic continued to have on the well-being of ISED employees.

In some cases, employees requested additional support from their supervisors related to the mandatory vaccination as per the new Treasury Board Policy, while some employees indicated not being comfortable in discussing their specific exemptions requests.



² While this factor is referred to as “Psychological and Social Support” in the Standard, we prefer to use “Psychological and Organizational Support” to reflect that an appropriate response from colleagues and supervisor is expected.

In other cases, employees were suffering from a mental health condition related to their specific family situation—children affected by the virus, teenagers affected by mental health issues, stress, anxiety and depression—and were struggling with competing work and family responsibilities; some were not comfortable discussing these personal issues with their supervisors, while others felt that their supervisors were not able to detect their level of distress.

These situations are similar to what we observed during the first year of the pandemic, where we advised to do more regular “check-ins” with employees to better detect their mental state using the mental health spectrum as the basis. We reiterate this recommendation again this year.



1.2 Our recommendations

- Managers might consider making more regular check-ins with all of their employees and ask if there is anything that can be done differently to improve their mental health and overall well-being in the workplace.
- ISED should pursue the Workplace Mental Health Certification Program (Queen's University/ LifeWorks) for managers and executives as part of their learning plans in future years. This program helps support the psychological and social support of employees and managers, through best practices outlined within the Mental Health Framework.

The Workplace Mental Health Leadership Certification Program^{mc}: the ISED Ombud partners with Queen's University and LifeWorks

As the first university-certified program [in workplace mental health leadership] created in collaboration with the Faculty of Health Sciences at Queen's University, it teaches practical, empathetic, solution-focused leadership skills for managing performance and promoting mental health. ISED participants formed the first cohort of this certification program within the Government of Canada.

As we have noted in our annual reports for the past three years, management needs to provide greater psychological and [organizational] support to employees, with the goal of having a healthy workplace with happy and productive employees. Further, managers and executives have expressed an interest in better understanding the fundamentals of mental health; they want to take effective and appropriate action within their teams as quickly as possible.

To help meet those needs, the Office of the Ombud launched a pilot project in January 2022, in partnership with [LifeWorks](#), to bring the [Workplace Mental Health Leadership Certification Program](#) to ISED.

As the first university-certified program created in collaboration with the Faculty of Health Sciences at Queen's University, it teaches practical, empathetic, solution-focused leadership skills for managing performance and promoting mental health. Just over 100 ISED managers and executives formed the first cohort of this certification program within the Government of Canada.

In order to be certified by Queen's University, participants had to complete all course requirements and achieve a passing grade of 70% on each exam.



A follow-up survey revealed that 100% of participants agreed and strongly agreed that they are now “confident they understand the importance of taking care of the team during each stage of the Mental Health Framework;” 100% also said they are confident they will be able to use the Framework to address declining behaviours/performance with their team. The overall satisfaction rating of the workshop was 93%.

The Ombud is pursuing discussions with the Head of the Human Resources Branch at ISED in order to establish next steps for this program.

The certificate program takes a blended learning approach that includes in-class and web-based components. It is comprised of three modules:

Module 1: Introduction to Mental Health in the Workplace includes both an instructor-led in-class session and web-based components that provide a high-level introduction to the topic of mental health in the workplace. It creates awareness of the impact of mental health issues on individuals and the workplace and serves as the foundation for building knowledge and practical skills throughout the program. It introduces The Mental Health Framework, a five-phase model of best practices for managing mental health in the workplace, namely Prevention, Early Performance Coaching, Recovery, Absence and Return to Work.

Module 2: The Leader's Role in Managing a Mentally Healthy Workplace includes both an instructor-led in-class session and web-based components that provide additional knowledge and skills to enhance the leader's ability to manage through the Mental Health Framework. Specifically, it focuses on phases two to four of the Framework: Early Performance Coaching, Recovery, Absence and Return to Work. In this module, leaders also learn about the importance of taking care of themselves and managing their own stress.

Module 3: Promoting a Mentally Healthy Workplace is based on the [National Standard for Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace](#). This module contains a web-based component only, which focuses on the Prevention phase of the Mental Health Framework and explores the leader's role and scope of influence in promoting mental health in the workplace. Through self-reflection and action planning, leaders are encouraged to apply new skills and knowledge to the workplace.

For more information, please visit the [Workplace Mental Health Leadership Certification Program](#) page on the [LifeWorks](#) website.

From the participants:

"When one of my reports takes a leave of absence, I will be able to properly support them through all the stages and help them successfully return to work."

