GuardingMinds @ WORK

Suggested Actions and Resources

CLEAR LEADERSHIP AND EXPECTATIONS

OBJECTIVE: A work environment where there is effective leadership and support so that employees know what they need to do, have confidence in their leaders and understand impending.

Engage your employees to improve clear leadership and expectations

Putting clear leadership and expectations On the Agenda is easy with these resources. A workshop slide presentation and facilitator guide help you have a productive conversation with your team about this psychosocial factor and each of the relevant statements from the Guarding Minds at Work survey.

If this factor shows up as a relative strength in your workplace, have a team discussion to find out why they scored this factor higher than the national average. This can lead to appreciation and understanding of what is already good. Policies and processes can also be developed or refined to continue to support positive clear leadership and expectations.

If this factor has been flagged as an area of concern in your workplace, engage all stakeholders in discussion about which actions might provide the best solutions. You can use ideas from the list below to begin the conversation. When everyone contributes to improving psychological health and safety, the responsibility is shared, the outcomes are more effective, and the effort is sustainable.

Below are actions and resources related to improving clear leadership and expectations. This list does not contain every solution. There may be other ideas that you find or think of and want to try. However, these suggestions can help provide a strong and cost-effective foundation for addressing clear leadership and expectations.

The practical strategies come from research studies, have been recommended as best practices, or have been applied effectively in workplaces. The resources included here are free. You can also find excellent services available at a cost from a variety of reputable providers.

Once you have reviewed the actions and resources below, we encourage you to use the Action Planning process to help you think critically about which combination of free, paid, or internal resources will best meet the needs in your workplace.

Actions by statements

If there are specific clear leadership and expectations statements from your Guarding Minds at Work survey that you want to address you may want to consider one of the actions or resources provided directly under the statement below. More general actions and resources, relevant to civility and respect, are also included at the end.

1. **In my job, I know what I am expected to do.**
   - Being clear about expectations in terms of both process and outcomes is critical to psychological safety. Employees who work hard doing something that is not what was expected are often demoralized. Developing a Workplace Plan helps you create a clear agreement about what is expected.
   - To help guide employee discussion about improving a specific task, the Productivity Review Form breaks down job expectations and responsibilities into more manageable and visual components.
   - Taking mental health into account when addressing performance issues is an important factor of a psychologically safe workplace. To ensure you are protecting employee mental health at different stages of their workplace plan, Supportive Performance Management provides additional information.
   - It's not unusual for a supervisor to be unaware of the extent of tasks completed by an employee. It is not uncommon for employees to continue to do work that is no longer required, but that their supervisor has not reassigned or informed them to move on. It may be helpful to have employees write down their work every 15 minutes for two weeks. This can provide an opportunity for the supervisor to reprioritize work.
   - Ensure that job descriptions are current, specific, and agreed-upon by relevant employees.
2. **I am informed about important changes at work in a timely manner.**
   - Change is often difficult, but even more so for employees who deal with mental health issues. Helping Employees Manage Change provides information that can help you support all employees through organizational or job changes in a psychologically safer way.
   - Supervisors may feel that joining their employees in complaining about those they feel are responsible for decisions in their workplace creates a sense of equality. However, it increases stress in the workplace by causing employees to feel more victimized or hopeless about their situation. When their leader is able to be neutral and engage them in exploring how to best respond to difficult decisions, it can be more effective and psychologically safer.
   - If you have a change management process, ensure it considers the impact on psychological health and safety and stakeholder engagement at the beginning of the decision-making process and throughout the change.
3. **Difficult situations at work are addressed effectively.**
   - Sometimes a situation can be difficult because of the emotional or psychological state of one or more employee. Training supervisors and leaders to effectively and respectfully intervene at these times is important. Supporting Employee Success is a resource that can be used to help guide that kind of conversation.
   - Everyone in the workplace can benefit from being trained in respectful conflict resolution approaches. Resolving Conflict is one approach and Ideas for Resolving Conflict at Work is another.

- The greater the levels of emotional and social intelligence among employees, the more likely that difficult situations will be addressed effectively. Fortunately, these skills can be learned at Building Emotional Intelligence.
- There is an email series that helps improve mental health awareness. These can help everyone become more aware of how they might impact the mental health of others. Mental Health Awareness Emails.
- Sometimes difficult situations are related to personal, family, or health issues that are outside the scope of the workplace. In this case it is important to know what resources are available and how to refer employees to them. Doing this effectively then allows the supervisor to focus on supporting the employee with work related issues. Referring Employees to Resources can help.

4. My organization provides clear and effective communication.

- Even organizations that spend a lot of time and energy on communication may find that their employees do not feel it is effective. We are living in a time of information overload, so we need to rethink traditional means of communication and implement a strategy that meets employee needs. Engage your employees in discussion about what type of communication, such as email, text, face-to-face, or townhall, and in what format, such as interactive, requiring confirmation, or training, is most effective for what types of information, such as personal, critical, ideas, decisions, or changes, and how feedback is received and acted on.

5. My supervisor supports me to do my job successfully.

- Improving leadership strategies can help ensure the workplace is psychologically safe. Psychologically Safe Leader Assessment is an assessment tool that provides supporting resources for this endeavor.
- Being an effective leader is a process of continual improvement, especially in the area of self-awareness. Leadership Development offers a variety of tools and resources to help.

Additional actions and resources

- Create explicit expectations for manager and leader behaviour. For example, through accountability agreements. The Psychologically Safe Leader Assessment allows you to effectively do this for all managers and leaders.
- Systematically review Policy Recommendations to see where opportunities exist to improve how managers and leaders impact psychological health and safety.

Use this space to jot down additional ideas and suggested actions:

To consider which actions are most likely to result in the outcomes you desire, use the Action Planning process to guide your decision making and help you identify timelines, milestones, budgets, responsibilities, and measures of success.

Thank you to Workplace Safety and Prevention Services for their generous contribution to the development of these action items. For more tools and resources, please visit Think Mental Health.ca

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