GuardingMinds @ WORK

Suggested Actions and Resources

INVOLVEMENT AND INFLUENCE

OBJECTIVE: A work environment where employees are included in discussions about how their work is done and have input into decisions that impact their job.

Engage your employees to improve involvement and influence

Putting involvement and influence 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 involvement and influence.

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 involvement and influence. 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 involvement and influence.

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 involvement and influence 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 involvement and influence, are also included at the end.

1. **I am able to talk to my immediate supervisor about how I do my work.**
   - In this video, Mary Ann Baynton shares how you can coach up to your direct supervisor to help them understand what you need to be supported at work: Help Your Supervisor Support You.
2. **I have some control over how I organize my work.**
   - Different workplaces allow different levels of control. Regulation, safety procedures, and quality control are all factors. A discussion with the employee about what needs to be done, what is not negotiable, and how they can meet those objectives can increase a sense of control even in highly regulated industries. Developing a Workplace Plan is one approach to help you facilitate this discussion.
3. **My opinions and suggestions are considered at work.**
   - While it's not always possible for employees to impact decisions made in the organization, there are ways to involve them in a discussion. Helping Employees Manage Change gives some tips and strategies that help both set expectations and introduce a process for discussing challenges related to work and change.
4. **I am informed of important changes that may impact how my work is done.**
   - Emails and other forms of communication should not replace face-to-face discussion when it comes to changes that can have a direct impact on the employee. Explaining the rationale behind these changes can be a good way to help employees understand the reasons behind workplace changes and how these changes can have a positive impact on the organization and work environment.
5. **I am encouraged to participate in decisions that impact my work.**
   - Intentionally engaging employees in discussion about their work, as well as potential changes, is not just a management style but a way to increase commitment by increasing their sense of involvement and influence. The approach laid out in Supportive Performance Management is one way to ask questions that are within the scope of the employee's job and engaging them in conversation about how it could be accomplished.

Additional actions and resources

- Hold workshop discussions about how employees define Psychologically Safe Interactions.
- Try team effectiveness activities from the Building Stronger Teams resource to help increase involvement and influence of all members.
- Work with employees in Developing a Workplace Plan so they are involved in their own success.
- Publicly recognize employees' contributions to reinforce that they have a level of involvement and influence, and to encourage continued contribution
- Foster a culture where all employees have some level of responsibility, autonomy, and accountability. For example, avoid micromanagement.

- Combine top-down leadership-driven, and bottom-up employee-driven approaches to work-related decisions, ensuring formal and informal mechanisms for soliciting input and feedback on how to make improvements to work. For example, use suggestion boxes and opinion surveys.
- Provide training on priority setting and time management to help employees maintain a sense of control over work.
- Provide training on effective communication skills, such as interpersonal problem solving and negotiation.
- Provide training and support on self-directed work teams to help work units or work teams to operate autonomously.
- Encourage discussions between supervisors or managers and employees about how work is done and how it could be improved.
- Provide timely responses to employee suggestions regarding how work could be improved or enhanced.
- Maintain current and accurate written job descriptions that specify roles and responsibilities.
- Create employment agreements and contracts that explicitly value and encourage employee input on how work is conducted.
- Ensure that all employees have an identified contact person such as a supervisor, office manager, or union steward, for issues pertaining to how their work is done.
- Systematically review Policy Recommendations to see where opportunities exist to improve how they 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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