



Employee Mental Health Strategy

an integrated approach to supporting the mental health and psychological well-being of faculty and staff at the University of Windsor



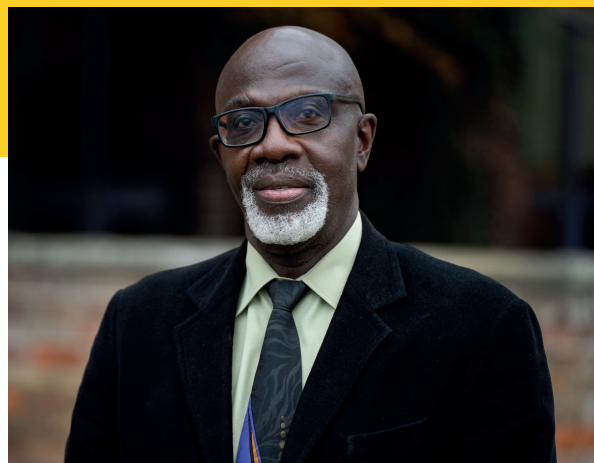
University
of Windsor

Office of the Vice-President
People, Equity, & Inclusion

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Message from the Vice-President People, Equity, & Inclusion



Dear Colleagues:

I am pleased to present the **Employee Mental Health Strategy**. This document outlines our vision, areas of priority, and key actions to build a psychologically healthy and safe workplace culture.

The development of the Employee Mental Health Strategy is one of the key actions emerging from the **Employee Engagement Survey (2022)** and a foundational commitment of the **Aspire: Together for Tomorrow Strategic Plan (2023)**.

People are at the heart of our institution. The University of Windsor is committed to being a people-centred place to learn and work. This means putting the well-being of our people at the forefront of what we do. We strive to create a culture of equity, inclusion, belonging, and dignity, which provides an environment for all to flourish as we deliver on our academic mission. A healthy and safe work environment is fundamental to this.

As we move forward with implementation, updates will be posted on the Employee Mental Health webpages that can be found at www.uwindsor.ca/vp-people-equity-inclusion.

Thank you to the members of the Employee Mental Health Steering Committee and the Campus Mental Health Advisory Committee for their commitment and contributions to this important initiative.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Clinton Beckford'.

Clinton Beckford (he/him)
Vice-President, People, Equity, & Inclusion

Background

Mental health is defined as the “capacities of each of us to feel, think, and act in ways that enhance our ability to enjoy life and deal with the challenges we face. It is a positive sense of emotional and spiritual well-being that respects the importance of culture, equity, social justice, interconnections, and personal dignity” ([Public Health Agency of Canada](#), 2006). The [World Health Organization](#) (WHO) defines it as a state of well-being in which every individual realizes their own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to contribute to their community.

According to the [Mental Health Commission of Canada](#) (2016), mental health concerns:

- Account for approximately thirty percent (30%) of short- and long-term disability claims in Canadian workplaces;
- Are rated as one of the top three (3) drivers of both short- and long-term disability claims by more than eighty percent (80%) of Canadian employers;
- Account for more than six (6) billion dollars in lost productivity costs due to absenteeism and presenteeism.

As an employer, the University understands that workplaces play a key role in promoting and protecting the mental health of employees. The workplace can and should be a source of positivity as it provides individuals with a purpose, financial security, a sense of identity, and social connections, but the workplace also has the potential to be a source of stress that negatively impacts mental health and well-being. The Employee Mental Health Strategy for the University of Windsor provides a roadmap to **promote mental health and well-being, minimize workplace risks to mental health, support employees throughout the mental health continuum, and build a psychologically healthy and safe workplace culture.**

Psychological safety describes a culture of respect, trust, and openness, where people feel unafraid to take risks, share ideas, and make mistakes.

Strategy Development

The Employee Mental Health Strategy Steering Committee (Appendix B) was established in the Fall of 2022 to lead the strategy development process. The Committee then engaged the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH) as an external subject-matter expert.