"Now that I have a better understanding of the mental health framework, specifically with regards to supportive coaching, I intend to ensure that I am...actively listening and being empathetic to [my employee's] situation and, instead of offering solutions, offer help."

"[I plan to] be more mindful of the mental health of others and take action earlier on if I suspect that someone may need support."

"In my role I often have to support people who are struggling with mental health issues or who have to manage their people. This course gives me more information, introspection, tools and ideas for questions that will help raise more powerful awareness in my meetings with managers."

"[The Program] was geared specifically for managers and provided practical suggestions to address workplace mental health issues (prevention and management)."

Finding #2: Involvement and Influence

Definition:

“Involvement and influence are present in a work environment where workers are included in discussions about how their work is done and how important decisions are made. Opportunities for involvement can relate to a worker’s specific job, the activities of a team or department, or issues involving the organization as a whole.

“An organization with good involvement and influence would be able to state that:

- a. workers are able to talk to their immediate supervisors about how their work is done
- b. workers have some control over how they organize their work
- c. worker opinions and suggestions are considered with respect to work
- d. workers are informed of important changes that can impact how their work is done
- e. the organization encourages input from all workers on important decisions related to their work.”



Factor #8, National Standard of Canada for Psychological Health and Safety: Involvement and Influence.

1. Our observations

For the first year since the Ombud’s Office was created in 2018, the Involvement and Influence factor has registered in the top five factors, reflecting that, over the course of the pandemic, clients reported not being consulted, engaged or even informed with regards to transformational initiatives within the department.

These employees—representing 16% of Ombud clients over the course of the fiscal year—felt they were set aside, and more so when they were asking for clarity and precision about the change management initiative being implemented. In the worst cases, employees experienced feelings of isolation, and even punishment, for asking questions so they might better understand the future direction.

This perceived lack of communication and direction created situations where employees began to contemplate leaving the organization. In some units, there have been departures related to a lack of involvement in change management initiatives.

2. Our recommendations

Managers and executives should:

- communicate transparently, clearly and frequently the intentions and goals related to a change management initiative or a reorganization
- engage everyone so that their views and contributions are being taken into consideration in the change management initiative
- establish regular meetings in a way to engage participation, involvement and influence
- validate with their employees that they feel engaged, and are part of the solution, in the development of new or transformational initiatives

Recognizing excellence in mental health and workplace well-being: CIPO and the Associate Ombud receive a DMs' Award of Merit

A unique initiative developed by and for employees of the Canadian Intellectual Property Office (CIPO), and supported by Eve Nadeau, ISSED's Associate Ombud for Mental Health and Employee Well-Being, has received a 2021 Deputy Ministers' Award of Merit.

The “**Beyond Awareness – 13 Psychosocial Risk Factors in the Workplace**” project aimed to not only raise awareness of the 13 factors from the [National Standard for Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace](#), but to create a lasting impact that will change CIPO's culture in a positive and meaningful way. The initiative helped capture the top workplace well-being issues as perceived by CIPO employees and provides a set of recommended actions for them to take to improve and address these factors in their workplace.

In submitting the project for award consideration, CIPO called the initiative “innovative, inclusive and intentional.” The submission notes: “The **innovation** is the creation of a CIPO-wide mental health action plan, which builds on itself year after year and is part of CIPO's culture. It is **inclusive** by gathering issues and solutions from employees at all levels and all branches,

through facilitated workshops. It is **intentional** because every step of the project has employee well-being in mind, including the final communications regarding the solutions management selected, and their plan for implementation.”

The initiative consisted of focus groups to get a snapshot of CIPO employees' mental health, starting with two, 2-hour presentations by **Eve Nadeau** to some 330 employees in which they learned about the National Standard's 13 risk factors, as well as best practices for fostering mental health and well-being in the workplace, the identification of top factors based on employee surveys; there were then eight 30-minute workshops on each of the top factors.

Eve's support enabled the team of 20 CIPO volunteers who made the project happen, to gather feedback from employees; this led to the creation of an action plan that aims to create transparency around perceived mental health issues in CIPO, assist management with selecting practical solutions, and help with closing the communication feedback loop, as well as ensuring continuity of the project into its second year.

The award was granted in the Mental Health and Workplace Well-Being category of the DMs' Awards of Merit in recognition for meeting the criterion of “[creating] a culture that encompasses psychological health, safety and well-being through collaboration, communication and consultation.”



