



Canadian Mental
Health Association
Mental health for all

Supporting the Mental Health of Your Teams

Managers and supervisors play a key role in promoting the mental or psychological health of their team members. They may also be among the first to notice changes that may indicate a mental health problem or mental illness. However, according to research, many employees do not believe that their managers are equipped to support them in the event of a mental health issue—only one-third of employees thought it would be helpful to discuss their mental health issue with their manager or supervisor.¹ The good news is that there are proven practices that can help managers support the mental health of their employees.

Five Management Practices that Support Psychological Health²



1. Communication & Collaboration

This involves the clear and transparent exchange of information between you and your team as well as an attitude that supports working together to help them do their jobs. When employees clearly understand what is expected of them and feel that their manager is supporting their success, teams are more likely to:

- Execute the right tasks at the right times
- Avoid errors due to miscommunication
- Identify and resolve challenges sooner
- Maintain shared objectives and priorities



2. Social Intelligence

This involves being a role model for psychologically safe interactions with others at work. When employees have a leader who models psychologically safe interactions, teams are more likely to:

- Manage stress at work without needing to be away from the workplace
- Maintain high productivity during demanding times
- Demonstrate civility and respect in their conversations
- Reach out for help when experiencing challenges with their mental health



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3. Problem Solving & Conflict Management

This involves supporting team members to effectively and respectfully resolve work-related disagreements. It also means holding employees accountable when they don't engage in productive problem-solving. When employees have a leader who facilitates and supports their ability to solve problems and manage conflict as a team, they are more likely to:

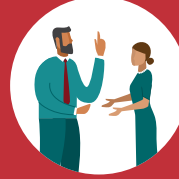
- Experience high levels of morale
- Use different perspectives to generate creative solutions
- Effectively resolve interpersonal differences



4. Security & Safety

This involves creating a safe work environment by responding proactively to situations that might cause psychological harm to employees. When a leader looks after the psychological safety of employees, teams are more likely to:

- Experience fewer stress-related absences
- Trust their leader to look after their needs
- Demonstrate loyalty to the organization



5. Fairness & Integrity

This involves demonstrating transparent and equitable decision-making, and being honest about how and why decisions are made within the team. It also means demonstrating humility and understanding your own personal limitations and biases. When a leader demonstrates these qualities, teams are more likely to:

- Want to do their best work
- Trust the decisions their leader makes
- Address problematic issues related to discrimination or exclusion





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How to develop these management practices

Use the checklist below to begin evaluating the ways you support the mental health of your team.³

- ☐ I regularly seek feedback from employees about what might be currently challenging or frustrating them at work.
- ☐ I regularly provide positive, constructive feedback to employees with the intent of helping them grow and develop.
- ☐ I have regular, confidential meetings with each team member to discuss issues that affect their work, including how their work links to organizational goals and objectives.
- ☐ During times of high work demands, I work even harder at keeping my employees motivated and engaged.
- ☐ I facilitate development of interpersonal skills, in addition to the development of technical job skills.
- ☐ I support the needs of employees with mental health issues who are trying to stay productive at work.
- ☐ I ensure that all team members demonstrate civility in their workplace interactions.
- ☐ I actively solicit input from workers on potential solutions to work-related challenges and issues.
- ☐ When demands are high, I work with employees to prioritize tasks and responsibilities.
- ☐ My employees know that I support and encourage them to maintain a healthy work-life balance.
- ☐ I recognize and address the psychological impact on workers of workplace bullying, harassment or unresolved conflict.
- ☐ I effectively address and resolve situations that may threaten or harm employee psychological health or safety (e.g., harassment, discrimination, violence).
- ☐ I ensure the mental and emotional effort required by my employees to do their work is reasonable.
- ☐ All my employees would agree that I fairly and promptly resolve workplace issues and disagreements.
- ☐ I effectively resolve workplace conflict in a way that preserves the respect and dignity of all participants.

For more information on what it takes to become a psychologically safe leader, go to cmha.ca/workplace. You can also take the Psychologically Safe Leader Assessment to see how you stack up and how you could improve your skills and habits as a leader.

¹ Conference Board of Canada, Building Mentally Healthy Workplaces, June 2011.
² The Great-West Life Centre for Mental Health in the Workplace. (2019). Psychologically Safe Leader Assessment. Retrieved from: <https://www.workplacestrategiesformentalhealth.com/psychological-health-and-safety/psychologically-safe-leader-assessment>
³ Adapted from Samra, J. (2017). Psychologically Safe Leader Assessment. Retrieved from <https://www.psychologicallysafeleader.com>
⁴ Canadian Mental Health Association, Ontario Division. www.mentalhealthworks.ca