Psycho-social factors for disability: What really matters?

Diana Vissers  
diana@worktowellness.com
Who am I?
Agenda

• Introduction
• Refresher: psycho-social factors for disability-definition
• Workplace factors for disability- research primer
• Legal backdrop for psychological safety
• Wrap up!

Work To Wellness
Psycho-social factors

“Factors that relate to the interaction between the person and his or her social environment, and the influences on the person’s behavior”

(Dyck, D., 2009)
What are the psycho-social factors of disability?
What does the research say?
Individual factors are seen as confounding work based disability BUT are **not** major factors

What matters most??

**Workplace factors** matter most for work based disability!

AND

**Workplace factors are modifiable!**
The workplace factors that matter

• What are the workplace factors that matter most for workplace disability?
What are Workplace factors?

Physical environment

Culture and work organization

Organization and stakeholder arrangements

Financial and employment contracts

(Adapted from Shultz, 2014)
Workplace factors that matter **most**?

- Social support
- Job strain
- Increased physical demands
- Job satisfaction
- Supervisor support
- Worker control
- Psychological demands
What is Safety?
What is Safety?

noun
1. the condition of being protected from or unlikely to cause danger, risk, or injury.
"they should leave for their own safety"
synonyms: welfare, well-being, protection, security
"the safety of the residents"
2. FOOTBALL
• a defensive back who normally is positioned well behind the line of scrimmage.

Definition from google, 2015
Psycho-social safety climate

• Move to prevention

• Changes in responsibility

• Changes in liability

• Increased WCB responsibility

• Psychological safety standards

Work To Wellness

*Courtesy of Excellence Canada*
Psychological Safety

“A psychologically healthy and safe workplace is one that promotes employees’ psychological well-being and actively works to prevent harm to employee psychological health due to negligent, reckless or intentional acts.”

Guarding Minds at Work.
http://www.guardingmindsatwork.ca/info/safety_what
Psychological Safety

- How is this relevant to WCB?
Standard for Psychological Safety

- Voluntary
- Comprehensive
- Plan-Do-Check-Act
Factors for Psychological Safety

- Organizational culture
- Psychological/social support
- Clear leadership and expectations
- Civility and Respect
- Psychological demands
- Growth and development
- Recognition and reward
- Involvement and influence
- Workload management
- Engagement
- Balance
- Psychological protection
- Protection and physical safety
Activity

Review the vignette at your table:

What are the regulatory and legislative pieces that are relevant to your role and the outcomes that can be expected?

Record and be prepared to provide responses to the larger group.

Work to Wellness
Framework

- Insurance Act
- Charter
- WCB – mental injury, stress claims, PTSD
- Damages in tort cases (civil)
- Labour law
- Employment standards
- Insurer contracts-STD

- Supreme Court in Canada: psych. safety is part of employment contract
- Human Rights-Duty to accommodate
- Collective agreements
- Occ health and safety legislation
- Policy/procedure-employer
Changing landscape
Once upon a time......
When you think that you can’t make a difference, remember that one raindrop raises the ocean.
Part 2: Looking Within

Diana Vissers
diana@worktowellness.com
• One moment of interest, or “aha” from Part 1
Return to Work/Stay at Work

Work To Wellness
A. Organizational-level interventions

These interventions are directed towards the whole organization to improve the physical or psychosocial environment within which the worker functions. The goal is to improve worker outcomes by making positive changes to the organization as a whole.

Examples of organizational-level interventions relevant here are:

• changing organizational policies,
• creating a people-oriented culture through supportive management practices,
• Adopting policy and practice and contracts that support return to work and stay at work for mental health conditions

Adapted from Pomaki et al
B. Disability management -level interventions

These interventions are directed towards the practice of disability management and can either aim to improve existing practices or introduce new return-to-work practices. The practice can be from within the organization or in interaction with other stakeholders.

Examples of disability management practices interventions that are relevant here are:

• improving communication among return-to-work stakeholders, or
• providing information to the worker about the return-to-work process
• aligning unions and management on return to work practices
• Ensuring efficiency with investigations
• Promoting creative accommodations

Adapted from Pomaki et al
C. Individual-level interventions

These interventions focus on the individual worker and try to improve worker care, access to care, or help the worker better adapt to his/her environment.

Examples of relevant individual-level interventions are:

- cognitive behavioural therapy,
- Occupational therapy,
- or care management

Adapted from Pomaki et al.
Working together

Work To Wellness
Thank you!

Work To Wellness
In the beginner’s mind there are many possibilities. In the expert’s mind there are few. It is desirable to maintain a readiness of mind that is open to everything.

Shunryu Suzuki