

Psychosocial Risks at Work

Collection of
Simplified Fact Sheets

Psychosocial Risks at Work. Collection of Simplified Fact Sheets is produced by the direction adjointe – Programme régional des services de santé au travail of the Direction régionale de santé publique du CIUSSS du Centre-Sud-de-l'Île-de-Montréal

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In this document, the use of masculine generic terms also refers to women and is used solely to simplify the text.

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Réseau de santé publique en santé au travail : <https://www.santeautravail.qc.ca/web/rspsat/publications/accueil>

Direction régionale de santé publique de Montréal : <https://ccsmtlpro.ca/drsp/drsp-qui-sommes-nous/drsp-publications>

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ISBN 978-2-550-98312-5 (On line)

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Bibliothèque et Archives Canada, 2024

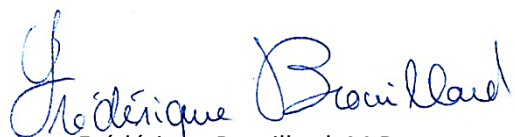
WORD FROM THE EDITOR

This collection of simplified fact sheets aims to inform employers, supervisors, and workers on various themes related to psychosocial risks at work. These simplified fact sheets were inspired by several documentary and scientific sources, including the fact sheets created on psychosocial risks and risk factors by the INSPQ (Institut national de santé publique du Québec) and those from the CNESST (Commission des normes, de l'équité, de la santé et de la sécurité du travail). You will find the full list of sources used at the bottom of each sheet.

The fact sheets have been developed and written in language that is understood by a wide audience, helping to increase awareness of psychosocial risks (PSRs) at work.



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Psychosocial Risks at Work

Simplified
Fact Sheets
for the Workers

LIST OF SIMPLIFIED FACT SHEETS FOR WORKERS

- Absenteeism
- Decision-making autonomy at work
- Workload
- Information and communication
- Presenteeism
- Workplace recognition
- Peer support at work
- Supervisor support at work



Absenteeism at Work

Simplified fact sheet for workers

- ☐ Have you ever been absent from work for a long period due to personal reasons or illness?
- ☐ Have you ever been so stressed by your tasks that you had to be absent from work multiple times?
- ☐ Have you ever experienced conflicts with your supervisor or colleagues that caused you to be absent from work multiple times?

If you answered **yes** to any of these questions, you may have experienced absenteeism at work.



What is absenteeism at work?

Absenteeism at work occurs when workers are repeatedly absent or absent for prolonged periods.

Public holidays, vacations, and parental leave are not considered absenteeism, as they are legally provided for.



What are the causes of workers' absenteeism?

Work organization

Example :

- A heavy workload

Support from supervisors or colleagues

Examples :

- Lack of respect during communications
- Insufficient support

Absenteeism habits in the workplace

Example :

- A worker notices that colleagues are often absent and begins taking leave more often

Personal and family life

Examples:

- Family responsibilities
- Health problems



Important !

A poor work environment is a significant cause of absenteeism



Why is it important to address absenteeism at work?

Absenteeism at work has consequences on both the workers and the company.

On the workers

- Psychological health issues
 - Psychological distress
 - Concentration problems
- Increased workload for colleagues of the absent
- Poor work environment
- Decreased motivation

On the company

- Increased costs due to
 - Personnel turnover
 - Hiring of temporary workers
- Decrease in
 - Performance de la
 - Production



158 days/year

Average duration of absences
due to mental disorders



18 000 \$ /year
par travailleur absent

Financial loss per absent worker
for the company (direct and
indirect costs)



Important !

Preventing even a single case of mental illness can reduce company costs.



Absenteeism at work is costly!



Disability insurance replaces
salary when a person is sick
or has an accident



In Canada, **nearly 1 in 5**
workers is on disability due
to mental health issues



Women are nearly twice as
likely as men to live with a
disability related to mental
health issues.



Workers, what can you do to reduce your absences from work?



Do not work

outside your scheduled work hours (example: turn off your work phone when leaving work, do not respond to emails in the evening).



Consult

a healthcare professional when you are not feeling well..



Discuss

with your supervisor when you experience difficult situations to get their support (examples: reduce your workload, get support for specific tasks).



Use

your paid leave days if you have them (examples: vacations, personal leave).



Listen

to your body and take time off when necessary.

This document is a production of the Assistant Director - Programme régional des services de santé au travail, Direction régionale de santé publique.

Centre intégré universitaire de santé et de services sociaux du Centre-Sud-de-l'Île-de-Montréal

Québec



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Decision-Making Autonomy at Work

Simplified fact sheet for workers

- ☐ Do you have the freedom to choose your work methods•
- ☐ Does your company sometimes allow you to participate in decisions that affect your work environment?
- ☐ Does your supervisor encourage you to use your skills and take initiative in your work?

