



Technical Committee Report to the Steering Committee on Mental Health in the Workplace - April 2016

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Technical Committee Report to the Steering Committee on Mental Health in the Workplace - April 2016



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**The Road to Workplace Psychological Health and Safety: Getting Started
Implementing the 2015 Memorandum of Understanding Between
the Treasury Board of Canada
and
the Public Service Alliance of Canada
With Respect to Mental Health in the Workplace**

April 2016

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Foreword

We are pleased to present this report to the Steering Committee on Mental Health in the Workplace.

We were encouraged by the positive feedback that the first Technical Committee Report to the Steering Committee on Mental Health in the Workplace received and by the progress made by federal organizations

since the release of the report in December 2015. Technical Committee members have provided numerous presentations to organizations and functional communities on the work of the committee, and we have observed that there is still more work to do to drive organizational best practices across the federal public service.

We are also pleased with the Clerk's renewed commitment to make mental health a top priority in the federal public service in support of a respectful workplace for all employees.

To support this commitment, the Technical Committee has prepared this report to support organizations in aligning with the CSA Group's National Standard of Canada for Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace.

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Executive Summary

Since the creation of the Joint Task Force on Mental Health in March 2015, and the release of the first Technical Committee Report to the Steering Committee on Mental Health in the Workplace in December 2015, there has been a groundswell of interest and a renewed commitment in advancing mental health within the federal public service. However, through discussion

and review with federal public service organizations and key stakeholders, the committee has found that further guidance on the way forward is required.

The Technical Committee has determined that the fundamental structure and supporting legislative framework are already in place to support the creation of a psychological health and safety management system that aligns with the National Standard of Canada for Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace (the National Standard). The committee's review of federal readiness to align with the National Standard has been broken down in this report into enterprise-wide and organization-specific key findings.

Enterprise-Wide Key Findings and Action Items

The Technical Committee has determined that:

- Current legislative requirements and enterprise-wide committee structures are not well known or fully utilized.
- There is a lack of accountability and oversight to ensure that organization-specific committees are in place and that they are able to fulfill their mandate.
- Many federal organizations have indicated that they are ill-equipped to align with the National Standard.

The following actions should be taken to support enterprise-wide alignment with the National Standard:

- Establish or improve the communications protocol between service-wide occupational health and safety (OHS) units and organizational policy committees to ensure appropriate oversight, guidance and information sharing.
- Ensure that enterprise-wide committees focus more on outreach and communication to organization-specific communities to ensure stronger linkages between committee structures.
- Hold deputy heads accountable for establishing, staffing and overseeing organizational OHS committees, ensuring that the committees are trained and equipped to fulfill their mandate. Minimum training includes committee orientation training, hazard analysis, workplace inspections, and hazardous occurrence investigation and reporting.
- Create a single centre of expertise to provide support to organizations.

Centre of Expertise

As noted in the Technical Committee's first report, the creation of a single, enterprise-wide centre of expertise would be an efficient and cost-effective means to help guide organizational alignment with the National Standard.

Review and discussion with heads of human resources (HR), OHS policy committees and key stakeholders helped determine the support that a centre of expertise would provide to organizations to help them align with the National Standard. The specific roles and responsibilities are as follows:

- Provide a roadmap for alignment to the National Standard.
- Provide immediate expert support and guidance.
- Establish a best practice repository.
- Develop a whole-of-government communications strategy.
- Identify factors and gaps that may affect the psychological health and safety of the workforce.
- Establish partnerships and networks with key organizations.
- Convene communities of practice.

The Technical Committee also determined that the centre of expertise should be a stand-alone entity under the umbrella of the National Joint Council, which would provide for the centre of expertise:

- Being co-governed with management and labour;
- Having a central, regional and virtual presence;
- Having a mandate that can evolve based on the needs of stakeholders within the federal public service;
- Performing its work neutrally and at arm's length; and
- Having dedicated and long-term funding from the Treasury Board.

Organization-Specific Key Findings and Action Items

The Technical Committee found a lack or absence of the following:

- An understanding of roles and responsibilities;
- Joint selection of champions;
- A joint employee engagement strategy;
- Training of organizational OHS committees;
- Organizational assessments; and
- A joint communications and promotion strategy.

The Technical Committee has determined that organizations should focus on the following to support alignment with the National Standard:

- Establish a joint governance structure to support the psychological health and safety management system within the organization, including the selection of psychological health and safety champions;
- Ensure adequate resources (staff and funds) and infrastructure;
- Ensure that OHS committees are equipped with training to fulfill their duties;
- Identify psychological health and safety factors through workplace assessments to inform continuous improvement; and
- Jointly develop and implement strategies for employee engagement, communication and promotion.

Introduction

Background

On September 30, 2015, the Technical Committee delivered its first report to the Steering Committee on Mental Health in the Workplace.

The first report provided recommendations on renewed leadership, engagement and education with respect to psychological health. The report also highlighted the importance of training and workplace practices, communication and promotion, and accountability in achieving a culture of humanity and compassion, reflected in the following vision:

To create a culture that enshrines psychological health, safety and well-being in all aspects of the workplace through collaboration, inclusivity and respect. This obligation belongs to every individual in the workplace.

On December 2, 2015, the President of the Treasury Board and the National President of the Public Service Alliance of Canada (PSAC) jointly welcomed the release of the first report. Following this announcement, the Steering Committee asked the Technical Committee to launch the next phase of work and provide further direction to organizations on how to align with the National Standard.

