



# Backgrounder: Mental Health Commission of Canada and Excellence Canada Partnership

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## Backgrounder

From [Mental Health Commission of Canada](#)

On May 7, 2021, the [Mental Health Commission of Canada \(MHCC\)](#) and [Excellence Canada \(EC\)](#) signed a new partnership with the goal of dramatically increasing the number of employers adopting the [National Standard of Canada for Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace](#) (the Standard).

### ***What is this new partnership all about and why should organizations across Canada be aware of it?***

- The MHCC and EC are embarking on a new partnership to help more organizations succeed with implementing the Standard and achieving certification.
- There are an increasing number of organizations in Canada seeking help with implementing workplace mental health programs and strategies. Many also want their efforts to be formally validated and recognized.

### ***What expertise do both organizations bring to the table?***

- EC is the *only* organization in Canada that provides evidence-based benchmarking and certification for organizations whose mental health strategy meets the Standard.
- The MHCC is a *leading authority* on the Standard and is dedicated to supporting organizations in meeting its requirements.
- EC's deep experience and practical methodology for helping organizations achieve excellence, combined with the MHCC's extensive expertise with the Standard and vetted resources, are expected to give employers the confidence to adopt the Standard, with the support of these trusted pioneers.

### ***How can organizations benefit from this partnership?***

- Benefits to organizations include the following:
  - The combined approach by the MHCC and EC allows organizations the flexibility to start wherever they are to reach their goal of implementing the Standard and being formally recognized for it as part of a progressive journey toward a psychologically healthy, safe, and productive workplace culture.
  - MHCC's and EC's combined expertise in psychological health and safety, management systems implementation, and business excellence, will help ease the sense of being overwhelmed that people often feel when transforming workplace culture and processes.
  - Organizations will have access to high-quality, evidence-based resources and support focused on ensuring measurable outcomes and sustainable change.

- There is mounting evidence that the value on investment (VOI) is significant for organizations that implement the Standard.<sup>1</sup>
- As more organizations implement the Standard, the MHCC and EC can help reverse the current trend of increasing mental illness in Canada and contribute to a brighter future for generations to come.
- Through this partnership, MHCC and EC expect to generate positive outcomes for organizations and build more Canadian success stories.
- Certification and recognition under the *Canada Awards for Excellence* program will shine a spotlight on workplace mental health as a business imperative

## Key Facts

- The economic costs of mental health problems and illnesses are significant. The total cost from mental health problems to the Canadian economy exceeds \$50 billion annually, or nearly \$1,400 for every person.
- According to the MHCC, prior to the pandemic, one in five Canadians experienced a mental health problem or illness each year, equal to having 500,000 employees unable to work every week due to mental health problems or illnesses.
- In a [2017 survey](#) on mental health in the workplace by the *Globe and Mail* and Morneau Shepell (now LifeWorks), employees named workplace stress as the primary cause of their mental health problems or illnesses, with depression and anxiety reported as the top two issues.
- Surveys completed in late 2020 show that the pandemic has had an impact on the mental health of Canadians. A survey on the Mental Health Impacts of COVID-19: Wave 2 by the Canadian Mental Health Association and University of British Columbia showed that the second wave of the pandemic has intensified feelings of stress and anxiety, causing alarming levels of despair, suicidal thoughts, and hopelessness in the Canadian population, with the impact being felt more among marginalized groups.<sup>2</sup>
- The summary report on Mental Health and Substance Use During COVID-19 showed that as of late 2020, the mental health and substance use impacts of the pandemic have been greater for people living with, or at risk of, mental health and substance use disorders.<sup>3</sup>
- As organizations work through and beyond the pandemic, managing psychological health and safety in the workplace can have a positive impact on supporting and improving the mental health of workers and their families.

## How can the Standard help?

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<sup>1</sup> Deloitte Insights. (2019). *The ROI in Workplace Mental Health Programs: Good for People, Good for Business*.

<https://www2.deloitte.com/content/dam/Deloitte/ca/Documents/about-deloitte/ca-en-about-blueprint-for-workplace-mental-health-final-aoda.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Canadian Mental Health Association and University of British Columbia. (2020) *Mental Health Impacts of COVID-19: Wave 2*.

<https://cmha.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/CMHA-UBC-wave-2-Summary-of-Findings-FINAL-EN.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> Canadian Centre on Substance Use and Addiction and the Mental Health Commission of Canada. (2020) *Leger Poll: The Relationship Between Mental Health and Substance Use During COVID-19*.

<https://www.mentalhealthcommission.ca/English/leger-poll-relationship-between-mental-health-and-substance-use-during-covid-19>

- The Standard provides an effective framework for managing the aspects of work that impact employee mental health.<sup>4</sup>
- The Standard, a framework commissioned by the MHCC and developed by CSA Group and the Bureau de normalisation du Québec in 2013, is a set of voluntary guidelines, tools, and resources intended to guide organizations in promoting mental health and preventing psychological harm at work.
- The Standard can be implemented with guidance from the MHCC's Workplace Mental Health team. Its goal is to ensure that employers and employees receive appropriate education, training, and support to build their competency.

### ***How can certification and awards recognition help?***

Fostering a psychologically safe and healthy workplace may take several years and the continual buy-in and support of employees, managers, and leaders. Excellence Canada with its 38 years of experience administering the [Canada Awards for Excellence program](#) has shown that periodic celebrations at significant milestones are crucial for sustaining the enthusiasm and energy needed to achieve exceptional organizational performance.

Excellence Canada also provides respected third-party validation of the good work and outcomes being achieved, demonstrating to employees, clients, suppliers, shareholders and other stakeholders that the organization is an industry role-model and an employer of choice. The world needs more mental health role-models.

### ***How is the MHCC preparing employers for the echo effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on the mental health of people in Canada?***

- The MHCC has been working with employers and associations to overcome stigma and improve understanding on how to support the psychological health and safety of employees throughout and beyond emergency situations such as the pandemic.
- The MHCC converted its two main anti-stigma training programs, The Working Mind and Mental Health First Aid, to virtual formats to ensure access during the pandemic.
- The MHCC has compiled a slew of practical resources for employers. Many of these resources can be accessed through the [MHCC COVID-19 resource hub, including \*Building Mental Health into Operations During a Pandemic: Guidelines to Support Employers Through COVID-19\*](#), which includes detailed guidance and links to specific resources. These Guidelines are based on the Standard and were created to help organizations build a supportive and proactive approach to mental health into their emergency management and business continuity programs.

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<sup>4</sup>For more information, visit the MHCC's [National Standard](#) page.