3 **Remedy the consequences** (tertiary prevention)

This aims to prevent a situation from deteriorating, but also to prevent it from recurring, which is why this is considered a form of prevention even though it involves remedial action. The effect of such action is to remedy the impacts on people's psychological health by providing them with support and assistance.

Examples of measures:

A Set up a support network

B Establish an employee assistance program (EAP)

C Create a return to work program

D Make a mediation service available

NOTE: Secondary and tertiary prevention basically produce short-term results because they only address the consequences of psychological health issues in the workplace, and not the source. For this reason, it is important to develop primary prevention action strategies.

RECOURSE

○ **Act respecting Industrial Accidents and Occupational Diseases (ARIAOD)**

Should an employment injury exist (depression, adjustment disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder, anxiety, job burnout, etc.): a claim is filed with the CNESST (Commission des normes, de l'équité, de la santé et de la sécurité au travail).

○ **Act respecting Occupational Health and Safety (AROHS)**

Right of refusal (according to section 12): refusal with regard to danger to a person's mental health.

As is the case for physical danger, the employer is required to take the necessary measures to protect the psychological health of his workers (section 51), in particular by ensuring that the organization of the work and the working procedures and techniques do not adversely affect the safety or health of the workers.
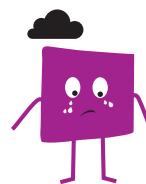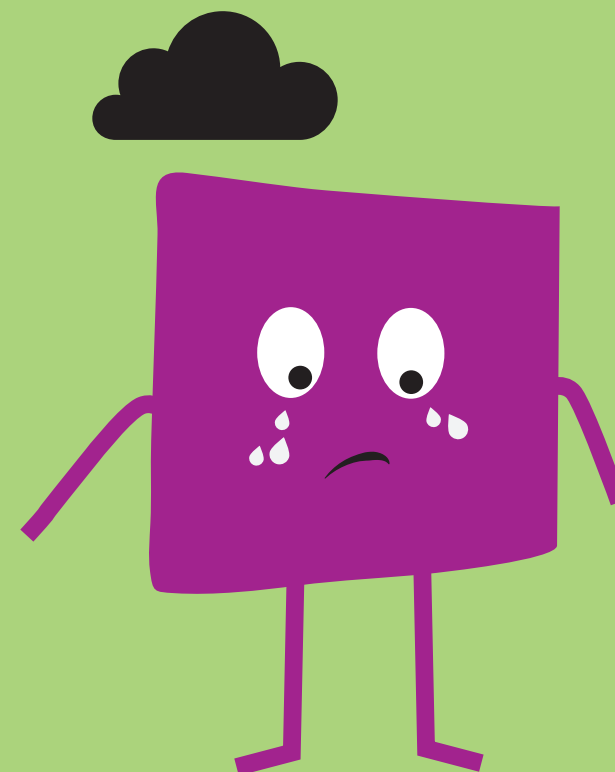

Prevent and cure

Centrale des syndicats du Québec

CSQ

For advice and solutions, consult your union or
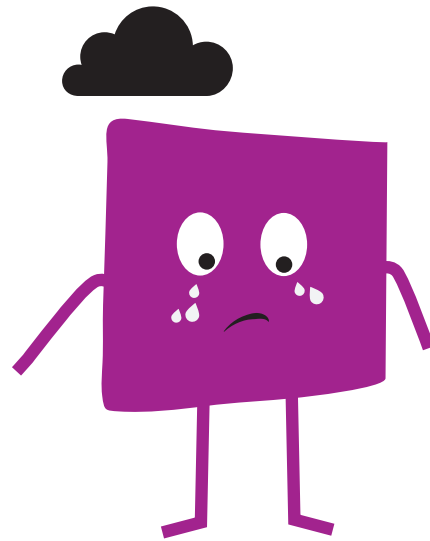**lacsq.org/sst**

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PSYCHOLOGICAL DISTRESS

CSQ

WHAT ARE WE TALKING ABOUT?

Mental health issues have several names, including psychological distress, depression, anxiety, job burnout and adjustment disorder, among others.

WHEN WORK MAKES PEOPLE SICK

Work can pose psychosocial risks that may result in distress in the workplace. When a person is exposed to stressful situations either too often or over a prolonged period, he or she may become vulnerable to developing mental health issues. The following risk factors may exist in workplaces:

- Work overload (qualitative or quantitative)
- Low workload
- Unclear roles or role conflict
- Low level of involvement in decision-making
- Lack of recognition in the workplace
- Low level of decision-making latitude in the workplace
- Lack of social relations or difficult relations in the workplace
- Negative environment and poor working conditions
- Difficult work schedules, split shifts, schedules not established in advance
- Lack of organizational justice or fairness in the workplace

CONSEQUENCES FOR WORKERS

Risk factors in workplaces can result in many consequences for workers. For example, the following signs and symptoms may indicate the presence of physical and psychological injury:

RECOGNIZE THE SIGNS AND THE SYMPTOMS

Physical	Mental	Emotional
Fatigue, insomnia	Loss of memory, concentration	Irritability, sensitivity
Digestive disorders	Distraction	Cynicism
Nausea	Difficulty making judgments	Lowered self-esteem
Hormonal imbalances	Indecision	Loss of sense of humour
Headaches	Vague sense of confusion	Loss of the ability to communicate, isolation
High blood pressure	Inability to perform simple tasks (e.g. mental arithmetic)	Paranoia, distrust and rigidity
Back pain		Alcoholism or substance abuse
Heart problems		

CONSEQUENCES FOR THE ORGANIZATION

1. Absenteeism
2. Presenteeism
3. Staff turnover
4. Loss of productivity
5. Increased overtime
6. Increased workload for colleagues

PREVENTIVE ACTION

1 Eliminate the source of the risks (primary prevention)

The elimination of risks is the most effective type of intervention. This may involve a change in the work environment and work methods. It is an essential focus of action in establishing sustainable prevention.

Examples of measures:

A Intervene in the work environment and working conditions

B Establish and apply a policy to eliminate psychological harassment and violence

C Create a setting to discuss problems and solutions being sought in order to:

- Clarify roles and responsibilities
- Involve workers in decision-making
- Alleviate sources of stress and pressure in the workplace
- Improve communication
- Implement measures that promote recognition in the workplace

NOTE: A **collective intervention** to address mental health issues that involves the input of many workers creates a strong impetus for action to change work organization and to eliminate risks at their source.

2 Reduce risks – build knowledge and skills (secondary prevention)

It aims to alleviate the impacts on individuals by helping them to recognize and manage difficult situations. Thus, an individual will be better prepared to deal with mental health issues.

Examples of measures:

A Take stress management and time management training

B Attend training sessions about psychological health in the workplace

C Take part in relaxation or yoga sessions

D Adopt healthy nutritional habits

E Practise physical activities