

Psychological Health in the Occupational Therapy Workplace at the Organizational and Policy Levels

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Psychological Health and Safety in the Occupational Therapy Workplace

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According to Wressle & Samuelsson (2014), psychological health in the occupational therapy workplace is becoming a progressively relevant subject owing largely to high job demands and limited time allocated to completing work-related duties. At the core of psychological health in the workplace is the organization. As such, there has been an increased focus on developing organizational frameworks to address psychological health and safety in the workplace (CSA Group, 2013).

Recent studies show that organizations that employ psychological health and safety strategies perform better overall on fundamental performance categories such as shareholder returns, and human resources measures (CSA Group, 2013). Furthermore, factors such as lack of resources and lack of time were found to be some of the primary sources of negative psychological health (Poulsen et al., 2014; Wressle & Samuelsson, 2014). Because such factors are organizationally dependent, organizational changes can play an integral role to mitigate psychological stressors in the OT workplace.

The framework currently discussed in the presentation is the *Psychological Health and Safety Management System* or PHSMS (CSA Group, 2013). It should be noted that there have been similar guidelines created the world over such as the *Six Management Standards for Mental Health in the Workplace* Framework by the UK government (Health & Safety Executive – UK Government). Though the PHSMS may not be practical in its applicability across all organizations, it has a flexible framework. Depending on the organizational size, readiness, resource availability and other contextual factors, some organizations may choose to modify the PHSMS to fit their companies' dimensions.

The breakdown of the PHSMS is discussed in the presentation. Its core elements are commitment, leadership, and participation, planning, implementation, evaluation and corrective action, and management review. Within commitment,

leadership, and participation, roles and responsibilities are communicated clearly to all employees (CSA, 2013). This aspect primarily involves commitment to the Standard, setting goals, positive culture, and worker involvement. In the planning stage, plans are established to outline objectives and the focus is on the development of an organizationally consistent vision of psychological wellness. At the implementation level, the organization ensures availability of appropriate infrastructure and resources. At this level, prevention and protection, and education are also emphasized. This is a critical level as the Mental Health Commissions of Canada (2010) noted that employees identified management's competence at building strong interpersonal relationships as a priority in their workplace wellbeing.

The evaluation and corrective action elements are in place to monitor and measure how well organizational standards adhere to psychological health and safety standards (CSA Group, 2013). Prior to management review, it is also possible to correct issues of hazards and risks. Management review includes all relevant PHSMS data. Areas of improvement are objectively determined and corrective and organizational policies and procedures are updated where necessary. As the CSA Group (2013) stated, employment of a standard like the PHSMS in the workplace involves a "journey of continual improvement" (p. 1).

KEY RESOURCES

- *A Leadership Framework for Advancing Workplace Mental Health*: <http://www.mhcleadership.ca/>
- Workplace strategies for psychological health
<http://www.workplacestrategiesformentalhealth.com/display.asp?l1=7&l2=84&d=84>
- Implementation: *Workplace Mental Health Promotion: A How-To Guide* <http://wmhp.cmhaontario.ca/case-studies>
- BNQ (Bureau de normalisation du Quebec): <http://www.bnq.qc.ca>
- BSI (British Standards Institution): <http://www.bsigroup.com>
- CSA Group: <http://csagroup.org>
- How to tackle work-related stress. Health & Safety Executive – UK Government
<http://www.hse.gov.uk/stress/standards/downloads.htm>

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