



[Video](#): Dr. Joti Samra, RPsych., shares report highlights.

Feeling safer at work? Survey says: It's a welcome trend

Research finds employees of organizations applying the National Standard of Canada for Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace perceive less psychological risk in the workplace.

Winnipeg, MB, February 2, 2017. . . If you'd describe your workplace as psychologically safe, with civil relationships and satisfactory work/life balance, it just may be due to a major shift in how employers understand and respond to workplace mental health issues.

In 2016, 77% of working Canadians indicated attitudes toward workplace mental health issues are better than they were in 2007 (Samra 2017). Additionally, those Canadians who say their workplace is psychologically unhealthy or unsafe (10%) has been cut in half, down from 20% in 2009 (Ipsos 2016).

These are just two of the findings arising from recent research commissioned by the Great-West Life Centre for Mental Health in the Workplace (the Centre) – now celebrating its 10th year – to help continue to define and respond to workplace mental health needs and to assess how far Canada has come in terms of psychological health and safety in the workplace over the last decade.

“The series of [Ipsos surveys](#) on depression and psychological health and safety in the workplace over the past decade are, to the best of our knowledge, the longest running in Canada, and with over 5,000 working Canadians participating, the largest,” says Mary Ann Baynton, Program Director for the Centre. “This year, we expanded on the Ipsos series with [The Evolution of Workplace Mental Health in Canada, 2007-2017](#), an objective report based on research led by registered psychologist, Dr. Joti Samra.”

“The report profiles the organizations and initiatives that contributed to the evolution of workplace mental health over the last decade,” Dr. Samra explains. “Taken together with the Ipsos findings, results show that there has been a dramatic and positive shift in how employers perceive and respond to workplace mental health issues, especially among those organizations applying the National Standard of Canada for Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace (the Standard).”

The Standard is a voluntary set of guidelines, tools and resources to promote employee psychological health and prevent psychological harm due to workplace factors.

“It's so encouraging to see the tremendous improvements in Canada's workplaces,” Dr. Samra adds (see [video](#)). “We've found many employers now see protecting psychological health and safety in the workplace as a core business consideration – essential to employee recruitment, engagement and retention – and more are taking concrete action to do so. What also emerged is that Canada is seen as a world leader in psychological health and safety in the workplace, as demonstrated in the proposed adoption of the Standard as an international benchmark, and is even inspiring others around the world to advance these issues in their countries.”

Ipsos research highlights:

- More working Canadians (79%) say they know about mental health conditions like depression, up from 66% in 2007.
- Since 2009, fewer workers describe a workplace that has serious or significant psychosocial concerns. Most significant improvements have been made in the areas of civility and respect (27% are concerned, down from 33%) and balance (30%, down from 35%).
- Employees have more concerns than managers. For example, employees were more concerned with growth and development (38% of employees vs. 26% of managers).

Additionally, a number of Canadian workplaces are now following best practices based on the Standard released in 2013. In organizations implementing the Standard:

- Only 5% of employees say their workplace is psychologically unhealthy or unsafe vs. 13% in organizations that are not implementing the Standard.
- Employees who are or have experienced depression are missing less time (7.4 days per year) from work as a result than the average employee with depression (12.5 days).

For a free download of *The Evolution of Workplace Mental Health in Canada, 2007-2017* and full Ipsos report, factum, infographics and research methodology, please go [here](#).

About Dr. Joti Samra

Dr. Joti Samra, R.Psych. (Lead Researcher) pursues a full spectrum of research, consulting, and educational activities in the field of workplace health. She is the Lead Developer of *Guarding Minds @ Work: A Workplace Guide to Psychological Health and Safety*, an innovative online resource for addressing psychosocial threats in the work environment, and is a member of the Technical Committee that developed the *National Standard of Canada for Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace* (CSA Z1003/BNQ9700). She is also the principal developer of *Managing Emotions*, a set of online, interactive assessment and training resources that strengthen the emotional intelligence skills of managers.

Dr. Samra is the Program Lead for the Centre for Psychological Health Sciences at the University of Fredericton (getstarted.ufred.ca), where she has led the development of a suite of online courses and certificates in Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace, Managing Psychological Health Issues at Work, and Resiliency Skills for Workers.

To learn more about Dr. Samra's organizational and media consultant work, go to www.drjotisamra.com

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About the Great-West Life Centre for Mental Health in the Workplace

Established in 2007, the Great-West Life Centre for Mental Health in the Workplace (the Centre) is a leading source of practical ideas, tools and resources designed to help with the prevention, intervention and management of workplace mental health issues. In 2017, the Centre will celebrate 10 years of helping employers take concrete steps to foster a psychologically healthy and safe workplace and manage employee mental health issues.

Around the world, Canada is recognized as an international leader in workplace mental health. Many individuals and organizations have contributed to this distinction and it has been a privilege for the Centre to have played a part in many of their important initiatives. Several key research projects and events are in store for 2017 to commemorate our collective progress.

For more information, visit the Centre's website at WorkplaceStrategiesforMentalHealth.com.

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