



Opening
Minds

MENTAL HEALTH
COMMISSION
OF CANADA

Introduction to Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace

Course Handout



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PHS Introduction Course - Handout
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Our Focus Areas

- Explain Psychological Health and Safety (PHS)
- Identify how PHS differs from mental well-being initiatives
- Recognize the value of PHS for an organization
- Understand PHS as a management system
- Identify and describe the key elements of PHS
- Describe the relationship between the key elements of PHS and the management system
- Develop an action plan to support PHS in your own organization

Glossary of Key Terms

Management system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A strategy to manage and continually improve an organization's policies, processes, and procedures
Mental health* Also referred to as: Mental well-being Psychological health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A state of mental well-being that enables people to cope with the stresses of life, realize their abilities, learn and work well, and contribute to their community. • A basic human right. • More than the absence of mental disorders. It exists on a complex continuum, which is experienced differently from one person to the next, with varying degrees of difficulty and distress and potentially very different social and clinical outcomes. (World Health Organization, 2023)
Psychological health and safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policies, processes, and procedures that seek to promote workers' psychological wellbeing and prevent psychological harm. (National Standard of Canada for Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace, 2013)
Psychological safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A shared belief held by members of a team that it's OK to take risks, to express their ideas and concerns, to speak up with questions, and to admit mistakes – all without fear of negative consequences. (Edmondson, 1999)
Psychologically healthy and safe workplace	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A workplace that promotes workers' psychological well-being and actively works to prevent harm to worker psychological health, including in negligent, reckless, or intentional ways. (National Standard of Canada for Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace, 2013)
CSA Z1003	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Standard of Canada for Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace • A set of guidelines tools and resources intended to guide organizations in promoting mental health and preventing psychological harm at work. • Canada is the first country in the world to have a national standard for PHS.
ISO 45003	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • International Standard for Occupational health and safety management – Psychological health and safety at work – Guidelines for managing psychosocial hazards • Was informed by Canada's national standard. • A set of guidelines tools and resources intended to guide organizations in promoting mental health and preventing psychological harm at work.

Why integrate PHS?

Scenario 1A

At ABC Corporation, management neglected Psychological Health and Safety (PHS) in their workplace. Employees faced high levels of stress due to excessive workloads, lack of support, and poor communication. The company had a high number of workplace conflicts and reported incidents of bullying.

1. What might be the consequences of these problems?

2. Connections to my workplace:



Scenario 1B

As management realized the impact of neglecting PHS, they took action by prioritizing PHS through workload management, improved communication, mental health resources, and anti-bullying policies. They enhanced employee support with regular check-ins, counseling services, and conflict resolution training. The company also introduced recognition programs and professional development opportunities.

1. What policies, programs, and initiatives did ABC Corporation introduce to integrate PHS?

2. What might be the consequences of these changes?

3. Connections to my workplace:



Mental well-being or PHS?

Scenario 2A

Nasir, a manager at a mid-sized company, notices an increase in reports of workplace bullying. To address this, he implements clear anti-bullying policies, establishes a reporting system, and conducts training sessions to ensure all employees understand the new protocols.

Mental well-being or PHS?

Connections to **my workplace**:



Scenario 2B

Sarah, the HR director of a tech firm, initiates a wellness program that includes gym memberships, healthy eating seminars, and monthly fitness challenges to encourage employees to maintain regular exercise and a balanced diet.

Mental well-being or PHS?

Connections to **my workplace**:



Scenario 2C

Enzo, the wellness coordinator at a healthcare facility, organizes monthly workshops on topics such as meditation practices, breathing exercises, and stress management techniques. He also ensures that there are refresher sessions for staff who have taken Mental Health First Aid training within the last two years. He frequently collects feedback from staff about these programs and shares the results with department directors.

Mental well-being or PHS?

Connections to **my workplace**:



Scenario 2D

Amelia, a project manager, notices her team is overwhelmed with tasks. She decides to reallocate responsibilities, set more realistic deadlines, and hire additional staff to ensure everyone has a manageable workload and can perform efficiently without excessive stress. She has begun holding monthly focus groups with employees to determine if the changes are having the intended impact.

Mental well-being or PHS?

Connections to **my workplace**:



What is PHS?