Finding #3: Civility and Respect

Definition:

“Civility and respect are present in a work environment where workers are respectful and considerate in their interactions with one another, as well as with customers, clients, and the public. Civility and respect are based on showing esteem, care, and consideration for others, and acknowledging their dignity.

“An organization with good civility and respect would be able to state that:

- a. people treat each other with respect and consideration in the workplace
- b. the organization effectively handles conflicts between stakeholders (workers, customers, clients, public, suppliers, etc.)
- c. workers from all backgrounds are treated fairly in our workplace
- d. the organization has effective ways of addressing inappropriate behaviour by customers or clients.”

Factor #4, National Standard of Canada for Psychological Health and Safety: Civility and Respect.



3.1 Our observations

Civility and Respect continues to track in the top three psychosocial factors that are impacting the mental health and safety of the ISED workplace; in FY 2021-2022, it reflected the issues shared by 15% of Ombud clients during confidential consultations.

In 2021-2022, we met with clients who experienced harassment at the hands of supervisors, employees and colleagues, including:

- being yelled at by their supervisor
- use of improper language
- threats of not renewing acting positions
- harassment by employees dealing with mental health issues
- not accepting feedback on performance or not accepting taskings and direction
- behaviour that had negative impacts on the entire team
- disrespecting former colleagues who had been given acting promotions.

3.2 Our recommendations

- Managers should consider engaging with their teams in establishing a “Team Values” document that is aligned with the ISED Code of Values and Ethics and the Values and Ethics Code for the Public Sector, and have every employee agree and sign-off on this foundational document. This “Team Values” component should be part of the “Team Charter” document that can be developed within teams as part of the return-to-the-workplace transition.³
- Managers should also consult proactively with the Ombud’s Office, and the Informal Conflict Management and Professional Coaching Services, if they feel that a specific behavior can possibly cause workplace issues.



³ Developing a team charter is a collaborative process in which team members jointly define their goals, values, norms (such as communication norms, etiquette, and conflict resolution strategies) as well as their operational activities. It fosters a positive team dynamic and contributes towards greater cohesion among team members. The ICM & PCS team offers a two-hour train-the-trainer course entitled [Developing Your Detailed Team Charter: From Values to Vision](#).

Looking ahead: what the future might hold

Plans for 2022-2023 and beyond

Annual reports are usually a story of outputs and results from the previous year, and this report is no different. However, it only tells part of our story; it is important to reflect on the past as we plan for and look to the future, to outline our ongoing commitment to supporting the well-being of ISED employees; publicly sharing our plans helps hold us accountable for following through and implementing them.

First and foremost, our focus will be to support the department and all ISED employees through the **“Return to Work”** and **“Future of Work”** initiatives that are being developed. The past two years have proven beyond a doubt the resilience of the ISED workforce in adapting to the realities inflicted by the COVID-19 pandemic. However, we have also witnessed and/or experienced mental health challenges as a result of it. Yet anxiety still exists for some ISED employees as we prepare for an unknown future of hybrid working models and other potential changes.

That is why our **Informal Conflict Management and Professional Coaching Services (ICM & PCS)** unit will take a direct and proactive role to support ISED sectors by streamlining its delivery of workshops to the most pressing need, and exploring new and innovative best practices in conflict resolution, including tri-partite mediations.

We are also working closely with the **ISED National Managers’ Community** to deliver specialized coaching-on-demand services to managers that will incorporate the latest in best practices. A new Managers Coaching Service will be implemented in FY 2022-23 allowing managers to discuss the specific issues they are facing within the hybrid model and receive coaching on how to address them.

The ICM & PCS team will also be developing additional tools and resources, such as a train-the-trainer workshop in which guidance on the development of a “Team Charter” will be provided; this process allows teams to create a new, “know-how-to-be” contract between the team members themselves, and the manager. The process promotes buy-in to team objectives by focusing on developing a team spirit and creating team cohesion. It also enables the group to give itself an identity, a feeling of belonging to its individual members, and a rationale for rallying the entire group to an agreed-upon operational mode. We encourage ISED employees to consult the Ombud’s intranet page, to explore new service offerings, and to register in one [click](#).



The Ombud's Office will continue to ensure that all of our service offerings for 2022-2023 are aligned with the outcome of **"Inclusive and Healthy"** as per ISED's Departmental Plan Report, and that our work is guided by our core values and ethics to provide a positive and healthy work environment across the organization. We will demonstrate our commitment to long-term health and a sustainable future by embracing diversity, tolerance and acceptance, encouraging teamwork, and being inclusive in our decision-making.

