

RECOMMENDATION #3

EMBARKING ON A JOURNEY TO CREATE PSYCHOLOGICALLY SAFE AND HEALTHY HOSPITALS

OBJECTIVES

- Recognize the importance of psychological safety as a key component of a productive, effective and psychologically healthy and safe workforce
- Enhance safety and well-being of everyone within the hospital
- Better patient care
- Build the supportive culture necessary to establish and maintain trust, confidence and participation in the workplace violence prevention program
- Communicate the message that the organization and its leaders care about workplace violence prevention and recognize the effects of workplace violence on staff and patients

DESCRIPTION

- In January 2013, Canada launched voluntary standard CSA Z1003, “Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace.” The standard encourages organizational leaders to strive towards psychologically safe and healthy workplaces.
- While the standard provides a systematic process and tools to structure efforts, it is understood that organizations have their own methods, tools, and processes for striving towards psychologically safe workplaces, and are in many stages of doing so notwithstanding the existence of the CSA Standard. Embarking on a journey towards a psychologically safe and healthy workplace is to stress the importance of identifying and addressing factors (including workplace violence) that negatively impact workers’ physical and mental health. Creating a culture where the organization is seen by employees to be caring and responsive is an important aspect of an employer’s implementation of a workplace violence prevention program. It also equates to better patient care.
- Communicating a goal to create a psychologically safe and healthy workplace is essentially committing that the hospital will strive towards a culture of vigilance, responsiveness, and collaboration as its operational mantra. Culture is the “output” of how the organization and everyone in it “delivers inputs.” Everyone talks about culture but achieving a positive culture is elusive. Using the CSA standard as a guide is a good starting point. It is understood that creating a supportive and responsive workplace is a journey and will not be achieved overnight. However, creating a responsive organization goes hand in hand with supporting efforts to prevent workplace violence. A culture of psychological safety will encourage employees to report incidents, and also provides the confidence that support and follow-up will occur. Committing and striving towards such a culture will build a healthy atmosphere where its people-resources will be fulfilled, supported, and where they know that they are an important part of the whole.

RECOMMENDED IMPLEMENTATION

1. The Ministry of Labour and the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care should send out a joint communicate to invite all hospitals to begin their own journey to create a psychologically safe and healthy workplace, using the CSA Standard as a guideline
2. All health system stakeholders declare their commitment to journey towards building a culture of psychological safety within their organization. The process should:
 - Be built on a backdrop of collaboration with workplace stakeholders (i.e. employees, the union, the JHSC)
 - Assess existing programs, striving for continual improvements to fill gaps and address concerns
 - Provide people leaders opportunities to develop supportive leadership styles and investigate, develop, customize, and implement metrics to evaluate and promote supportive leadership styles as a requirement of the job
 - Focus on “supporting” and “responding.” This investment will build trust
 - Match policy commitments with action inputs that are visible to everyone in the organization
 - The Ministry of Labour and the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care should develop resources and supports to help in this process