

# Mixed Methods Research: Identify Barriers and Facilitators to Support for Psychological Self-Care and Protection from Moral Distress for Health-Care Workers

## Request for Proposals

**Submission Deadline: 11:59 p.m., ET, Tuesday, August 10, 2021**

**NOTE:** *Deadline for project completion has been extended.*

### Purpose

The Mental Health Commission of Canada (MHCC) is seeking a contractor to complete a literature review, stakeholder map, key-informant interviews, and a national survey. The purpose of this work is to identify common barriers and facilitators for Canada's health-care workers, health-care teams, and health-care organizations to address in health-care settings: (1) support for psychological self-care, and (2) protection from moral distress. The review and findings would also need to account for added stressors stemming from the current COVID-19 pandemic.

Through this work, the MHCC will

- identify trends in barriers and facilitators related to advancing psychological health and safety for health-care workers
- support health-care organizations in addressing the two psychosocial factors specific to health-care settings<sup>1</sup> by offering comprehensive descriptions of specific barriers and facilitators
- use the insights from the mixed methods research to develop a final report and up to 15 case scenarios that will inform capacity building strategies to advance psychological health and safety for health-care workers, health-care teams, and health-care organizations.

### Project objectives and scope

The MHCC is seeking proposals from contractors to support the next phase of work in advancing psychological health and safety for health-care workers by addressing the two additional psychosocial factors specific to health-care settings.

Phase one of this project took place from April 2019 to March 2021. During this time, the MHCC developed

- an [Environmental Scan](#) and updated a [Healthcare Worker Support Toolkit](#), in collaboration with the Canadian Patient Safety Institute (now Healthcare Excellence Canada), which explored promising interventions for addressing the two psychosocial factors specific to health-care settings
- a [video](#) to raise awareness on the importance of addressing the two psychosocial factors specific to health-care settings.

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<sup>1</sup> See Appendix A for more information on the background of this project and the two psychosocial factors for health-care settings.

The next phase of this work will require the following items:

- An examination and summary of Canadian academic and grey literature as well as government and non-governmental policies to identify the barriers and facilitators to support for psychological self-care and protection from moral distress in health-care settings.
- An active stakeholder map (identified through the literature review) of those involved in research and development, policies, programs, and initiatives to advance psychological health and safety for health-care workers.
- Semi-structured interviews (using the stakeholder map) with key informants to identify the barriers and facilitators to support for psychological self-care and protection from moral distress in health-care settings.
- The development and release of an anonymous online survey for health-care workers, health-care teams, and health-care organizations across Canada to identify the barriers and facilitators to support for psychological self-care and protection from moral distress in health-care settings.
- An analysis and synthesis of the results of the survey and key-informant interviews.
- The creation of up to 15 case scenarios<sup>2</sup> (based on the findings of all these initiatives) that will inform strategies to advance psychological health and safety for health-care workers.

**Target audience:** All agents working in health-care organizations, including providers, support services and administration, leaders, and decision makers.

### Guiding documents

- [National Standard for Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace](#)
- [Understand the Psychosocial Factors](#)
- [Section 2: Creating a Safe Space: Global Environmental Scan of Healthcare Worker Support Models](#)
- [Advancing Psychological Health and Safety for Health-Care Workers](#) (video)
- [Caring for Healthcare Toolkit](#)
- [Advancing Psychological Health and Safety in Healthcare Settings](#) (video)
- [13 Psychosocial Factors: Addressing Mental Health in the Workplace](#) (video series)
- [Advancing Psychological Health and Safety within Healthcare Settings](#) (MHCC web page)
- [Declaration of Commitment to Psychological Health and Safety in Healthcare](#)

### Deliverables

1. A project plan for the literature review, stakeholder map, key informant interviews, and survey questions, including stage-based planning, scope, timelines, and budget
2. Proposed scope and search parameters for the literature review and stakeholder map
3. A literature review, based on the barriers and facilitators to support for psychological self-care and protection from moral distress in health-care settings (includes COVID-19 context)
4. A map of key stakeholders in the sector
5. The questions to be included in the national survey and to be used for key-informant interviews

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<sup>2</sup> Case scenarios should consist of promising practices and examples that are already in place or could be implemented in jurisdictions across Canada.

6. 12 to 25 key-informant interviews (which the MHCC will participate in)
7. A final report that includes the findings of
  - the literature review
  - stakeholder map
  - key-informant interviews
  - national survey
  - case scenarios based on learnings from the mixed methods research.

**Note:** The MHCC will be responsible for communications supports, including translation, editing, and design for all public-facing content.

### Qualifications

The successful candidate will

- be experienced in conducting mixed methods research, content auditing, and assessment for various audiences, particularly decision makers, policy makers, and health-care service providers
- be experienced in conducting research in the health-care sector
- be familiar with the [Mental Health Strategy for Canada](#), the [National Standard for Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace](#), and other guiding documents (listed above)
- have effective project management and research skills (access to a research librarian is an asset)
- be bilingual (EN/FR) or be able to work with a subcontractor that can support in this capacity.