The following provides a high-level overview of the strategy development process:



1. Take stock of current situation

The strategy development was grounded on the 13 psychosocial factors (Appendix A) that are part of the National Standard of Canada for Psychological Health & Safety in the Workplace, which was released in 2013 by the Mental Health Commission of Canada (MHCC) in partnership with CSA and the Bureau de Normalisation du Québec (BNQ).

An organizational review/assessment tool was designed to take stock of our current situation. The assessment tool included key indicators that emerged from the review of the [Guarding Minds at Work website](#). Guarding Minds at Work is a comprehensive resource that has been designed to support organizations to understand and assess the 13 factors of the National Standard of Canada for Psychological Health & Safety.

The data gathered through the [Employee Engagement Survey \(2022\)](#), the [Aspire](#) Strategic planning consultations, and the review of policies, programs, and websites was used to complete the assessment tool.

2. Identify gaps, needs, & opportunities

The information gathered through the assessment tool was reviewed to identify areas of strength, gaps, needs, and opportunities.

3. Formulate areas of priority & key actions

A thematic analysis of emerging gaps, needs, and opportunities was conducted to identify the **5 areas of priority** and the **associated 22 key actions** outlined in this document.

Integrated Approach

To address the opportunities for improvement emerging from the organizational assessment, an integrated approach to psychological health and safety was adopted by the Steering Committee, consisting of the following three broad areas:



promote

Promote positive mental health and well-being, improve understanding of mental health, combat stigma, and reduce the likelihood of mental health injury.



protect

Address risks and protective factors and foster a civil and respectful workplace culture.



support

Support employees throughout the mental health continuum.

Purpose, Vision, & Guiding Principles

In order to work towards a campus-wide mental health approach, the Campus Mental Health Advisory Committee (Appendix C), comprised of representatives from the Student Mental Health Strategy Implementation Committee and the Employee Mental Health Strategy Steering Committee, was established to draft a **Purpose, Vision, and Guiding Principles** to guide the overarching way in which we approach mental health at the University of Windsor. These statements form the foundation for the Employee Mental Health Strategy and will guide the future review and update of the Student Mental Health Strategy.



PURPOSE

Establish a roadmap to build awareness and understanding of mental health, reduce stigma, and foster a psychologically safe environment for all.



VISION

A caring, connected, and compassionate campus culture where mental health and psychological safety are embedded and integrated into every facet of the University of Windsor experience.

Purpose, Vision, & Guiding Principles



GUIDING PRINCIPLES



LEADERSHIP: Senior leaders must be active participants in creating and advancing a mentally healthy and psychologically safe culture at the University of Windsor.



SHARED RESPONSIBILITY: Leaders, managers, employees, and students share in the responsibility of creating and maintaining a psychologically healthy culture at the University of Windsor.



CULTURE OF RESPECT: Shared values of civility, respect, equity, diversity, inclusion, and anti-oppressive and decolonizing practices are integral for promoting a psychologically safe environment for all.



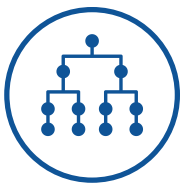
INTEGRATED APPROACH: An integrated approach informed by evidence-based practices is key to protect, promote, and support mental health and psychological safety.



RESULTS-DRIVEN: Regular monitoring, reviewing, and adjusting of action plans is vital to achieve sustainable change.

Areas of Priority & Key Actions

The following five (5) areas of priority have been identified to **promote mental health, minimize workplace risks to mental health, support employees, and build a psychologically healthy and safe workplace culture.**



Organizational Structure & Measurement Framework

Ensure that the University has the appropriate organizational structure to meet its psychological health and safety mandate within a comprehensive framework to track progress and measure ROI.



Leadership Development

Enhance the knowledge and skills of leaders/supervisors to create the conditions in the work environment that positively influence psychological health and safety.



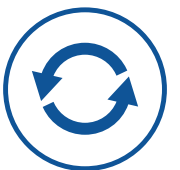
Policies, Procedures, & Processes

Ensure that organizational policies, programs, and processes promote a psychologically healthy and safe workplace culture.



