

## The PWF and National Standards

Canadian workplaces are seeking ways to adopt approaches and build environments that meet the mental health needs of their employees. The Mental Health Commission of Canada's (MHCC) *National Standard of Canada: Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace* (2013) has provided workplaces with a lens through which to examine environments and practices related to mental health and psychological wellbeing. WMA has designed a **Positive Workplace Framework (PWF)** to assist organizations in implementing evidence-informed positive psychology practices that contribute to healthy and effective workplace communities. The PWF provides a cost-effective strategy for increasing employee engagement and performance through enhanced mental fitness, resiliency and wellness. The PWF is composed of three core components: *Mental Fitness Practices, Resiliency Practices and Positive Leadership Practices*.

According to the MHCC, "The key drivers for workers and their organizations include the promotion and protection of workers' well-being, job satisfaction, self-esteem and job fulfillment" (p. 2). This statement is inclusive of all members of the workforce, and suggests that the environments and practices that we foster have a direct impact on the mental health and wellbeing of both employees and managers. Essential elements of the National Standard that address psychologically healthy and safe workplaces include:

- The identification and elimination of hazards in the workplace that pose a risk of psychological harm to a worker
- The assessment and control of the risks in the workplace associated with hazards that cannot be eliminated (e.g. stressors due to organizational change or reasonable job demands)
- Implementing structures and practices that support and promote psychological health and safety in the workplace
- Fostering a culture that promotes psychological health and safety in the workplace (p. 2)

These elements are widely accepted as contributing factors to overall wellness in the workplace; however, many organizations are scrambling to address the "how to" of environmental change. The PWF offers training and assessment programs and materials that can meet this need. The following table addresses each of the key elements identified in the National Standard, and indicates related PWF learning sessions and/or assessment instruments.

MHCC Element	PWF Product or Service	Description
1. The identification and elimination of hazards in the workplace that pose a risk of psychological harm to a worker	<i>Assessment Instruments</i>	
	Positive Leadership Inventory	Assesses positive leadership attitudes and practices
	Mental Fitness and Resiliency Inventory	Provides an aggregated level of employee psychological wellness and resiliency measures
	<i>Learning Sessions</i>	
	Positive Leadership Practices	Increases understanding of positive leadership practices that contribute to employee wellbeing, engagement and performance
	Applying Strength-Based Problem-solving Strategies	Introduces strength-based paradigms and principles, as well as practices for building solutions through the use of appreciative inquiry methods and practical planning tools
<i>Note: Identifying risk/need areas and capacity for organizational change is an essential first step in minimizing the risk of psychological harm to employees.</i>		
2. The assessment and control of the risks in the workplace associated with hazards that cannot be eliminated (e.g. stressors due to organizational change or reasonable job demands)	Principles of Organizational Resiliency	Outlines protective factors that contribute to organizational resiliency, and supporting practices that focus on workplace leadership, culture, employee relations and organizational strengths
	Managing Workplace Change and Transition	Provides insights into the key transition stages that are experienced throughout life and during unexpected changes in work or life routines
	Effective Personal Coping and Thriving	Highlights a range of personal coping skills that contribute to effective stress management and problem-solving approaches
	Positive Team Development	Covers key concepts and practices related to creating a team-oriented environment in the workplace.
3. Implementing structures and practices that support and promote psychological health and safety in the workplace	Mental Fitness Awareness: Embracing Strengths and Wellness in the Workplace	Designed to introduce the key psychological wellness needs that promote personal and organizational wellness
	Mental Fitness in Action: 1. Understanding Others 2. Encouraging Others 3. Engaging Others	Builds employees' mental fitness practices related to effective listening and communication skills; encouragement and affirmation; and engagement and empowerment
4. Fostering a culture that promotes psychological health and safety in the workplace	Understanding and Applying the Strengths of Individual Differences	Provides insights into personal preferences and their expression, and enhances understanding of complementary preferences and how they enrich employee team functioning
	Understanding and Appreciating Diversity and Inclusion	Promotes understanding of diversity and the importance of creating an environment in which employees' identities and abilities are not only respected, but also appreciated
	Fostering Respectful Workplaces	Examines key practices for promoting respectful interactions that value the dignity, self-respect and esteem of all persons
	Understanding and Supporting Others with Mental Health Concerns	Provides a basic understanding of mental health concerns and their impact on people, and identifies practical actions to enhance understanding and support for those with such concerns
	Setting Positive Directions for Personal Change	Introduces a practical framework from which to examine and enhance personal lifestyle practices related to social, emotional, and physical wellness.
	Work-Life Interaction	Provides insights into key practices for promoting mental fitness and resiliency within family and close personal relationships.