Approach

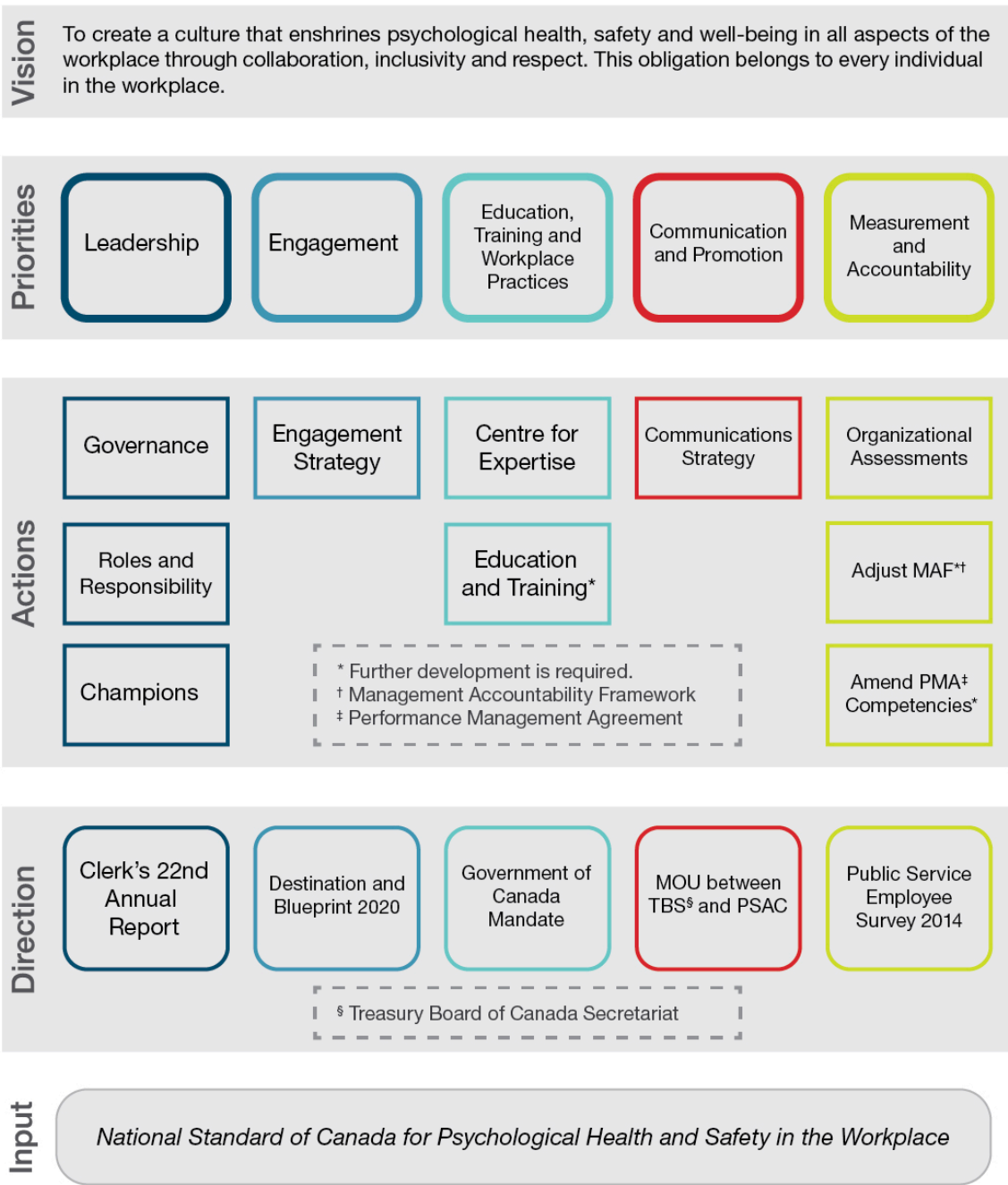
The Technical Committee solicited input from a number of key stakeholders, including the following:

- Heads of HR;
- OHS policy committees;
- The Joint Career Transition Committee;
- The Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety;
- Health Canada's Employee Assistance Services;
- The Joint Learning Program; and
- The Canadian Psychological Association.

These discussions augmented the guidance and advice through presentations that was provided previously to the Technical Committee.

The framework shown in Figure 1 guided the development of this report and serves as an action plan for future work. Key findings have been broken down into enterprise-wide and organization-specific action areas to provide guidance on the way forward.

Figure 1: Technical Committee Framework

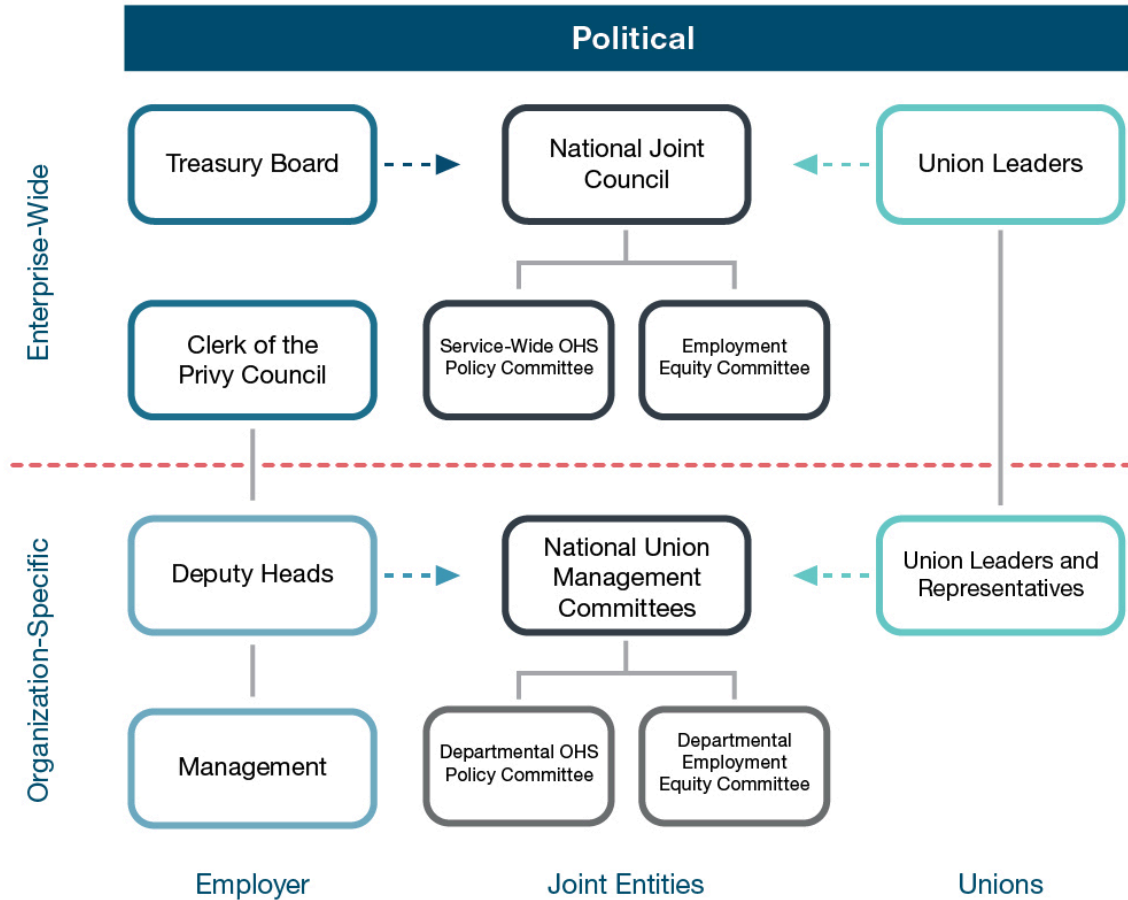


► Figure 1 - Text version

Part I: Enterprise-Wide Key Findings and Action Items

Through review and discussion, the Technical Committee determined that a fundamental structure (shown in Figure 2) and supporting legislative framework are already in place to allow for good governance in aligning with the National Standard.

