

## Tips for Policy Development

healthy  
minds

Every company should consider developing a mental health policy. A mental health policy for the workplace defines the vision for improving the mental health of the workforce and establishes a model for action.

### Policy Development

When developing a workplace mental health policy you should:

- Draft a policy that describes workplace harassment and bullying, explains the consequences of such behaviour and clarifies for employees what to do when harassment and bullying occurs. In BC, the Workers' Compensation Act was recently amended making employees eligible for compensation for mental illnesses that are predominantly caused by a significant workplace stressor related to employment. As a follow-up to these amendments, WorkSafeBC introduced new policies to address bullying and harassment in the workplace, which become effective on November 1, 2013. The policies have been developed to clarify the obligations of employers, workers, and supervisors regarding preventing and addressing workplace bullying and harassment. WorkSafeBC has a workplace [toolkit](#) to assist workers and employers in understanding, preventing and addressing bullying and harassment in the workplace.
- Review existing policies, programs and procedures from the perspective of their impact on the psychological safety of employees.
- Emphasize what can be done to support staff with mental health problems and address the topic of employing people with mental health problems.
- Outline a commitment to promoting and monitoring mental health at work, and acknowledge the importance of creating a safe environment for employees that will benefit their mental wellbeing; for example, making reasonable efforts to ensure the workplace is free from bullying and harassment and promotes respect. It may be helpful to consider the specific risk factors for mental health problems in the workplace. [Guarding Minds@Work](#) outlines 13 workplace psycho-social factors that influence risk for mental health problems.

## Policy Statement

Workplaces can also create a policy statement related to workplace mental health that demonstrates leadership and commitment.

The policy statement:

- Should ideally be signed and dated by organizational and labour leaders.
- May be overarching or embedded within existing policies and programs.
- Embeds actions resulting from policy in standard organizational processes.

The Mental Health Commission of Canada's [Leadership Framework for Advancing Workplace Mental Health](#) offers this sample policy statement:

*"The ABC company considers the mental health and psychological safety of its employees to be as important as other aspects of health and safety. ABC is committed to supporting a mentally healthy workplace through appropriate policies, programs and services."*

**Sources:** [Shaw Trust](#)  
[Mental Health Commission of Canada: A Leadership Framework for Advancing Workplace Mental Health](#)