### Budget

C\$50,000 (including all applicable taxes)

Please submit a detailed budget on how the money will be allocated across the different elements outlined in this request for proposals and include any additional or in-kind contributions for the work.

**Note:** The MHCC would retain the intellectual property rights of the literature review and final report. Co-branding and shared knowledge translation opportunities may be available.

### Timelines

- Deadline to submit proposals: 11:59 p.m., ET, Tuesday, August 10, 2021
- Deadline to submit final report *\*extended\**: **Friday, March 18, 2022**

### Proposal requirements (French or English)

- A project plan for all deliverables with a focus on approach/methodology, activity timelines, and budget (including GST/HST/PST)
- Names, CVs or bios, and roles of project team members
- Two examples of related prior projects
- Two references
- A list of other individuals or organizations that you plan to draw on or engage to complete the work

## Evaluation criteria

1. Demonstrated experience with mixed methods research and evaluation
2. Demonstrated history of writing and publishing on advancing psychological health and safety in the workplace with a focus on health-care settings
3. Demonstrated familiarity with key concepts related to the two additional psychosocial factors in the workplace
4. Familiarity with the MHCC's [safe language guide](#), social determinants of health (including [sex- and gender-based analysis](#)), and the [National Standard for Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace](#)
5. Adequate resource capacity to meet identified timelines
6. Ability to complete the project within scope (timelines, budget, and products/goals)

## How to submit a proposal

Please send your proposal to Samuel Breau, Manager, Access to Quality Mental Health Services, at [sbreau@mentalhealthcommission.ca](mailto:sbreau@mentalhealthcommission.ca). Be sure to cc Alida Ingabire ([aingabire@mentalhealthcommission.ca](mailto:aingabire@mentalhealthcommission.ca)) and request a confirmation of receipt.

**Note:** The MHCC reserves the right to select the proposal candidate of its choosing or to not proceed with any.

## Appendix A

### Background

Regardless of profession or sector, protecting and promoting mental health in the workplace is essential. Yet, health-care settings can be particularly challenging environments. Health-care workers are 1.5 times as likely to take time off work due to illness or disability than people in any other sector. Chronic stress and burnout are common, and many health-care workers report a wide range of health conditions associated with work-related stress, including depression, anxiety, weight gain, substance use and even suicide. While the [National Standard for Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace](#) (the Standard) applies to all industries, health-care organizations face unique psychological risks and opportunities.

The Standard describes 13 psychosocial factors that contribute to or threaten the psychological health and safety of Canada's workforce in all industries:

PF1: Psychological Support	A work environment where co-workers and supervisors support employees' psychological and mental health concerns and respond appropriately as needed.
PF2: Organizational Culture	A work environment characterized by trust, honesty, and fairness.
PF3: Clear Leadership and Expectations	A work environment where there is effective leadership and support that helps employees know what they need to do, how their work contributes to the organization, and whether there are impending changes.
PF4: Civility and Respect	A work environment where employees are respectful and considerate in their interactions with one another, as well as with customers, clients, and the public.
PF5: Psychological Competencies and Requirements	A work environment where there is a good fit between employees' interpersonal and emotional competencies and the requirements of the position they hold.
PF6: Growth and Development	A work environment where employees receive encouragement and support in the development of their interpersonal, emotional, and job skills.
PF7: Recognition and Reward	A work environment where there is appropriate acknowledgment and appreciation of employees' efforts in a fair and timely manner.
PF8: Involvement and Influence	A work environment where employees are included in discussions about how their work is done and how important decisions are made.

PF9: Workload Management	A work environment where tasks and responsibilities can be accomplished successfully within the time available.
PF10: Engagement	A work environment where employees feel connected to their work and are motivated to do their job well.
PF11: Balance	A work environment where there is recognition of the need for balance between the demands of work, family, and personal life.
PF12: Psychological Protection	A work environment where employees' psychological safety is ensured.
PF13: Protection of Physical Safety	A work environment where management takes appropriate action to protect the physical safety of employees.

The Standard also emphasizes the importance of “other chronic stressors as identified by workers.” To define chronic stressors in the health-care sector, in 2018 the MHCC and HealthCareCAN consulted with health-care organizations across Canada. During that process, two additional factors unique to health care were identified:

<b>PF14: Support for Psychological Self-Care (specific to health care)</b>	A health-care workplace where staff are encouraged to care for their own psychological health and safety.
<b>PF15: Protection from Moral Distress (specific to health care)</b>	A health-care work environment where staff are able to do their work with a sense of integrity that is supported by their profession, employer, and peers.

With the increased pressures of the COVID-19 pandemic, it is imperative that these two psychosocial factors be addressed to support the mental health of Canada's health-care workers.