If you answered **no** to any of these questions, you may be working in a company where you have little decision-making autonomy.



What is decision-making autonomy?

Having control over the work to be done : The ability to choose your work methods and organize yourself.

The ability to use or develop your skills.

For example, in a company with high decision-making autonomy, one can see :

- Encouragement to use creativity, take initiative, and develop skills to take on new tasks.
- Workers participating in certain decisions.
- Workers deciding on their own methods and pace of work.

Decision-making autonomy depends on the freedom the supervisor gives to workers in:

- Task organization,
- Choosing the method of work for the required tasks. le temps alloué,
- The time available to complete tasks.

Decision-making autonomy also depends on the workers' ability to:

- Acquire, maintain, and enhance skills,
- Use creativity,
- Take on new tasks,
- Take initiative.

Here are some examples of what can lead to low decision-making autonomy:

- Frequent and urgent new demands,
- A supervisor deciding on tasks and methods without consulting workers,
- Not being able to choose or change your schedule.



Why is it important to pay attention to decision-making autonomy?

Decision-making autonomy is an effective way to support innovation and business development. Offering decision-making autonomy is also a sign of respect and trust towards workers. Low autonomy at work increases the risk of:

- Developing heart disease,
- Experiencing psychological distress,
- Having alcohol or drug consumption issues
- Losing interest in work,
- Devaluing workers and their professional skills.



More than **one in three workers** aged 15 and older has low to moderate decision-making autonomy at work.



Nearly **6 out of 10 workers** are young people aged 15 to 24, mostly in non-specialized jobs lacking professional experience.

Only **56% of workers** have a supervisor who encourages them to participate in important decisions.



Decision-making autonomy means: being able to choose how to do your work and participate in decisions.



Workers, what can you do to improve your decision-making autonomy?



Participate

in decisions surrounding the organization of your work (example: joining the health and safety committee).



Develop

your knowledge and skills (example: training activities, support from colleagues, or taking on new tasks).



Focus

on possible solutions rather than the problems.



Consult

your colleagues before making decisions that concern them.



Listen

to ideas from others.

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Workload

Simplified fact sheet for workers

- ☐ Do you feel like you have to work very fast?
- ☐ Does your work require you to stay focused for long periods of time?
- ☐ Do you lack time to finish your work?

If you answered yes to any of these questions, you may currently be experiencing a high workload.



What is workload?

Workload includes:

- The quantity and complexity of the tasks to be done
- the concentration and analytical capacity required to complete the tasks
- The deadlines to meet for completing the tasks



Attention !

The perceived workload is just as important as the actual workload.

Your perception matters !



What influences workload?

Demands (requirements)

Examples :

- Concentration over a long period
- Unrealistic objectives
- High number of meetings Frequent
- interruptions

Resources:

Examples :

- Lack of personnel Mauvaise
- Poor priority management
- Lack of time
- Lack of knowledge



Why is it important to pay attention to workload?

A heavy workload is a risk to workers' health and the productivity of the company. **An excessive workload increases the risk of:**

- Experiencing psychological distress,
- Developing muscle and joint pain,
- Developing heart diseases,
- Absenteeism at work : a heavy workload negatively affects presenteeism and absenteeism due to illness,
- Being less effective and engaging in less safe practices at work,
- Supervisors lacking time to support workers.



In Montreal, nearly **1 in 2 workers** who work more than **50 hours per week** struggle to maintain a balance between their professional and personal lives.

In Montreal, workers with high levels of psychological distress related to their jobs:



31 % work between **41 and 50 hours per week.**



43 % work **more than 50 hours per week.**



Workers, what can you do to better manage your workload?



Talk
to your supervisor :

- Tell them if you feel overworked,
- Determine with them the most important and urgent tasks,
- Set realistic goals together.



Encourage
teamwork and **share**
your tasks with
colleagues.



Reduce
distractions that
interfere with your work.
Example: turn off
notifications

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Information and Communication

Simplified fact sheet for workers

- ☐ Does your company regularly provide you with information?
- ☐ Are the methods your company uses to transmit information adequate?
- ☐ Does the company have rules regarding the transmission of information?

If you answered **no** to any of these questions, you may be working in a company where the transmission of information and communication methods need improvement.



Be Careful!

The method of communication has as much impact as the information being transmitted.



What is meant by communication at work?

These are the methods used by the employer to inform and consult the staff on the company's vision, values, and priorities.

For the worker, communication allows

- Access to the information needed to do the job.
- Participation in decision-making.
- Reinforcement of their sense of belonging to the company.

Different communication methods

- Bulletin board notices.
- Virtual meetings.
- Team or individual meetings.
- Emails.
- Surveys.



Be Careful !

According to the objective, choose the appropriate method of communication.

Example 1

Objectives

- Sharing general information (example: dates of next year's meetings).
- No response expected.

Communication methods to prioritize

- Posters.
- Reports.
- Emails.
- Memos.

Example 2

Objectives

- Sharing personal information (example: notifying about an absence due to illness, informing about a pregnancy).
- A response is expected from workers and/or supervisors.

Communication methods to prioritize

- Phone calls.
- Text messages.
- In-person meetings (individual and/or team).



Why is communication important at work?

Impacts of **ineffective** communication

Increases

- Workplace accidents.
- Delays and production defects.
- Psychological distress.
- Wasted time.
- Misunderstanding of the tasks to be performed.

Important : When too little information is transmitted to workers, an uncertainty and mistrust climate develops.

Impacts of **effective** communication

Allows

- Proper information to workers.
- Collection of workers' opinions.

Increases in workers:

- Adherence to changes within the company.
- Sense of belonging.
- Motivation and commitment to work.

Consequences of poor communication according to workers:

22 %



say they want to find a job in another company.

34 %



say it reduces their job satisfaction.

50 %



say it increases their stress levels.

29 %



say it harms their relationships with colleagues.



Poor communication results in significant time loss and impacts productivity!

A company with **100 employees** spends around **884 hours pper year** clarifying communications.

This is enough time to make **18 trips** between Montreal and Vancouver by car.



What are the obstacles to effective communication?

- Misunderstanding of the words used.
- Sources of distraction: cell phones, instant messaging, spontaneous requests.
- Information overload: having too much or too little information.
- Colleagues and/or supervisors who do not speak the same language.
- Frequency of meetings: having too many or too few meetings.



Be Careful!

Virtual communication is not as effective as in-person communication.



Workers, what can you do to improve communication at work?



Favor in-person communication over written communication.



Familiarize yourself with your company's rules for information transmission.



Convey only the essential information.



Use respectful words and tone.

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Presenteeism at Work

Simplified fact sheet for workers

- ☐ Have you ever gone to work while sick
- ☐ Have you ever been afraid of being judged if you were absent from work?
- ☐ Have you ever stayed at work even when you lacked concentration?

If you answered **yes** to any of these questions, you may have already experienced presenteeism at work.

> What is presenteeism at work ?

Workers come to work even when their ability to perform tasks is significantly reduced.

Some signs can help you recognize that your condition at work is not optimal :

- Being less focused at work.
- Your work is of lower quality than usual (examples: an increase in the number of mistakes, missing deadlines).
- Feeling more tired at work.
- Being late to work more often.

> What are the main causes of presenteeism at work ?

- Having a heavy workload to catch up on if absent.
- Fear of being judged if you take time off.
- Fear of missing opportunities for promotion.
- Not having enough sick days or paid leave.
- Job insecurity (examples: seasonal or contractual workers, or working in precarious conditions).

> Why is it important to address presenteeism at work ?

Presenteeism has several consequences. For example:

For the company

- Increases the risk of mistakes and workplace accidents.
- Reduces production quality.
- Decreases productivity.

For the worker

- Decreases motivation at work.
- Increases stress.
- Increases psychological distress.
- Increases the likelihood of serious.
- Impacts mental health.
- Harms the work environment.



Be Careful !

Working despite a mental or physical health issue can worsen your condition. This can lead to an extended leave of absence due to illness.



In Canada, more than **6 out of 10 workers** have worked despite being in poor health. These workers did not feel "sick enough" to be absent.



Important !

There are as many workers as supervisors engaging in presenteeism



Workers, what can you do to reduce presenteeism ?



Listen

to your body and take time off if you are not feeling well (examples: difficulty concentrating, extreme fatigue).



Discuss

with your supervisor when you face difficult situations to get their support (examples: adjusting your work schedule, taking an unplanned week off).



Use

your paid leave days (examples: vacations, personal leave, sick leave).



Consult

a healthcare professional when you are not feeling well.

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Recognition at Work

Simplified fact sheet for workers

- ☐ Are your efforts and successes sufficiently recognized in your company?
- ☐ Are your career prospects satisfying ?
- ☐ Do your supervisor and colleagues respect you ?

If you answered **no** to any of these questions, you may be working in a company where there is a lack of recognition.

Did you know that a lack of recognition at work is identified as the greatest risk to workers' psychological health?

> What is recognition at work?

Workplace recognition involves showing in various ways that we value our colleagues, workers, and supervisors.

There are **three types of recognition**:

Economic :

- Fair salary based on skills and expertise.

Social :

- Recognition of efforts.
- Positive feedback.

Organizational:

- Job security.
- Promotion opportunities.

> What influences recognition at work ?

What facilitates recognition :

- Gestures of recognition from the supervisor.
- Regular meetings with colleagues and the supervisor.
- Promotion opportunities and job changes.

What hinders recognition :

- Lack of time.
- The fear of creating competition and jealousy within the team.
- The absence of formal or informal recognition processes.
- Focusing recognition only on results rather than efforts.

➤ Why is it important to demonstrate recognition at work ?

In Montreal, **33% of workers** experiencing high psychological distress report having a low level of recognition at work.

A lack of recognition also has consequences on :

Health

- **Psychological** : Symptoms of anxiety or depression.
- **Physical** : Sleep problems, high blood pressure, muscle and joint pain.
- **Behavioral** : Impulsivity, alcohol or medication consumption.

The company

- Workers are more frequently absent.
- Higher employee turnover rates

Adequate recognition has positive impacts on :

- Productivity.
 - Motivation.
 - The desire to stay in the same job.
 - The sense of purpose at work.
- Work feels more meaningful!



In Montreal, nearly **1 in 4 workers** reports having a low level of recognition at work.

➤ Workers, what can you do to increase recognition at work ?



Show interest
in your colleagues
and supervisors.



Remind
others of the
importance of
recognition at work.



Vary
recognition
gestures.



Use
good recognition
practices with
everyone

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Support Between Colleagues at Work

Simplified Guide for Workers

- ☐ Is there good collaboration between colleagues in your team?
- ☐ Do your colleagues sometimes help you perform your tasks?
- ☐ Are the discussions within your team respectful and polite?

If you answered **no** to any of these questions, you might be working in an environment with little support between colleagues.



What is support between colleagues at work?

Support between colleagues includes all actions and discussions that foster mutual help and collaboration among workers. It is based on feelings such as kindness, respect, and recognition.

There are two types of support between colleagues:

Task Support

- Helping with a task.
- Working together to find a solution to a problem.
- Sharing knowledge.
- Assisting a colleague in organizing their work.
- Spontaneously offering your help.

Emotional Support

- Having a positive and warm attitude.
- Providing positive feedback.
- Offering a listening ear.
- Recognizing when your colleagues are not feeling well.



Why is support between colleagues important at work?

In emotionally demanding jobs, psychological distress is higher when there is little support between colleagues.

Emergency services and workers in care professions (e.g., social workers, paramedics, nurses) are examples of professions with emotionally demanding environments.

Emotionally demanding jobs are characterized by

- A high workload,
- Lack of time (feeling constantly rushed),
- A lack of resources.



Important !

Good support among colleagues is a protective factor for workers' health.

Good colleague support allows:

- Increasing the sense of belonging to the company,
- Increasing job satisfaction,
- Promoting the integration of new employees,
- Enhancing employee retention,
- Encouraging the development of new ideas,
- Improving the work environment.



In Quebec, nearly **1 in 5 workers** reports low support from colleagues at work



45 and older

In Canada, workers aged **45 and older** are more likely to feel they receive less support from their colleagues.



Workers, what can you do to increase support for your colleagues?



Discuss

with your colleagues about your hobbies during breaks.



Participate

in social activities.



Ask

your colleagues how they are doing. If they are not doing well, ask how you can help them.



Stay in touch

with your colleagues, even during teleworking days.



Listen

to your colleagues who are going through difficulties and offer reassurance.

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Support from Supervisors at Work

Simplified fact sheet for workers

- ☐ Is your supervisor available for you?
- ☐ Does your supervisor treat their employees fairly and respectfully?
- ☐ Does your supervisor provide you with the information and resources needed to do your job?

If you answered **no** to any of these questions, you may be lacking support from your supervisor.

> What support can your supervisor offer you?

Task support

- Providing tools and resources.
- Giving realistic deadlines.
- Helping to resolve complex situations.

Information and advice support

- Providing information and guidance.
- Clarifying roles and responsibilities.

Employee support

- Listening and treating with respect.
- Building confidence.
- Supporting professional aspirations.

> Why is supervisor support important?

A conflict with your supervisor or a lack of support increases stress at work. Conversely, a supportive supervisor reduces stress at work.

Lack of support from a supervisor affects

- The quality of human relationships,
- Organizational efficiency,
- The occurrence of conflicts,
- Absenteeism,
- Employee retention.



In Montreal, nearly **1 in 4 workers** reports having low to moderate support from their supervisor.



In Canada, nearly **1 in 2 workers** reports that their supervisors do not always help them manage stress at work.



In Quebec, among workers reporting low to moderate support from their supervisor, **more than 1 in 3:**

- Has a high level of psychological distress related to work,
- Has had suicidal thoughts in the past 12 months.



Workers, how can you receive more support from your supervisor?



Actively participate in team meetings.



Schedule regular one-on-one meetings with your supervisor.



Ask for support when you face difficulties.



Be Careful!

Workers have little control over increasing the support they receive from their supervisors.

This document is a production of the direction adjointe - Programme régional des services de santé au travail, Direction régionale de santé publique.

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