



Glossary

Mental health

There is no health without mental health. Mental health is a state of well-being where a person

- Understands their own abilities
- Can cope with the normal stresses of life
- Can work productively and fruitfully, and
- Is able to contribute to their own community.¹

Mental illness

Mental illnesses affect the way we think about ourselves, relate to others, and interact with the world around us. They influence our:

- thoughts
- feelings
- abilities, and
- behaviours.

Depression and anxiety disorders are the most common mental illnesses.

People with a mental illness may not be able to cope with ordinary aspects of everyday life. They may need help to regain a healthy emotional balance.

Types of mental illness – Mental illness takes many forms, including:

- mood disorders that affect how you feel, such as:
 - depression
 - bipolar disorder
- anxiety disorders.
- adjustment disorder, which is an abnormal excessive reaction to an identifiable stressor
- psychotic disorders like schizophrenia.
- personality disorders – where someone has rigid and maladaptive patterns of thinking, feeling and relating
- eating disorders, which involve distorted body image, difficulty managing emotions and negative view of self:
 - anorexia
 - bulimia
 - binge eating disorder
- substance use disorders, which generally involve behaviour patterns in which people continue to use a substance despite having problems caused by it.

Suicide

Suicide isn't a mental illness but is often the result of some underlying mental illness. It's a significant cause of premature death in Canada.

Stigma

Stigma is a negative stereotype. Stigma can apply to a person or an entire group.

Stigma is different from discrimination. Discrimination is the behaviour that results from this negative stereotype. Stigma is a powerful barrier to getting help. 60% of people with a mental health problem or illness won't seek help because they're afraid of being labeled.²

Discrimination

Discrimination is unfair treatment due to a person's identity. This includes:

- race
- ancestry
- religion
- place of origin
- colour
- ethnic origin
- citizenship
- creed
- sex
- sexual orientation
- gender identity
- gender expression
- age
- marital status
- family status, or
- disability, including mental disorder.

Acts of discrimination can be overt or covert. Openly expressing prejudices is an overt example. Covert (systemic) discrimination is often evasive or passive.

A psychologically healthy and safe workplace

The National Standard defines a psychologically healthy and safe workplace as "a workplace that promotes workers' psychological wellbeing and actively works to prevent harm to worker mental health. This includes in negligent, reckless or intentional ways."³



Stress

Stress can come from both good and bad things that happen to us. Stress is the body's response to a real or perceived threat. It's a reaction to a situation. It isn't about the actual situation. Some stress can be a good thing. It can motivate us to focus on a task or take action to solve a problem. Too much stress over time can have a big impact on physical and mental health. Many people experience symptoms like sweating, racing heart, or tense muscles. Stress can make it hard to concentrate, make decisions and make people less productive. Sleep problems and headaches are common problems related to stress.

Presenteeism

Employees come to work when they aren't well—either physically or mentally. As a result, they aren't productive. When employees come to work when they aren't mentally present, they aren't taking the time needed to get better. Presenteeism can happen because employees feel pressure to keep performing. They may also feel guilty leaving work for their coworkers.

Burnout

Burnout is a state of physical, emotional and mental exhaustion. It's caused by long-term exposure to demanding work situations. Burnout is the cumulative result of stress. Anyone can experience job burnout. However, jobs with high demands and few supports can increase the prevalence of burnout and lower engagement. Helping professions have high rates of burnout. Healthcare workers, teachers or counsellors are good examples.

Harassment, violence, bullying and mobbing

Most people think of violence as a physical assault. However, workplace violence is a much broader problem. It's any act where a person is abused, threatened, intimidated or assaulted in their employment.

¹ World Health Organization (2018), Mental health, strengthening our response

² Mental Health Commission of Canada (2018), [Opening minds](#)

³ CSA Group and Mental Health Commission of Canada (MHCC) (2014). Assembling the Pieces: An Implementation Guide to the National Standard for Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace.