

IS YOUR BUSINESS ADDRESSING MENTAL HEALTH?

By [Diana F. Saturno](#)

On January 23, 2020, CAMH launched the [Workplace Mental Health Playbook for Business Leaders](#), which addresses the relationship between employees, their workplace, and mental health. The Playbook has five key recommendations, with examples of best practices for workplaces.

The Playbook states that the economic burden of mental illness every year in Canada is \$51 billion and that 30% of disability claims in Canada are due to mental illness. Further, only 32% of Canadian employees feel that their organization's leadership is taking action to address workplace mental health. These numbers are staggering, growing, and will ultimately negatively impact your business if workplace leaders do not take action.

The Playbook discusses and lists five recommendations for Canadian Business Leaders:

1. Create a Long-Term, Organization-Wide Mental Health Strategy

Organizations should ensure they have a strategy for mental health that works with its overall business strategy, and supports employees in all aspects of mental health, including prevention, risk mitigation, and care. CAMH suggests that elements of a mental health strategy include:

- setting the tone from the top;
- addressing job stress;
- exposing and addressing discrimination in the workplace;
- sensitivity to employees' beliefs and attitudes;
- wellness and prevention; and
- accountability.

2. Institute Mandatory Mental Health Training for Leadership

Training should focus on general information, not skills training, and be mandatory for all levels of management/leadership, including middle management.

3. Develop Tailored Mental Health Supports

Employers should conduct a comprehensive needs assessment to determine their employees' mental health needs and barriers. Employers should consider delivery, access, and inclusivity of services and supports.



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4. Prioritize and Optimize Your Return-to-Work Process Checklist

Employers need to ensure they have a return to work process in place for when employees return from a leave due to mental health, not just physical health. CAMH lists best practices for your organization, which may include:

- employing occupational health professionals to meet with employees on sick leave;
- coordinating and planning carefully for the return to work;
- having a toolbox of accommodation options for the returning employee;
- continuing access to mental health treatment after the employee returns to work;
- conducting a formal capability assessment upon the employee's return to work; and
- ensuring managers are trained to assist employees in connecting them with the support they need.

5. Track Your Progress

Business leaders and employers should track utilization and mental health outcomes across employee groups. This will help identify discrimination and barriers that the employer can productively address. Using data can help make your workplace safer and healthier for employees. CAMH notes that data to consider includes:

- absenteeism;
- presenteeism;
- increase in sick days;
- successful return to work;
- use of short and long term disability;
- return on investment for mental health supports.

Employers have a duty to accommodate disabilities in the workplace, many of which encompass mental health. It is important to ensure policies and training are in place to ensure those in leadership properly address these issues and foster a safe, healthy environment for all.

If you have questions about your company's policies on mental health in the workplace or require assistance drafting a mental health strategy, please contact me directly at 416.864.7624 or dsaturno@foglers.com and I would be happy to assist.