Workplace Culture

Foster a supportive, healthy, and psychologically safe workplace culture through day-to-day practices and actions that align with the Strategy's guiding principles.

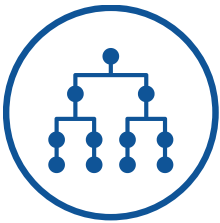


Holistic Supports

Create and actively promote a tailored, holistic system that supports employees along the entire spectrum of mental health.

For each of these priorities, pages 8 through 12 of this document outline the associated key actions and the ways in which these areas of priority and key actions cut across the integrated approach framework (page 4).

1



Area of Priority

Organizational Structure & Measurement Framework

Ensure that the University has the appropriate organizational structure to meet its psychological health and safety mandate within a comprehensive framework to track progress and measure ROI.

Key Actions



1.1 Establish an adequately resourced structure to support the mental health of employees and build a psychologically healthy and safe workplace culture.



1.2 Establish a comprehensive key performance measurement framework to track progress and inform ongoing planning.

2



Area of Priority Leadership Development

Enhance the knowledge and skills of leaders/supervisors to create the conditions in the work environment that positively influence psychological health and safety.

Key Action

2.1 Establish a mandatory, ongoing development program for leaders/supervisors to foster a common level of awareness and understanding of mental health, reduce stigma, and build a psychologically healthy and safe workplace culture.



3



Area of Priority

Policies, Procedures, & Processes

Ensure that organizational policies, programs, and processes promote a psychologically healthy and safe workplace culture.

Key Actions

3.1 Regularly review, revise, and promote organizational policies that impact and support psychological health and safety, including but not limited to the Harassment Prevention Policy, Violence Prevention Policy, Sexual Misconduct Policy, and Human Rights Policy.

3.2 Review Human Resources policies, procedures, and programs to ensure that they address both physical and psychological health and safety.

3.3 Establish a Workplace Civility and Respect policy and program.

3.4 Hold employees accountable for breaches to organizational policies that impact and support psychological health and safety and address these breaches in a fair, thorough, and timely manner as articulated in the policies and/or collective agreements.



 promote

 protect

 support

4



Area of Priority Workplace Culture

Foster a supportive, healthy, and psychologically safe workplace culture through day-to-day practices and actions that align with the Strategy's guiding principles.

Key Actions



4.1 Establish a comprehensive knowledge- and skills-development program for employees to enhance awareness and understanding of mental health, reduce stigma, and foster a supportive and psychologically safe workplace culture.



4.2 Expand mental health promotion initiatives and events and identify and reduce barriers to participation. Establish initiatives that explore the relationship between mental health, human rights, and social justice.



4.3 Provide leaders and supervisors with the tools and supports to care for themselves and others, enhance employee engagement and teamwork, and address interpersonal conflicts/inappropriate behaviour in an effective and timely manner.



4.4 Introduce a central fund for departments interested in conducting workplace climate assessments to proactively identify and address workplace culture issues/concerns.



4.5 Ensure that job descriptions clearly articulate job expectations in equitable ways and accurately describe psychological job demands.



4.6 Encourage supervisors to provide employees opportunities to participate in decisions that impact their work and provide supervisors with the tools to address workload issues that lead to chronic stress and burnout.



4.7 Explore opportunities to reduce the timelines associated with approving and filling vacant positions (permanent and/or acting).



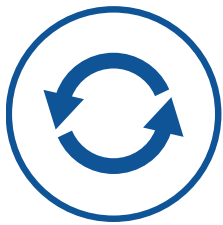
4.8 Ensure that executive level and managerial positions have clearly defined expectations that articulate the responsibilities for fostering a psychologically healthy and safe workplace culture and introduce an accountability mechanism.

 promote

 protect

 support

5



Area of Priority Holistic Supports

Create and actively promote a tailored, holistic system that supports employees along the entire spectrum of mental health.

Key Actions



5.1 Review current mental health supports/benefits provided to employees (usage, effectiveness, and use of anti-oppressive and decolonizing practices).