Figure 2: Mental Health Governance Framework for the Core Public Administration



► Figure 2 - Text version

Legislative Framework

Specific obligations for the government, the employer and deputy heads to support psychological health and safety in the workplace are found in the Financial Administration Act, the Employment Equity Act and the Canada Labour Code, Part II. These instruments provide the foundation for the governance of psychological health and safety in the federal public service, both broadly and at the organizational level.

Financial Administration Act

The Financial Administration Act sets out the responsibilities of the Treasury Board and deputy heads regarding HR management.

Employment Equity Act

The Employment Equity Act provides a framework for achieving equality in the workplace. Workers who have mental health issues are included in this legislation, and collaboration is required between organizations and unions.

Canada Labour Code, Part II

The purpose of Part II of the Canada Labour Code is to prevent work-related accidents and injury to health, including psychological health and safety.

Part II of the Canada Labour Code creates an obligation for large employers to establish a health and safety policy committee (referred to in this report as a policy committee) and workplace health and safety committees. Overall, the committees are to engage in developing, implementing and monitoring issues that affect occupational health and safety in the workplace.

Specifically, under Part XIX of the Canada Occupational Health and Safety Regulations, the employer, with its policy committee and workplace committees, must develop, implement and monitor a program to prevent hazards. Similarly, Part XX of the Canada Occupational Health and Safety Regulations has a broad definition of workplace violence that includes psychological health and safety.

Key Participants

Key participants are in place and need to understand and fulfill their roles and obligations in governing psychological health at the enterprise-wide and organizational levels, as illustrated in Figure 2.

Employer

Treasury Board:

The Treasury Board is a committee of Cabinet that is responsible for overall management of the federal government's financial, HR and administrative activities, and is the employer of the core public administration.

Clerk of the Privy Council:

As head of the federal public service, the Clerk works with senior leadership to ensure that the Government of Canada has the policy, management and HR capacity it needs to design and deliver high-quality programs and services to and for Canadians in a manner that is consistent with public service values and ethics.

Deputy heads:

Deputy heads manage organizational resources and assets to deliver government priorities in compliance with Treasury Board policies and directives, including specific obligations imposed on deputy ministers under the Financial Administration Act (e.g., OHS obligations under the Canada Labour Code).

Management:

Managers at all levels in an organization are responsible for the health and safety of the workplace and workforce.

Joint Entities

National Joint Council:

The National Joint Council of the public service of Canada is the forum of choice for co-development, consultation and information sharing between the government as employer and public service unions. Through the National Joint Council, the parties work together to resolve problems and establish terms of employment that apply across the public service.

Service-Wide Occupational Health and Safety (SWOHS) Policy Committee:

The role of the SWOHS Policy Committee is to participate in developing and reviewing all Treasury Board policies, programs and issues relating to occupational health and safety. The SWOHS Policy Committee provides advice and leadership to organizational policy committees.

Joint Employment Equity Committee:

This committee provides a national forum where the Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat, the Public Service Commission of Canada and unions can consult and collaborate on preparing, implementing and revising policies and practices across the public service that may affect employment equity designated groups.

National union management committees / National labour management consultation committees:

Consultation with unions that represent employees in the portion of the federal public service for which a deputy head is responsible must establish a consultation committee of representatives of the organization and unions to exchange information and obtain views and advice on issues relating to the workplace that affect those employees.

Organizational OHS policy committees:

For the purposes of addressing health and safety matters that apply to the work, undertaking or business of an employer, every organization that normally directly employs 300 or more employees shall establish a policy

health and safety committee and, subject to section 135.1 of the Canada Labour Code, select and appoint its members.

Unions

Union leaders:

Unions are responsible for representing employees in all matters concerning terms and conditions of employment. Unions must select representatives for policy and workplace OHS committees. Unions must collaborate on all issues related to employment equity.

Key Findings

The foundation for alignment is already in place. However, there are key gaps and barriers at an enterprise-wide level that prevent full implementation of a psychological health and safety management system, including the following:

- Current legislative requirements and enterprise-wide committee structures are not well known and or fully utilized (e.g., the SWOSH Policy Committee and the Joint Employment Equity Committee).
- There is a lack of accountability and oversight to ensure that organization-specific committees are in place and able to fulfill their mandate.
- Many federal organizations have indicated that they are ill-equipped to align with the National Standard.

Action Items

The following actions should be taken to support enterprise-wide alignment with the National Standard:

- Establish or improve communication protocols between the SWOSH Policy Committee and organizational policy committees to ensure appropriate oversight, guidance and information sharing.
- Enterprise-wide committees need to focus more on outreach and communication to organization-specific communities to ensure stronger linkages between committee structures.
- Hold deputy heads accountable for establishing, staffing and overseeing organizational OHS committees, and for ensuring that the committees are trained and equipped to fulfill their mandate. Minimum training includes the following:

- Committee orientation;
- Hazard analysis;
- Workplace inspections; and
- Hazardous occurrence investigation and reporting.
- Create a single centre of expertise to provide support to organizations (detailed in Part II of this report).

Part II: Enterprise-Wide Centre of Expertise

A gap that the Technical Committee identified was the lack of a central resource to support and guide organizations in developing their psychological health and safety management system. The creation of an enterprise-wide single centre of expertise would be an efficient and cost-effective means to help guide organizational alignment with the National Standard.

To determine the essential characteristics, roles and responsibilities of a centre of expertise that will address the needs of federal organizations, Technical Committee members reached out to a number of internal and external organizations. These discussions were framed by and considered in light of both the complexity and breadth of the federal public service and the significant culture shift required to fully embrace the National Standard.

Essential Characteristics

Key Characteristics of a Centre of Expertise

- Is co-governed with management and union.
- Has a central, regional and virtual presence.
- Has a mandate that can evolve based on the needs of stakeholders within the federal public service.
- Is neutral and at arm’s length.
- Has dedicated, long-term funding from Treasury Board.

Input received from all sources underscored the benefits of a “bricks and mortar” organization that can work virtually, comprising a core team that includes a regional and “on the ground” presence. ¹ This blended service model allows for a wider scope and broad support and response to

organizations through central, regional and virtual platforms. Discussions and input also highlighted the importance of a centre's mandate to be able to evolve over time in response to unique and often changing needs of clients and client organizations.

The National Standard, along with [Assembling the Pieces](#),² identifies collaboration between management and unions as one of the key elements for successful implementation. This was further substantiated by Great-West Life's [Workplace Strategies for Mental Health webpage](#)³ and by discussions held with the public service of Nova Scotia. Furthermore, the Technical Committee spoke at length of the importance of the centre of expertise being considered neutral and at arm's length to the organizations it supports. The success of the Technical Committee, as well as other management-union initiatives, including the Joint Career Transition Committee, the Joint Learning Program and the National Joint Council, demonstrates that this type of collaboration is achievable.

As highlighted in the Technical Committee's [first report](#), the recognition and implementation of the National Standard will require a significant cultural shift within the federal public service. This will not occur overnight, and will require an ongoing and sustainable commitment over a number of years. To demonstrate the Government of Canada's ongoing commitment, and to ensure the sustainability and stability of the centre of expertise, such as centre must have dedicated and ongoing funding. This view is reinforced in [Assembling the Pieces](#) and by on-the-ground experience of Bell Canada and other organizations.

Roles and Responsibilities

Core Functions of a Centre of Expertise

- Provide a roadmap for alignment to the National Standard.
- Provide immediate expert support and guidance.
- Establish a best practice repository.
- Develop a whole-of-government communications strategy.
- Identify factors and gaps that may impact the psychological health and safety of the workforce.
- Establish partnerships and networks with key organizations.
- Convene communities of practice.

A review of the input received from heads of HR, OHS policy committees and key stakeholders has helped define the roles and responsibilities of a centre of expertise.

Provide Roadmap

Assembling the Pieces provides a framework for organizations, big and small, to implement the National Standard. However, feedback from organizations in Canada that have adopted the National Standard suggest that Assembling the Pieces should be customized to the work setting. This is in line with feedback from some federal organizations that have indicated that Assembling the Pieces is generic in its approach and does not necessarily address specific federal government needs, experiences and context.

This point is echoed in a recent qualitative study:

A simplified description of the Standard and staged implementation strategy may also improve its receptivity. The preferred terminology regarding psychological health and safety appears to differ between types of organizations and their sites.⁴

The centre of expertise should support the dissemination of a federalized version of Assembling the Pieces, which will service as a roadmap for organizations.

Expert Support and Guidance

With most federal organizations reporting being under-resourced and ill-equipped to develop appropriate mental health strategies, or assess the numerous offerings from private companies to assist them with their implementation of the National Standard, there was a clear demand for a centre of expertise to provide immediate support and guidance to federal organizations as they take steps to align with the National Standard.

Repository

Stakeholders strongly advocated that federal public service put in place partnerships and networks that will:

- Allow them to leverage existing resources and expertise and not reinvent the wheel; and
- Establish an entity that can act as a clearing house and repository of resources, research and training.

Putting in place a best practice repository responds to a need identified by HR members and OHS policy committees, who advocated for an entity to compile tools and best practices, keeping abreast of new developments and communicating them to the broader community.

Communication and Promotion

Communication and engagement are two key pillars of the National Standard. Alignment with the National Standard typically requires a significant culture shift within an organization, and contribution and buy-in of all stakeholders is critical. In this regard, the centre of expertise should play a critical role in promoting mental health, as highlighted in *Assembling the Pieces*, by supporting an organization's ability to:

- Foster understanding and awareness of mental health on the part of their employees; and
- Encourage individual employees to take responsibility for their health and contribute to the health of others.

Gap Analysis

Assembling the Pieces provides a framework for organizations to align with the National Standard. It highlights the fact that existing organizational policies and programs may not be conducive to the promotion of psychological health and safety. As such, organizations are encouraged to look internally and identify program and policy gaps that may be affecting the psychological health and safety of their workforce. Such programs and policies include those that involve the following:

- Return to work;
- Duty to accommodate;
- Disability management;
- Performance management; and
- Harassment prevention.

Partnerships and Networks

Interviews with key stakeholders also emphasized the importance of networking. Outreach is not a “nice to have” but a “must have.” The value of face-to-face interaction cannot be understated, especially given the complexity of the federal public service and the significance of the needed shift in culture. To that end, to promote and maintain effective outreach and networking for staff, the centre will need the skills, competencies and leadership support for mobility and flexibility of staff. Staff may have to travel, as the value of face-to-face interaction cannot be understated, especially given the complexity of the federal public service and the significance of the culture shift.

Forum of Discussion

As mentioned above, HR practitioners and OHS policy committee members recommend that the centre of expertise be responsible for communicating across the whole of government regarding best practices. To achieve this objective, the centre of expertise will need to:

- Bring together national and regional communities of practice;
- Foster collaboration across geographical regions with stakeholders within the federal public service; and
- Provide networking and interfacing with key stakeholders, both nationally and internationally.

Location

Centre of Excellence
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A stand-alone entity under the umbrella of the National Joint Council.

Based on the requirement for co-management, independence and neutrality, the Technical Committee focused its attention on a review of existing management-labour organizations, including the Joint Learning Program, the Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety, and the National Joint Council.

In addition, following significant consultation and deliberation, the Technical Committee determined that the centre of expertise could be established as a stand-alone entity under the umbrella of the National Joint Council.

The National Joint Council is has been in place for over 70 years and is recognized and respected by management and unions as a jointly governed organization. Adopting a governance model in keeping with that of the Public Service Health Care Plan model ensures co-governance and neutrality. Furthermore, the National Joint Council already houses the SWOHS Policy Committee and the Joint Employment Equity Committee, which will provide a forum for essential coordination and collaboration of organizational OHS policy committees.

Part III: Organization-Specific Key Findings and Action Items

The Technical Committee determined that, in most organizations, a fundamental structure and legislative framework are in place, but that there is no coordinated approach to support alignment with the National Standard.

There are key gaps and barriers that will affect the success of organizational alignment with the National Standard.