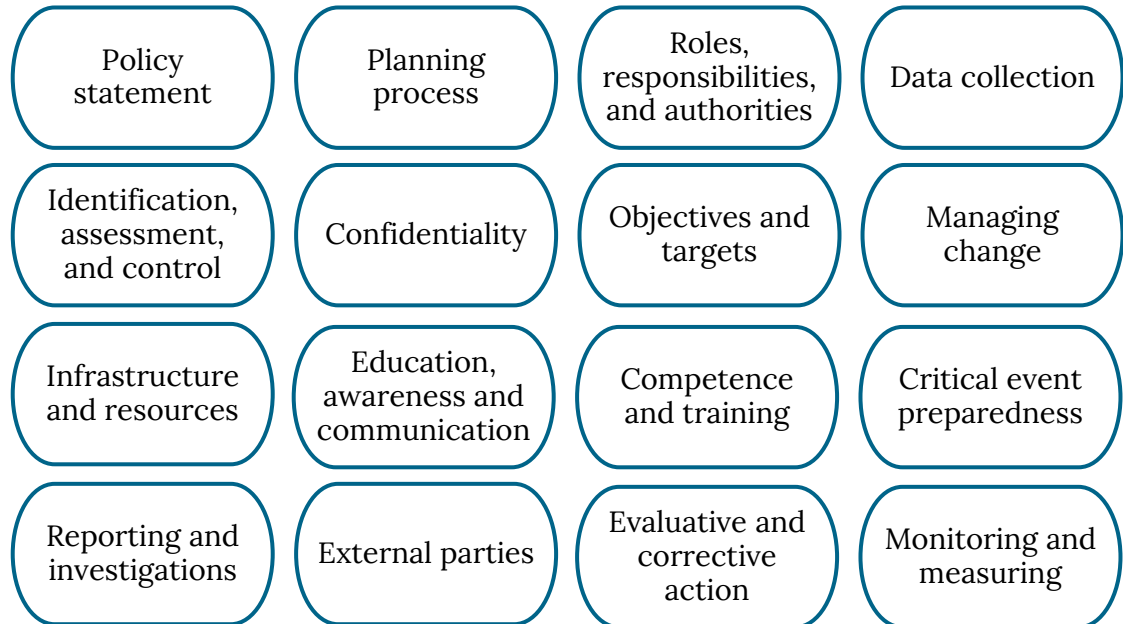
PHS is systematic and proactive.	PHS creates a sustainable culture.	PHS addresses underlying causes of workplace stress.
PHS is broad in its scope and considers all aspects of the work environment.	PHS enhances trust and collaboration.	PHS addresses psychosocial risks.



The Psychosocial Factors

Organizational culture	Psychological and social support	Clear leadership and expectations	Psychological demands
Growth and development	Recognition and reward	Workload management	Engagement
Balance	Civility and respect	Involvement and influence	Psychological protection
	Protection of physical safety	Other chronic stressors	

PHS Requirements



Exploring PHS

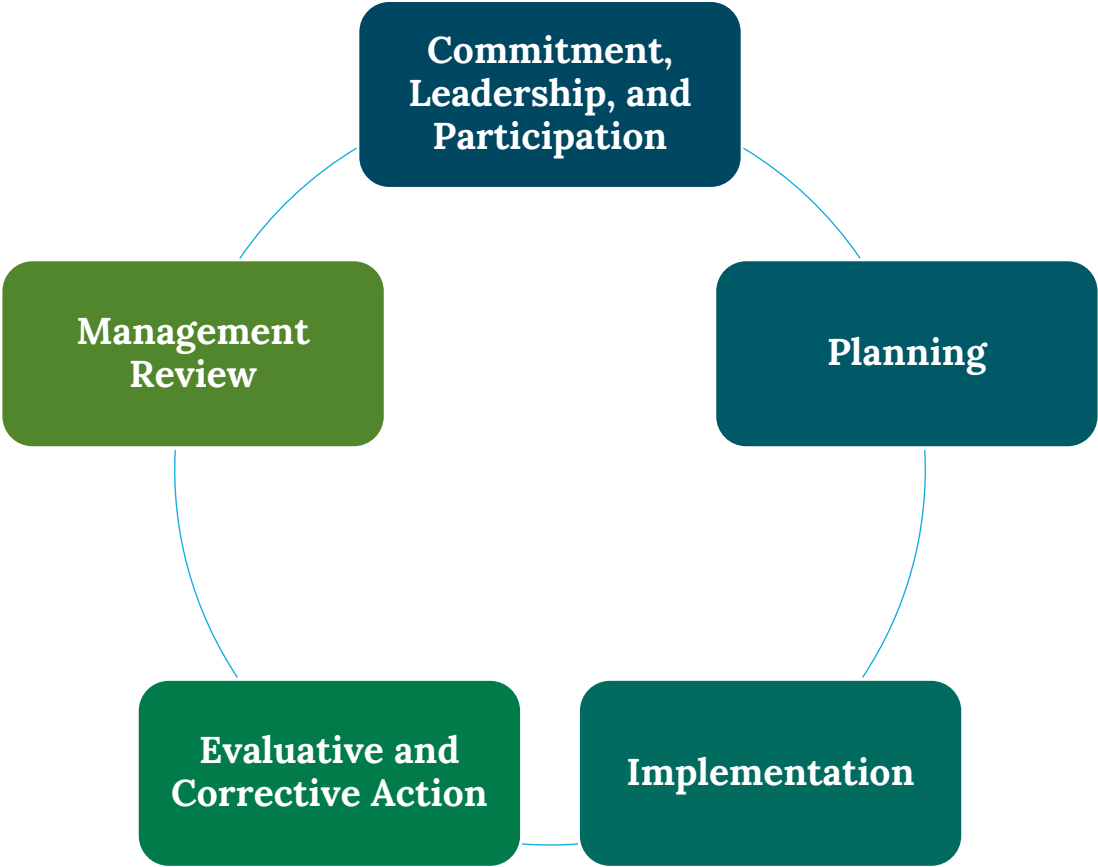
Scenario 3

Imagine you are a manager at ABC Corporation, where employees have reported increased stress due to unclear job roles and a perceived lack of support. Recently, a team member expressed concerns during a meeting, highlighting the impact of these issues on their work performance and well-being.




Reasons for my choice:

Implications of my choice:

PHS Management System



10 Key Elements

Area of Focus	Elements
 <p>Risk</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mental health awareness, promotion, and supports • Risk assessment and control • Emergency preparedness and response
 <p>People</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Human rights and employment standards • Equity, diversity, and inclusion • Ability management • Worker lifecycle
 <p>Leadership</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy and strategy • Managing change • Leadership development and competencies

Context – Integrating PHS

ABC Corporation started with no formal Psychological Health and Safety (PHS) system. Initially, the leadership noticed increasing stress levels and absenteeism among employees, which raised concerns about overall well-being and productivity. They decided it was time to integrate PHS to address these issues.

Scenario 4A

ABC Corporation began by establishing a commitment to PHS from the top levels of leadership. They communicated this commitment through a policy statement prioritizing employee mental health. A cross-functional team was then formed to assess existing structures and identify gaps that could affect PHS. In consultation with workers' representatives, this team developed a comprehensive plan, including clear roles, responsibilities, and a budget for PHS integration.

1. Which key element(s) of PHS integration are addressed in your scenario?

2. In which part(s) of the management system do they fit?

3. If this were your workplace, where would you see yourself in this scenario?

Scenario 4B

With a plan in place, ABC Corporation began integrating PHS into everyday operations. They implemented mental health awareness training, established support systems, and developed clear communication channels. Psychosocial factors were identified, regular risk assessments were conducted, and adjustments were made to mitigate the risks. Emergency preparedness was also enhanced to address critical events that could impact PHS.

1. Which key element(s) of PHS integration are addressed in your scenario?

2. In which part(s) of the management system do they fit?

3. If this were your workplace, where would you see yourself in this scenario?

Scenario 4C

Over time, ABC Corporation continuously evaluated the effectiveness and functionality of PHS integration into organizational systems and policies. They collected data on the system's adherence to PHS standards, employee well-being, engagement, and productivity. The results showed a significant reduction in absenteeism, increased job satisfaction, and the system's consistent application across the organization. Feedback was used to address issues and to continue refining the PHS system, ensuring it remained relevant, effective, and aligned with organizational goals.

1. Which key element(s) of PHS integration are addressed in your scenario?

2. In which part(s) of the management system do they fit?

3. If this were your workplace, where would you see yourself in this scenario?

Potential Challenges

The most significant challenge to implementing or integrating PHS will be:

Next Steps

Three actions I can do in my role to support PHS in my workplace:



Resources I will need:





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