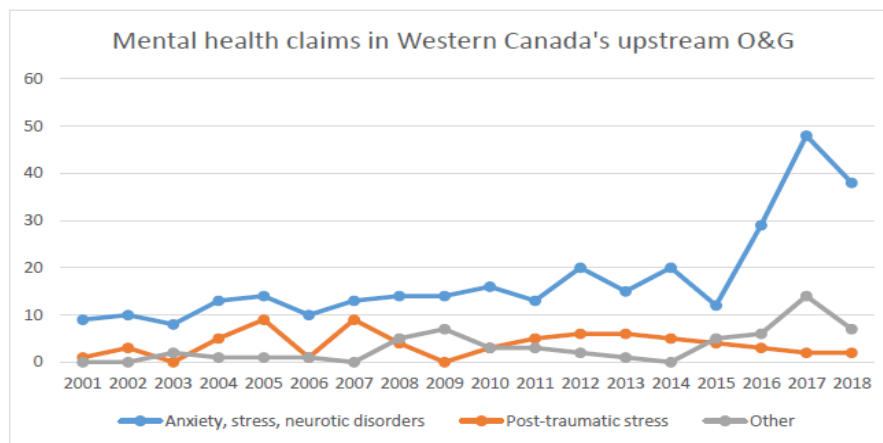


Mental health claims are complex and are the fastest growing class of all disability costs. Each year in Canada, \$33 billion in productivity and 35 million workdays are lost, all due to mental health issues in the workplace.

Bullying, harassment and discrimination are occupational health and safety issues that pose a potential risk to the physical and mental health and safety of workers. Studies report a “significant association between bullying and health and well-being...[including] increased levels of psychological complaints, depression, burnout, anxiety, and aggression, and also psychosomatic and musculoskeletal health.”¹ In 2017, WorkSafeBC responded to over 4,800 inquiries and complaints directly related to bullying, harassment and discriminatory action.



CHALLENGES

Many of us are trained to identify hazards that may cause bodily harm, but we must also be able to recognize hazards that are less obvious. There are various behaviours that reflect disrespect in the workplace such as incivility, bullying, and harassment. Each creates a negative or toxic environment and has implications for employee turnover, sick leave, reduced performance, reduced commitment and legal action.

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY RESPECTFUL WORKPLACE?

Everyone has a right to a respectful workplace that includes a professional atmosphere and support from supervisors and managers.

Respect is demonstrated through:

- Courtesy, politeness and kindness to those you interact with.
- Assigning reasonable duties and workloads and carrying out managerial duties in a respectful and professional manner.
- Job performance measures that are fair and in line with specific occupational requirements for the safe and efficient job performance.

WHAT CAN SUPERVISORS DO?

Harassment, bullying and violence are hazards that can occur in any area of your company. They are not limited to the shop floor or the field and, unlike most physical hazards, they are not readily obvious.

- Take all reasonable steps to ensure the health and safety of workers under your supervision.
- Supervisors must take steps to prevent where possible, or otherwise minimize, workplace bullying and harassment.
- Be a “respect leader”. Set a good example and model respect. Do not engage in bullying and harassment of workers, or other supervisors, persons acting on behalf of the employer and comply with employer’s policies and procedures on bullying and harassment.
- Workplace bullying and harassment can lead to injury, illness or death.

WHAT CAN WORKERS DO?

- Treat others with respect.
- Be familiar with corporate procedures for identifying and reporting harassment, bullying and violence.
- Intervene when you witness disrespectful behavior and do not tolerate it.
- Take reasonable care to protect the health and safety of yourself and others and take steps to prevent or otherwise minimize, workplace bullying and harassment.

REFERENCES

¹Alberta Health Services, “Minding the Workplace: Tips for Employees and Managers Together”

<https://www.worksafebc.com/en/about-us/what-we-do/industry-initiatives/bullying-harassment-discriminatory-action>

PRESENT LIKE A PRO

Before you begin:

Review this material and make sure you understand it and how the topic can be applied.

Research your own company’s experience so you can provide examples that pertain to your work areas.

If you’re not able to answer a question, let the person know you will find the information and make sure you follow up.

Consider the audience and their experience with the topic (i.e. how familiar are they with the topic or the terms being used?).

Challenge the group:

Ask the group if anyone has experienced or witnessed harassment or bullying.

How did it feel? What did they do about it?

Prepare a few scenarios and ask the group which ones are examples of harassment or bullying.

Discuss your corporate policies and procedures regarding bullying and harassment.