The Technical Committee found a lack or absence of the following:

- An understanding of roles and responsibilities;
- Joint selection of champions;

A coordinated approach includes the following:

- Employees at all levels.
- Champions and sponsors.
- Unions.
- OHS units.
- Human resources.
- Corporate services.
- Communications.
- The duty to accommodate.
- Labour relations.
- Disability management.
- Informal conflict resolution.
- Employees Assistance Program.
- Values and ethics.
- Employment equity and diversity.

- A joint employee engagement strategy;
- Training of organizational OHS committees;
- Organizational assessments; and
- A joint communications and promotion strategy.

Understanding Roles and Responsibilities

Federal Organizations

Federal organizations have an obligation to support, facilitate and ensure the participation of key stakeholders (including all federal public service employees, unions and OHS committees) and services. In particular, organizations are responsible for the following: ⁵

- Demonstrating senior leadership support in implementation and governance by ensuring that resources (staff and funds) and infrastructure are adequate to support the psychological health and safety management system within the organization;
- Establishing who will be responsible for the psychological health and safety management system within the organization;
- Engaging stakeholders in regular dialogue, including OHS and employment equity committees, employees at all levels, and unions;
- Engaging employees and unions in policy development, data generation and planning;
- Encouraging employee and union participation by providing time, training and resources to participate in developing a psychological health and safety management system;
- Establishing processes to support sustained implementation, including identifying leadership (champions), and to support at all levels of the organization; and
- Monitoring and implementing changes to ensure continual improvement in collaboration with stakeholders.

OHS Policy Committees

As previously mentioned, the Canada Labour Code sets the requirements to address health and safety in federal workplaces, including in the federal public service. Such requirements include structure, scope and duties of all workplace and policy health and safety committees.

The policy committee addresses issues that, because of their nature, cannot be dealt with by local health and safety committees, particularly issues that are broad in scope and that affect multiple worksites. Such issues include the following:

- Participating in the development and monitoring of a program to prevent workplace hazards, according to regulations, that also provides for the health and safety education of employees;
- Participating in inquiries, studies, investigations and inspections as the policy committee considers necessary;
- Monitoring data on work accidents, injuries and health hazards; and
- Participating in the planning and implementation of changes that may affect health and safety, including work processes and procedures.

All Employees and Representatives

All individuals have a role in ensuring the success of psychologically safe and healthy workplaces. Section 126 of the Canada Labour Code requires the reporting of any situation believed to be a contravention of the Canada Labour Code, or of a circumstance in a workplace that is likely to be hazardous to the health and safety of an employee, other employees or other persons granted access to the workplace.

Champions and Sponsors

A Champion Defined

“Someone who is respected by both workers and management, has a passion for the cause, and is willing to be the ‘face’ of the system. This is the person who acts as leader and communicates frequently to all workplace stakeholders.”

—
Jill Collins, *Assembling the Pieces*, SA Group, 2014

Personal Characteristics of a Champion

- Has passion and is genuine
- Walks the talk (has credibility)

- Is respected by their colleagues
- Is proactive
- Has strong communication skills and the ability to adapt to one's audience, i.e., has emotional intelligence
- Can mobilize at all levels
- Embraces diversity
- Has access to resources
- Is accessible
- Offers fearless advice
- Has moral authority

Together with other organizational leaders, champions are responsible for advocating the following:⁶

- Developing and ensuring the sustainability of a psychologically healthy and safe workplace;
- Establishing key objectives toward continual improvement of psychological health and safety in the workplace; and
- Ensuring that psychological health and safety are part of all organizational decision making processes.

Supporting the champion are organizational sponsors and senior leaders, who advocate for the allocation of resources to support the psychological health and safety management system, and have the authority and power to make decisions at the highest level.

Joint Selection of the Champion

As noted in the Technical Committee's first report, the person that an organization chooses as a champion, and the process for selecting a champion, is essential for aligning with the National Standard.

Champions should be selected through a joint process, with input from individuals across the organization. They must be the face of the vision, engage unions and employees at all levels, and raise awareness of the importance of psychological health and safety.

The champion is part of a multidisciplinary team, which may include various subject matter experts in areas such as health and safety, HR, mental health, governance, disability management, and project management.

These individuals should be given the support and additional resources they require to fulfill their professional commitments related to their substantive position and their personal commitments as champion (i.e., to ensure that the recommendations and the vision are adopted and that champions are advocates of the vision). The champion designation should be incorporated within his or her official title as a show of the organization's commitment to the vision.

Selection Process

The selection process must be transparent and fair in order to lend credibility and authenticity to the department's commitment to improve the culture. The selection process forms the first step toward general employee engagement.

Contrary to traditional forms of champion appointments, which have generally been unilateral and often made by a deputy head, it is imperative that senior leaders pay attention to how appointments are made in light of the commitment to adopt the vision. It is not sufficient to simply have the deputy head inform unions of his or her champion selection and ask whether unions have any objection; this approach would exclude the very individuals that collectively have an obligation to support the vision.

Guide to an Organization's Selection Process

How Many Champions?

Consider:

- Demographics
- Geography
- Number of employees
- State of mental health within the organization
- State of labour relations within an organization
- Need for representation by employees, unions and management representation
- General accessibility requirements
- Workload

- **Transparency:** Initiate an open call for nominations and avoid selection through appointment.
- **Joint decision:** Consult unions and/or form a selection committee comprising management-union representatives as agreed to at the organization’s National Labour Management Consultation Committee.
- **Consent:** Nominees must consent before being considered by the selection committee.
- **Source of champions:** Champions may be individuals from the organization or the union, or be external individuals.
- **Number of champions:** Determine the appropriate number of champions.
- **Communication:** Develop a communications strategy that describes the selection process, the role of the champion, the number of champions by region, the organization’s commitment to allocate time and resources to champions, and an announcement to introduce the champions.

For Organizations That Have Already Selected a Champion

Our recommendation is that deputy heads revisit the process in order to ensure the overall engagement and buy-in of employees. This process could include, but not be limited to, the following:

- Discussions with unions at the National Labour Management Consultation Committee level;
- A call for nominations, in collaboration with unions, for additional champions across the organization;
- A mechanism that allows employees to raise objections regarding the naming of the champion with a linkage to the attributes listed in the text box titled “Personal Characteristics of a Champion”; and
- Collaborative decisions on how best to revisit the selection of a champion.

Joint Engagement Strategy

Key Points
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engagement is active participation by all individuals. • Engagement is continuous and requires openness and inclusion.

- Employees require time and resources to participate in psychological health and safety activities.
- Engagement is a key component to be included in an action plan to address psychological health and safety in the workplace.

One of the key areas of focus to create a culture of humanity, compassion and fairness is engagement. Senior management and unions are expected to actively engage employees by promoting formal and informal approaches to facilitate contributions toward continuous and positive cultural change.

Moreover, creating a psychologically healthy and safe workplace requires commitment and engagement beyond senior leadership. Psychological health and safety is the responsibility of all individuals in the workplace, and active and meaningful participation of employees is essential.

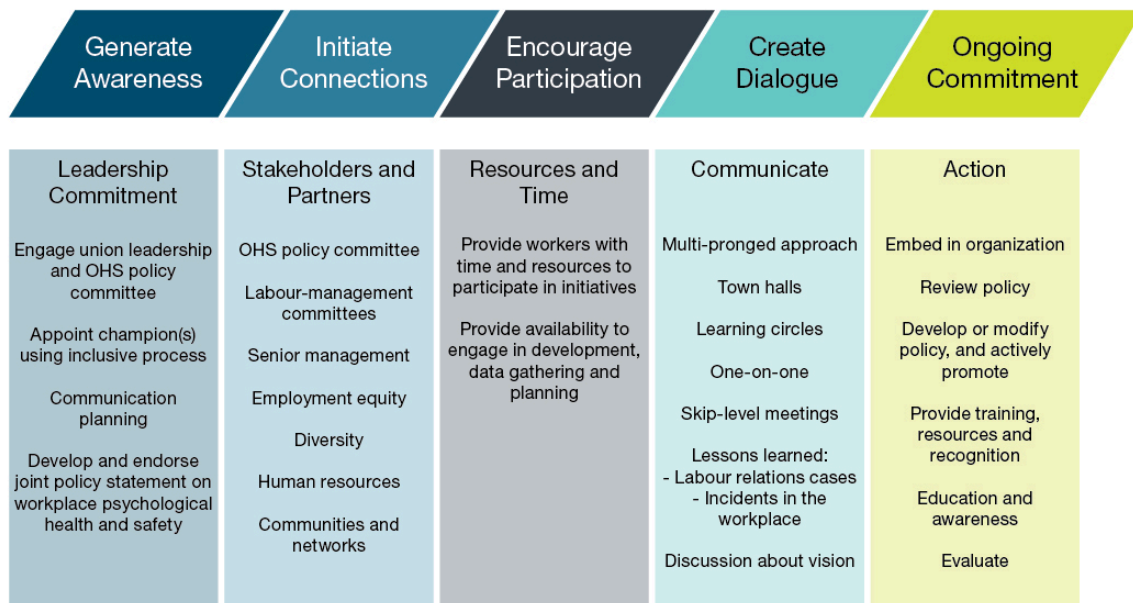
Engagement and participation are the building blocks for improving psychological health and well-being in the workplace. This is supported through openness and inclusion of all entities involved in supporting psychological health and safety in the workplace during all stages of planning, implementation, review and remediation.

Engagement is not a goal in and of itself but rather the means to create a culture of humanity, compassion and fairness through alignment with the National Standard. Trust will be established only through supportive dialogue and consistent action, in keeping with the vision.

Organizations will need to provide employees and unions with the time and resources to participate effectively in the development of psychological health and safety policy, planning, implementation, training, evaluation and corrective action.

There are a number of resources available at the organizational level that can be used to start engaging employees as part of an action plan on mental health. Figure 3 outlines examples of what organizations can do to “walk the talk.”

Figure 3: Engagement Strategy Example



Build and strengthen trust: walk the talk

► Figure 3 - Text version

Training OHS Committees

To support alignment with the National Standard, organizations must prepare OHS committees for their role in conducting organizational assessments and provide the following training:

- Committee orientation training (basic responsibilities);
- Hazard analysis;
- Workplace inspections; and
- Hazardous occurrence investigation and reporting.

Information on training requirements can be found in subsection 20.18 of the National Joint Council’s Occupational Health and Safety Directive and section 3 of the Policy Committees, Work Place Committees and Health and Safety Representatives Regulations.

Organizational Assessments

Once an organization has confirmed its commitment to align with the National Standard, its OHS policy committee should participate in an assessment of the work setting.

OHS Policy Committee

Regarding assessments, the OHS policy committee will normally assume leadership for the following:

- Ensuring that members of the committee (national, regional and local) are trained and engaged in undertaking organizational assessments;
- Collaborating with key partners to conduct organizational assessments (data collection, psychological hazard identification and data analysis);
- Implementation planning (with implementation to be undertaken by workplace OHS committees); and
- Developing worksite inspection methodology, as required under the Canada Occupational Health and Safety Regulations.

The OHS policy committee has the legal authority to request any information, except personal medical records, that is relevant to the psychological health and safety of employees. The OHS policy committee can seek guidance and support from the SWOHS Policy Committee in this regard.

Assessment Process

Psychosocial Factors
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Psychological support2. Organizational culture3. Clear leadership and expectations4. Civility and respect5. Psychological competencies and requirements6. Growth and development7. Recognition and reward8. Involvement and influence9. Workload management10. Engagement11. Balance12. Psychological protection13. Protection of physical safety14. Other factors identified by workers
Gathering the Facts

- Workforce demographics
- Organizational data (e.g., sick leave, absenteeism, return to work and accommodation statistics)
- Assessment of existing policies and programs
- Hazard identification
- Data analysis

Key References

- Part 19.3 of the COHS Regulations details information sources to explore and steps to take.
- Section 4 of the National Standard.

The National Standard identifies three elements of an organizational assessment:

- Data collection;
- Psychological hazard identification; and
- Data analysis.

The assessment process will help identify the extent to which the factors in the National Standard support the psychological health and safety of the workforce and any factors that may be negatively affecting employees. Taking a SWOT (strength, weakness, opportunities and threats) approach to the assessment enables organizations to identify attributes that can be leveraged to address areas of concern.

Data Collection

Federal organizations have the tools and resources to immediately begin the assessment of their workplace. With access to an array of data such as absence rates, exit interview results, health care claims, and accident and incident reports, combined with in-house resources such as auditors, evaluators, HR analysts and OHS policy committees, federal organizations are equipped to undertake a SWOT analysis. When determining which data sets to use, *Assembling the Pieces* recommends that organizations consider how they will measure improvements over time.

In addition to analyzing specific data sets, organizations should also review existing programs and policies that may be affecting the psychological health and safety of their employees. Specific attention should be given to policies and programs for return to work, accommodation and employee equity.

A useful tool to assist organizations in conducting the assessment is Great-West Life's [Assessing Risks and Returns, Great-West Life Centre for Mental Health in the Workplace – Workplace Strategies for Mental Health](#).

Psychological Hazard Identification

In addition to data collection, organizations should identify hazards to detect all workplace hazards that may affect psychological health and safety and determine the risk that these hazards pose to employees. There are various tools and resources available to guide organizations as they undertake risk assessments. Essential elements of these types of analyses are as follows:

- Hazard identification;
- Elimination of those hazards that can be eliminated; and
- Assessment for level of risk for hazards that cannot be eliminated.

Organizations should ensure the participation of their OHS policy committee in conducting assessments. In addition, the SWOSH Policy Committee can serve as a resource for the OHS policy committee and, if deemed necessary, will coordinate training for committee members to develop the skills and competencies to assess risks to psychological health and safety.

Data Analysis

Following data collection and hazard identification, organizations should conduct a thorough analysis to:

- Identify trends that suggest areas of concern that should be evaluated more thoroughly;
- Determine the root causes of these trends; and
- Where possible, benchmark data against industry data.

This analysis will provide a baseline from which organizations can monitor improvements year over year.

Workplace Assessment

Worksite committees should follow the same steps for issues that are specific to their worksite.

Joint Communications and Promotion Strategy

Communication and promotion are key components of any successful engagement and implementation strategy. A communication strategy must be developed in partnership between the employer and the unions.

Joint Communications Strategy

It is essential that the message be tailored to various audiences, including senior management, front-line managers, employees and unions. To ensure full collaboration of OHS committees, the National Joint Council should develop an enterprise-wide communications strategy, which could be disseminated to organizations through the SWOHS Policy Committee.

As described in the Joint Engagement Strategy section of this report, the Technical Committee emphasizes the need for each organization to develop and endorse a joint employer-employee policy statement as a key first step in the engagement strategy.

The joint policy statement should include the organizational commitment ⁷ to do the following:

- Keep collaborative partners aware of each other's communiqués;
- Establish and implement policies and practices that are consistent with existing legislative obligations;
- Establish, promote and maintain psychologically healthy and safe workplaces;
- Align with organizational values and ethics;
- Establish and implement a process to evaluate the effectiveness of the system and make changes;
- Delegate the necessary authority to implement the system;
- Ensure involvement of employees and employee representatives in the development, implementation and continual improvement of the system;
- Provide ongoing resources;
- Ensure regular evaluation and review; and
- Respect the principles of mutual respect, confidentiality and cooperation.

Assembling the Pieces emphasizes the following:

There are few things that will be more integral to your Psychological Health and Safety Management System than communications. What you communicate to your workers, how you develop and convey the messages, and how often you communicate needs to be given careful consideration at the planning stage. ⁸

Assembling the Pieces provides an excellent reference for organizations as they develop their communication strategy.

Joint Promotion Strategy

Promotion and engagement go hand in hand. Organizations should promote healthy workplace practices, employee participation in psychological health and safety initiatives, and mental health resiliency. Education, awareness and training are key components of an effective promotion strategy, but they can be overshadowed by a crowded market that has numerous offerings related to mental health. However, there are training courses available within the public service that organizations can use and tailor to organization-specific needs.

The Canada School of Public Service provides a suite of mental health and healthy workplace course offerings for employees, managers, executives and functional specialists. In addition, the Joint Learning Program provides mental health workshops that can be organized within regions across the federal public service.

Next Steps

Fostering a healthy workplace is more than an organizational program, short-term project or initiative. It requires a shift in organizational culture carried out through an effective strategy that allows for sustainability and continuous improvement. This can be achieved through four steps:

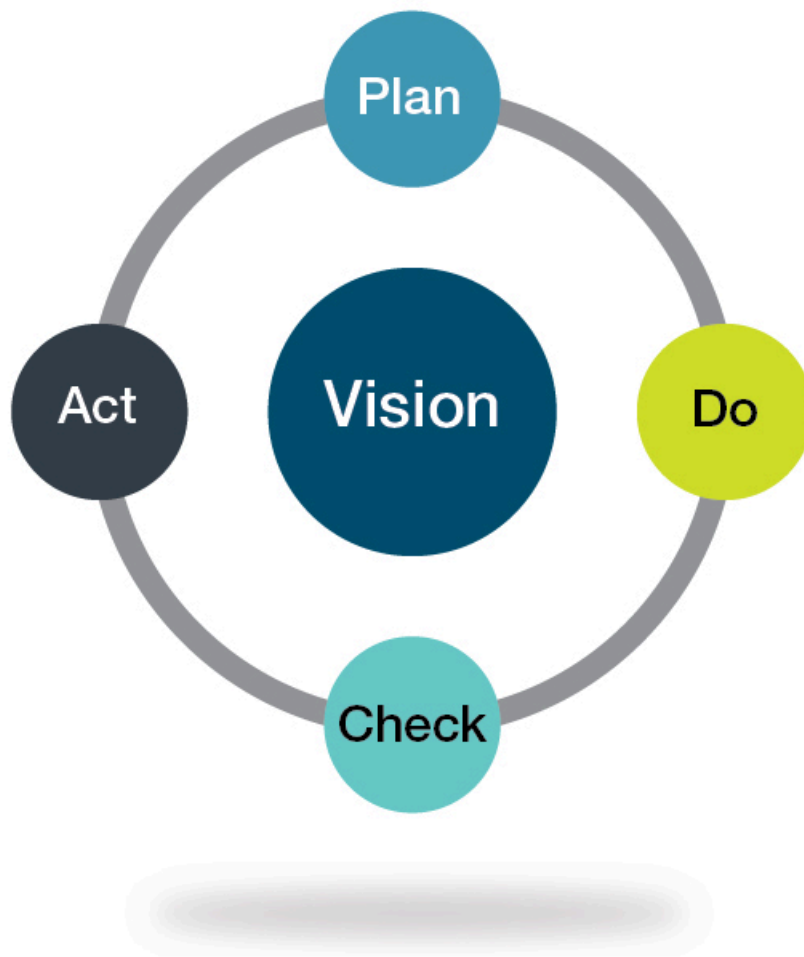
Step 1: Plan – Develop a plan to implement the vision, including how you will measure success.

Step 2: Do – Implement the plan.