5.2 Introduce and/or expand mental health supports/benefits to create a holistic system of support.



5.3 Introduce culturally appropriate supports for Indigenous employees to address the impacts of trauma and violence and/or current conditions in the work environment.



5.4 Develop a comprehensive awareness-raising campaign to disseminate information actively and widely about resources, benefits, and supports available to employees.



5.5 Establish a central fund for departments to access specialized services to respond to trauma and crisis experiences.



5.6 Establish a proactive approach to crisis management to enable leaders and employees to respond effectively in crisis situations.



5.7 Review workplace accommodation guidelines and processes from a mental health lens and ensure a systems approach to effectively support employees who either remain at work or return to work.

 promote

 protect

 support

Moving from Strategy to Action

The Vice-President, People, Equity, and Inclusion is accountable for the implementation of this strategy, and as a first step in that process, an **accountability structure has been established** to lead the implementation of the strategy.

An implementation plan and a measurement framework will be established in **Winter 2024** to turn the strategy into action and to measure success as we continue to build a safe and thriving workplace at the University of Windsor.



Appendix A

13 Psychosocial Factors

Guarding Minds at Work define the psychosocial factors as elements that psychologically and/or socially impact the health, safety, and well-being of employees, either positively or negatively.

Clear Leadership & Expectations

A work environment where employees know what they need to do, have confidence in their leaders, and understand impending changes.

Civility & Respect

A work environment where all stakeholders are considerate and fair in their interactions with each other.

Engagement

A work environment where employees are motivated to do their jobs well and feel connected to their work, co-workers, and the organization.

Growth & Development

A work environment where employees receive ongoing encouragement and support to enhance interpersonal, emotional, and job-related skills.

Involvement & Influence

A work environment where employees are included in discussions and have input into decisions that impact their respective jobs.

Organizational Culture

A work environment where there are shared values of trust, honesty, fairness, and accountability.

Psychological Competencies & Job Demands

A work environment where psychological competencies and demands are not a health risk and employees are continually supported to meet the psychological demands of their positions.

Psychological Protection

A work environment where employees are free from bullying, harassment, stigma, and discrimination.

Psychological & Social Support

A work environment where all employees feel a sense of belonging and contribution.

Protection of Physical Safety

A work environment where management takes appropriate action to protect all employees against injury and illness and ensures they have what they need to do their jobs safely.

Recognition & Reward

A work environment where employees are recognized and acknowledged for their efforts in a fair and timely manner.

Work/Life Balance

A work environment where employees are supported to manage the demands of work, family, and personal life.

Workload Management

A work environment where employees feel supported to complete their assigned tasks and responsibilities successfully.

Appendix B

Employee Mental Health Strategy Steering Committee

Daniella Beaulieu (tri-chair)

Senior Executive Officer, Equity, Diversity, & Inclusion Strategic Initiatives,
Office of the Vice-President, People, Equity, & Inclusion

Mohsan Beg (tri-chair)

Executive Director, Student Health, Counselling, & Wellness Services

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Katie Chauvin

Wellness Coordinator, Student Counselling Centre

Marcela Ciampa (tri-chair)

Director, Organizational & Leadership Development,
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Kerry Gray

Director, Talent Acquisition & Retention, Human Resources

Lindsey Jaber

Chair of Research, Graduate Studies and Research & Associate Professor, Faculty of Education

Jaimie Kechego

Learning Specialist, Indigenization, Centre for Teaching & Learning

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Manager, Occupational Health & Safety, Human Resources

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Clinical Therapist, Student Counselling Centre

Anouchka Plumb

Director, Centre for Student Learning Excellence

Jill Singleton-Jackson

Associate Dean, Student Experience & Inter-Faculty Programs, FAHSS;
Professor, Department of Psychology

Committee Resource:

[Centre for Addiction and Mental Health \(CAMH\)](#)

Appendix C

Campus Mental Health Advisory Committee

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Karen Pillon

Associate University Librarian, Leddy Library

Anouchka Plumb

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Jill Singleton-Jackson

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