The National Standards document identifies thirteen factors that affect psychological health and safety. PWF learning sessions and assessment instruments can be closely aligned with these factors, and can provide organizations with a structured means of addressing them. The thirteen factors are listed below, along with relevant PWF products and services:

MHCC Factors	PWF Products and Services	PWF Assessment Instruments
1. Organizational culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mental Fitness Awareness: Embracing Strengths and Wellness in the Workplace</li> <li>Mental Fitness in Action I, II and III</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mental Fitness and Resiliency Inventory</li> <li>Positive Leadership Inventory</li> </ul>
2. Psychological and social support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mental Fitness in Action I, II and III</li> <li>Fostering Respectful Workplaces</li> <li>Understanding and Supporting Others with Mental Health Concerns</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mental Fitness and Resiliency Inventory</li> </ul>
3. Clear leadership and expectations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Positive Leadership Perspectives and Practices</li> <li>Building Positive Team Relationships</li> <li>Applying Strength-Based Problem-Solving Strategies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Positive Leadership Inventory</li> </ul>
4. Civility and respect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fostering Respectful Workplaces</li> <li>Understanding and Applying the Strengths of Individual Differences</li> <li>Understanding and Appreciating Diversity and Inclusion</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mental Fitness and Resiliency Inventory</li> </ul>
5. Psychological demands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Effective Personal Coping</li> <li>Managing Workplace Change and Transition</li> <li>PWF Employee Engagement Process</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mental Fitness and Resiliency Inventory</li> </ul>
6. Growth and development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Finding Balance in Work and Home Life</li> <li>Planning for Positive Personal Change</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mental Fitness and Resiliency Inventory</li> <li>Positive Leadership Inventory</li> </ul>
7. Recognition and reward	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Planning for Positive Personal Change</li> <li>Certificates of Accomplishment for PWF Management and Employee Training Series</li> <li>PWF Employee Engagement Process</li> <li>Training of PWF Wellness Champions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Positive Leadership Inventory</li> </ul>
8. Involvement and influence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mental Fitness Awareness</li> <li>Mental Fitness in Action I, II and III</li> <li>Positive Leadership Practices</li> <li>PWF Employee Engagement Process</li> <li>Training of PWF Wellness Champions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mental Fitness and Resiliency Inventory</li> <li>Positive Leadership Inventory</li> </ul>
9. Workload management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Managing Workplace Change and Transition</li> <li>Positive Leadership Practices</li> <li>Effective Personal Coping</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Positive Leadership Inventory</li> </ul>
10. Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mental Fitness Awareness</li> <li>Mental Fitness in Action</li> <li>PWF Employee Engagement Process</li> <li>Training of Mental Fitness Champions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mental Fitness and Resiliency Inventory</li> </ul>
11. Balance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Finding Balance in Work and Home Life</li> <li>Planning for Positive Personal Change</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mental Fitness and Resiliency Inventory</li> </ul>
12. Psychological protection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mental Fitness Awareness,</li> <li>Mental Fitness in Action I, II and III</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mental Fitness and Resiliency Inventory</li> </ul>
13. Protection of physical safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mental Fitness Awareness</li> <li>Mental Fitness in Action</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mental Fitness and Resiliency Inventory</li> </ul>