GuardingMinds @ WORK

Suggested Actions and Resources

ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

OBJECTIVE: A work environment characterized by the shared values of trust, honesty and fairness.

Engage your employees to improve organizational culture

Putting organizational culture 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 organizational culture.

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 organizational culture. 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 organizational culture.

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 organizational culture 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 organizational culture, are also included at the end.

1. **People in our workplace are held accountable for their actions.**
   - Make sure all employees know who to turn to in the workplace when they are dealing with a difficult situation, especially when the difficulty is with their supervisor.
   - Train both leaders and employees to resolve conflict at the first sign of it. Choose a method that is psychologically safer for all concerned such as Resolving Conflict or Discussing Difficult Topics Effectively.
2. **I feel that I am part of a community at work.**
   - The many benefits new Canadians bring to the workplace can be lost when they are not properly supported regarding things like integration, communication, and the recognition and understanding that they are likely adapting to a workplace culture that is very different from what they have known. Supporting Newcomers provides strategies to help protect their psychological safety and promote their success in the workplace.
   - Team building activities to support organizational culture can be found at Building Stronger Teams.
   - Onboarding, mentorship, and peer coaching can help employees feel like they are part of a community and making a valuable contribution. Involving individual coaches, mentors, or peer supporters and ensuring that they are helping people to feel part of the work community can help.
   - For new employees, ensure that the onboarding process includes introducing them to employees at all levels.
   - Identify role models or mentors for new or junior employees to strengthen and ensure the continuity of organizational culture.
   - Encourage ongoing opportunities for employees at all levels to interact and get to know each other, including through healthy break activities.
3. **Employees and management trust one another.**
   - We are not always aware of how our words and actions can be interpreted as harmful by other people. While most of us would never purposely say or do anything to hurt someone else, misunderstandings do happen. Psychologically Safe Interactions provides resources to help increase psychological health and safety in the workplace.
   - Trust is earned by leaders who are trustworthy. This takes a level of emotional intelligence and a consistent management style which can be developed over time. Leadership Development provides information about management style, emotional intelligence, and psychologically safe leadership.
   - Trust means that we believe, even when we disagree with their perspective or opinion, that the other person respects us and has our best interests at heart.

4. **My workplace is inclusive of persons with diverse backgrounds and points of view.**
   - Any workplace discrimination, even when unintentional, can seriously impact the employee's psychological well-being. Review Inclusivity and Discrimination for a series of examples that you can use to start conversations about unconscious bias in your workplace.
   - Engaging the Indigenous Community provides strategies that can be applied to any group that is not currently represented in your workplace.
5. **Organizational values are demonstrated at all levels.**
   - A healthy workplace culture is one that is psychologically safe. Organizational Culture provides you with questions to ask about your organizational culture and solutions to improve it.
   - Create values-based procedures that guide organizational decision-making. For example, asking the question, "How might this [decision, policy, change, process, event, task, communication] impact psychological health and safety in our workplace?"
   - If your workplace is unionized, you may also want to review Union-Management Cooperation.
   - Vision, mission, values are developed in collaboration with all employees, expressed in terms of observable behaviours, and communicated to everyone. There is a respectful process to hold people accountable to align with these values on a daily basis.

Additional actions and resources

- Host a leadership meeting to discuss questions about Organizational Culture and use this to help guide your actions.
- Encourage face-to-face communication, particularly about potentially difficult issues.
- Communicate explanations for decisions and ensure respect, sincerity, care, and empathy when the implications of decisions may be seen as negative by some employees.
- Hold all members of the organization accountable for their actions, and in particular ensure that managers and leaders are held accountable to the same or higher standard.
- 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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