GuardingMinds @ WORK

Suggested Actions and Resources

WORKLOAD MANAGEMENT

OBJECTIVE: A work environment where assigned tasks and responsibilities can be accomplished successfully within the time available.

Engage your employees to improve workload management

Putting workload management 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 workload management.

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 workload management. 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 workload management.

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 workload management 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 workload management, are also included at the end.

1. **The amount of work I am expected to do is reasonable for my position.**
   - Actively involve employees in the development of strategies to better manage workload. For example, help with prioritizing, reduction or elimination of redundant or unnecessary tasks, and managing deadlines. Developing a Workplace Plan helps with the creation of a workplace plan that considers both what and how work gets completed. Supportive Performance Management focuses on developing solutions.
   - Provide education on topics relevant to managing workload such as time management, technology use, etc.
2. **I can talk to my supervisor about the amount of work I have to do.**
   - Supervisors need to have both the skillset and the time to meet with employees about any challenges they may have. Provide training and resources necessary to allow them to do this. Supporting Employee Success is a tool that can help.
   - Engage employees in identifying solutions, setting reasonable expectations, identifying any barriers to success and need for corrective action. Productivity Review is a fillable form that helps to focus on specific tasks that require attention.
3. **I have the equipment, resources and time needed to do my job well.**
   - Ensure that the necessary equipment and supports are available to help complete work competently and efficiently, such as adequate time, tools, technology and clear instructions. Developing a Workplace Plan engages the employee in developing specific solutions to past, current, and potential work-related issues.
   - Generate, communicate, and implement timely strategies such as temporary employees, job pools, or job sharing, for dealing with peak periods of demand, sick leave, or unfilled positions. Ensure that systems are in place to cover staffing shortages.
   - Inform and prepare employees for anticipated periods of increased work, such as seasonal demands, peak shift hours, etc.
4. **My work is free from unnecessary interruptions and disruptions.**
   - Have a discussion with employees about all interruptions and disruptions that happen at work. Brainstorm potential solutions including changing the use of technology, limiting meeting times, revising communication strategies, scheduling quiet time, and managing lights, noise, or foot traffic that may be disruptive. Although you may not be able to eliminate all interruptions, providing some time during the workday that is protected to be interruption-free may help.
5. **I have control over how my tasks and responsibilities are prioritized.**
   - The higher the demands at work, the more important it can be for employees to have some level of control. It may not be possible, practical, or efficient to allow employees significant control over how their work is prioritized. Regulations, safety concerns, and customer or patient demands can restrict options. But exploring where some level of control over the assigned tasks

would make sense can help employees work more effectively. Commitment over Compliance is an approach that actively engages employees in developing a plan or strategy that meets both organizational needs and may increase their willingness to commit over the long term.

Additional actions and resources

- Cultivate a work culture that clearly values the quality of work done, and not simply the quantity of work.
- Orient new employees comprehensively, making sure to provide accurate and realistic information about job demands and expectations.
- Create written job descriptions that include explicit and reasonable productivity expectations.
- Provide pay or accrued time off for approved overtime worked.
- Conduct job analyses and audits to determine workload demands, equity in work distribution, and areas for improvement.
- Consider providing non-remunerative perks during times of excessive work demands, such as meals, coverage of transportation costs, help with personal errands, etc.
- Identify and incorporate best practices for protecting employee psychological safety in your policies and procedures. Policy Recommendations can help.

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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