Step 3: Check – Check that the work carried out is according to the plan.

Step 4: Act – Take action to change the action and update the plan (continual improvement).

Figure 4: Four Steps: Plan, Do, Check and Act



Conclusion

Through existing structures and a legal framework, including legislative obligations for the federal government, the employer and deputy heads support psychological health and safety in the workplace. Specifically, the Financial Administration Act, the Employment Equity Act, and Part II of the Canada Labour Code provide the foundation for the governance for psychological health and safety in the federal public service, both enterprise-wide and at the organizational level. To leverage these structures and legal framework, several actions are proposed.

Getting Started

Enterprise-Wide Actions

The federal public service should focus on the following areas to support alignment with the National Standard:

- Establish or improve the communications protocol between the SWOSH Policy Committee and organizational policy committees to ensure appropriate oversight, guidance and information sharing.
- Enterprise-wide committees need to focus more on outreach and communication to organization-specific communities to ensure stronger linkages between committee structures.
- Hold deputy heads accountable for establishing, staffing and overseeing OHS committees, and for ensuring that the committees are trained and equipped to fulfill their mandate. Minimum training includes the following:
 - Committee orientation training;
 - Hazard analysis;
 - Workplace inspections; and
 - Hazards occurrence and investigation reporting.
- Create a single centre of expertise to provide support to organizations.

Organization-Specific Actions

Organizations should focus on the following elements to support their alignment with the National Standard:

- Establish a joint governance structure to support the psychological health and safety management system within the organization, including the selection of psychological health and safety champions;
- Ensure adequate resources (staff and funds) and infrastructure;
- Ensure that OHS committees are equipped with essential training to fulfill their duties;
- Identify psychological health and safety factors through workplace assessments to inform continuous improvement; and
- Jointly develop and implement strategies for employee engagement, communication and promotion.

The Way Forward

One year has passed since the Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the Treasury Board and PSAC with respect to mental health in the workplace, and the Technical Committee has demonstrated that the collaborative process works. The Technical Committee recognizes that there

are other tracks of work to support psychological health and safety improvement in the workplace, and it looks forward to next steps to support this work and broader linkages with the Clerk's priority mental health.

The journey is just beginning, and there is more work left to do. We recommend that the Technical Committee continues to federalize elements in *Assembling the Pieces*, support alignment with the National Standard, and fully implement the intent of the Memorandum of Understanding.

Glossary

Assembling the Pieces:

Assembling the Pieces: An Implementation Guide to the National Standard for Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace, Toronto: CSA Group, 2014.

CCOHS:

Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety

CLC:

Canada Labour Code

COHSR:

Canada Occupational Health and Safety Regulations

EEA:

Employment Equity Act

FAA:

Financial Administration Act

First report:

September 2015 Technical Committee Report to the Steering Committee on Mental Health in the Workplace (released December 2015)

HR:

Human resources

JEEC:

Joint Employment Equity Committee

JCTC:

Joint Career Transition Committee

JLP:

Joint Learning Program

MAF:

Management Accountability Framework

MHCC:

Mental Health Commission of Canada

NJC:

National Joint Council

National Standard:

CSA Group's National Standard of Canada for Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace

Organizations:

Federal public service departments and agencies

OHS:

Occupational health and safety

PMA:

Performance management agreement

PSAC:

Public Service Alliance of Canada

SWOHS policy committee:

Service-wide occupational health and safety committee policy committee

TBS:

Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat

Unions:

Federal public service bargaining agents and/or unions

Vision:

To create a culture that enshrines psychological health, safety and well-being in all aspects of the workplace through collaboration, inclusivity and respect. This obligation belongs to every individual in the workplace.

Appendix: About the Joint Task Force

The Joint Task Force on Mental Health, created in March 2015, comprises a Steering Committee and a Technical Committee that supports the Steering Committee. The Steering Committee is co-led by the Chief Human Resources

Officer and the President of the PSAC, and provides guidance and leadership to the Technical Committee. The Technical Committee comprises representatives of unions and the employer, and is co-chaired by representatives of the Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat (TBS) and PSAC.

Steering Committee Members

Union Members

- **Robyn Benson** (Co-Chair)
President, PSAC
- **Ron Cochrane**
The Professional Association of Foreign Service Officers
- **Debi Daviau**
The Professional Institute of the Public Service of Canada

Employer Members

- **Anne Marie Smart** (Co-Chair)
Chief Human Resources Officer, TBS

Technical Committee Members

Union Members

- **Bob Kingston** (Co-Chair), PSAC
- **Lisa Addario**, PSAC
- **Shirley Friesen**, The Professional Institute of the Public Service of Canada
- **Sandra Guttman**, Association of Justice Counsel
- **Jerry Ryan**, Dockyards Council East
- **Sari Sairanen**, Unifor-HQ
- **Denis St-Jean**, PSAC

Employer Members

- **Caroline Curran** (Co-Chair), TBS
- **Brenda Baxter**, Labour Program
- **Barbara Carswell**, Global Affairs Canada
- **Hilary Flett**, Health Canada
- **Lisa Janes**, Canada Border Services Agency
- **Brian McKee**, National Managers' Community

- **Hélène Nadeau**, Association of Professional Executives of the Public Service of Canada
- **Stephanie Priest**, Public Health Agency of Canada

Support to the Technical Committee was provided by Matthew Millar and Mariane Small, both of TBS.

Footnotes

- 1 The Joint Career Transition Committee, Employee Assistance Services of Health Canada, and the Joint Learning Program are examples of blended service models.
- 2 Collins, Jill: *Assembling the Pieces: An Implementation Guide to the National Standard for Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace*, Toronto: CSA Group, 2014.
- 3 Great-West Life's workplace strategies for mental health are as follows:

 - Recognize that workers' well-being is a shared responsibility between unions and management.
 - Strengthen union-management relationships by taking a collaborative, positive approach to psychological health and safety.
 - Leverage union involvement to help sustain a psychologically healthy and safe workplace.
 - Comply with the Standard by ensuring union buy-in and participation in the implementation of the system.
- 4 Diane Kunyk, Heather Morris and Emilene Reisdorfer. "Organizational Receptivity to a Voluntary Psychological Health & Safety Workplace Standard," University of Calgary, March 2014
- 5 *Assembling the Pieces*, pp. 32–33.
- 6 *Assembling the Pieces*, p. 26.

7 Assembling the Pieces, p. 32.

8 Assembling the Pieces, p. 83.

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