

Psychological Health and Safety Management System (PHSMS)

Purpose

The purpose of this plan is to define the actions to be taken in support of FFPL Board Policy HR-13, Psychological Health and Safety. The Fort Frances Public Library Technology Centre is dedicated to the principle that all employees deserve a psychologically safe workplace and are committed to providing psychologically safe leadership, policies and employment. This plan fits with the overarching philosophy described in policies HR-01, HR-02, and HR-03 of a workplace that is safe and free from harassment, discrimination and violence for all employees.

Definition of a psychologically healthy workplace

As defined in our Psychological Health and Safety Policy, HR-13, the Fort Frances Public Library defines a psychologically healthy and safe workplace as being “a workplace that promotes workers’ psychological well-being and actively works to prevent harm to worker psychological health including preventing harm in negligent, reckless, or intentional ways.”

How is psychological health and safety being supported?

The FFPL board and staff will support the Psychological Health and Safety Management System (PHSMS) in the following ways:

- Commitment of the FFPL Board and CEO to provide access to psychological supports;
- Encouragement by the CEO to access psychological supports when needed;
- Provision of a Psychological Health and Safety Policy;
- A Return-to-Work Strategy; and
- Active, meaningful, and effective participation in this program.

While there are many factors that contribute to a psychologically safe workplace, key factors required to be assessed in the Fort Frances Public Library to achieve a psychologically safe workplace include:

- Civility and respect in the workplace;
- Supported and valued employees;
- Praise, recognition, acknowledgement, and fairness;
- Growth and development opportunities;
- Leadership and expectations are clear;
- Work/life balance;
- Manageable workloads;
- Adequate resources to do the job;
- Worker input as to how they accomplish their jobs;
- Employees participate in decision-making;
- Consideration of employee suggestions; and
- Psychological services and supports are available.

Return-to-Work Strategy

Engage the employee in developing solutions

The purpose of this strategy is to ensure that staff of the Fort Frances Public Library Technology Centre feel safe to work with the CEO to develop a strategy for their successful return, or to successfully stay at work. This plan includes specific solutions to past, current and potential work-related issues. The employee's involvement in the creation of a workplace plan can be the determining factor for the employee's commitment to the plan's success.

By engaging the employee in producing a work plan in cooperation with the CEO, they create a sustainable and successful workplace plan with a conversation framed by 3 key questions:

- How can the library help you be successful at work?
- What will you do to ensure the library workplace plan is successful for you?
- How will we deal with future issues in a way that is healthy for you?

How can the library help you be successful at work?

Focus on getting at all of the issues that will affect the employee's ability to be productive, including:

- Start time;
- Break times;
- Training needs;
- Reorientation and reintegration into the workplace, if appropriate;
- Gradual increase in hours and/or days worked if stamina is an issue;
- Tasks the employee is most confident about completing successfully;
- Changes or modifications to tasks;
- Changes or modifications to communication including instructions, directions and feedback;
- Attendance at meetings, offsite events or social events; and
- Project leadership

What will you do to ensure the library workplace plan is successful for you?

Support the employee to take both control and responsibility for their own well-being at work. Encourage the employee to come up with ideas.

How will we deal with future issues in a way that is healthy for you?

This is an opportunity for the employee to tell the CEO how they wish to be approached with questions regarding their mental health. Privacy and confidentiality are important and any discussion regarding the employee's mental health will be held privately.

Workplace plan implementation

The workplace plan is a document that is produced during a conversation between the CEO and the employee. The document will serve as a plan that can be consulted by either party to ensure that all the requirements are met. To be most effective, the workplace plan should have everything in writing in the words of the employee. This is especially important so that at a later date or during follow-up the employee is better able to recognize the full intent of the plan they have agreed to.

Next is a guide to how the workplace plan is to be administered.

When the CEO believes the employee may be unwell

The CEO will watch for signs that the employee is experiencing a mental health issue. The employee may just be having a bad day. Using an approach that the employee has provided in advance, can make it easier for both parties.

Example: An employee may suggest the CEO say, "You don't seem yourself today. Are you okay?"

The actual words are less important than the shared understanding that the words are being used as directed by the employee to show concern.

When the plan is not being implemented in the way it was agreed

After a time, one or both parties may find that the plan is not being implemented as agreed. If there is a process for broaching the subject in a confidential and safe manner that the question will be received knowing that only concern for their welfare is being questioned. Having an agreed-upon process in writing on how to address this with the employee will make it much easier to deal with when or if it happens. It also provides an opportunity for both parties to review each section of the workplace plan to determine if everything was being carried out as agreed. As long as both parties agree, the plan can be changed.

When there are performance management issues

Receiving critical comments or corrective feedback can be challenging to hear by an employee that is already in mental distress. While specific and measurable goals should be a part of the work plan, when discussing performance it is critical that this be done in a private setting and accompanied by positive reinforcement.

Periodic reviews

Period reviews with the employee will help create an objective measure of their performance, assess or reassess their workload, and set priorities. The CEO will occasionally set up a meeting time in which the employee and CEO can assess where the workload is currently and evaluate what lies ahead and make adjustments or re-assignments as necessary and agreed to.

Ensure that goals are specific, measurable, time-specific, and workplace-related

Goals set for individual employees will be specific to their circumstances. Goals at the earliest stages must be attainable given the employee's current well-being. Add increments to allow for small victories, which are preferable to larger defeats.

Communication

New problems can arise and old problems can resurface. The CEO and the employee need to be aware that the road to wellness is not a short or direct one. Constant vigilance over a period of years is required. The lines of communication must remain open at this point so it does not become a contributing factor.

Documentation

To reduce future problems, all communication should be in writing. The CEO will take notes during meetings and the employee should be engaged in helping to formulate the wording that is to be used. This means that when reviewing the documentation at a later date, the employee is more likely to recognize the intent as well as the plan.

Regular follow-up

Regular follow-up will help in avoiding future problems. Complex situations call for a shorter timeframe for follow up. The CEO should follow up within two weeks after implementing the plan.

Regularly review measurements for success

To be most effective, the workplace plan should have everything in writing in the words of the employee. This is especially important so that at a later date or during follow-up the employee is better able to recognize the full intent of the plan they have agreed to.

Prepare for challenges before they arise

Better outcomes are possible if the CEO and the employee have these often difficult conversations but having a clear plan for actions can significantly improve the situation.



Employee Questionnaire

How can the library help you be successful at work?

What will you do to ensure the library workplace plan is successful for you?

How will we deal with future issues in a way that is healthy for you?



Workplace Plan

This image shows a full page of blank, lined paper. It features approximately 28 horizontal blue or grey lines spaced evenly apart, typical of notebook paper. The lines extend across the entire width of the page, leaving small margins at the top and bottom. There are no vertical lines, text, or other markings on the page.