Like most of our colleagues, we have not traveled outside the National Capital Region for the last two years because of the restrictions brought on by the pandemic. This has resulted in a significantly reduced number of clients from the regions reaching out to us for confidential services. Before the pandemic, regional visits allowed us to deliver training, information sessions, and allocate time for confidential meetings in person; this reinforces our finding about the importance of discussing such important and often difficult situations face-to-face. As part of our plans for a return to the workplace, we will explore ways to **increase our outreach to regional employees** and better engage those who require our services.



With regards to the [Clerk's Call to Action on Equity, Diversity and Inclusion](#), the Ombud's Office will pursue discussions with ISED's Networks and Champions (ISED Black Employees Network (BEN), ISED Inclusion Committee, Indigenous Employees Network, LGBTQ2+ Network, ISED Persons with Disabilities Network, ISED Women's Network, etc.) in order to discuss how we can continue to support this very important agenda. In the past years, we have created safe space discussions during our CaféOmbud. We are now further exploring ideas with the larger Federal Ombuds Community.

Meet the Ombud and Associate Ombud

Mario Baril and Eve Nadeau

Mario Baril has been the Ombud for Mental Health and Employee Well-Being at Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada since October 2018. During his career in the Government of Canada, Mario has held several executive positions, including Chief of Staff in the Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat, Director of Strategic and Business Communications at Public Services and Procurement Canada,

and Executive Director of Strategic and Business Communication of the Association of Professional Executives of the Public Service of Canada (APEX).

Mario demonstrates a profound interest in a committed, diversified, agile and productive public service. He brings extensive experience in developing strategic partnerships and initiatives to foster a healthy workplace, especially as a result of his participation in advisory boards at the Centre of Expertise for Mental Health in the Workplace (TBS), the Interdepartmental Committee on Mental Health Performance Measurement, and the Employee Assistance Program Stakeholder Advisory Committee at Health Canada.

Mario has a master's degree in public administration from L'École nationale d'administration publique (ENAP), a bachelor's degree in economics and public administration from the University of Ottawa, and a college diploma in journalism. He also has an ombud certification from Osgoode Hall Law School at York University, as well as training in mediation from the Faculty of Law at the Université de Sherbrooke and Saint Paul University. Mario is an accredited Mediator from the Institut de médiation et d'arbitrage du Québec.

In his spare time, Mario practises many outdoor sports, including downhill skiing, swimming, canoeing, cycling and mountain climbing, especially at Mont-Tremblant in the Laurentians. His passion for travel has brought him to several countries, along with his wife, Danielle, and his two sons, Alexandre and Samuel, allowing him to encounter amazing people and diverse cultures from around the world.



ISED's Associate Ombud for Mental Health and Employee Well-Being is **Eve Nadeau**, who has held the position since November 2018. She is also the Director of Informal Conflict Management and Professional Coaching Services (ICM & PCS).

Eve joined the department after occupying the positions of manager of the Values and Ethics and Harassment Prevention Programs at the Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat, and Manager of Respect in the Workplace at Justice Canada. For eight years prior to this, in addition to being the manager, Eve was also a senior conflict management advisor at Public Services and Procurement Canada. In her role as a mediator, she developed a departmental harassment prevention initiative, designed various organization-specific training, and created group intervention processes and harassment and sexual harassment prevention tools.

In her role today, Eve continues to focus on raising awareness about mental health, harassment prevention, conflict resolution and workplace well-being.

Eve joined the federal public service in 2006 and worked in the field of labour relations as a senior advisor at Public Services and Procurement Canada, Correctional Services Canada, and the Canada Border Services Agency. Prior to this, she worked for 10 years as a social worker and as a probation officer with the Government of Quebec.

In addition to being trained in professional coaching as a specialized coach in conflict management, and certified as a group facilitator and a mediator by Saint Paul University and by the Faculty of Law at the Université de Sherbrooke. Eve has an ombud certification from Osgoode Hall Law School at York University; she is also an accredited Mediator from the Institut de médiation et d'arbitrage du Québec. Eve also holds a bachelor's degree in criminology from the University of Ottawa, a bachelor's degree in social work from the Université du Québec à Hull,



and a master's degree in public administration from the École nationale d'administration publique (ENAP). Eve's passions include the neuropsychology of human relations, dance and walks in the forest; she enjoys her family life and loves to support her 13-year-old son, who lives with a pervasive developmental disorder and who is in Scouts and participates in hockey, horseback riding and swimming sports.


We're here to help

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