

The background features a large, stylized 'HR' in black and red, with a teal circle behind the 'R'. The HRPA logo is on the left, and the title and date are on the right.

**HR
PA**

**Human
Resources
Professionals
Association**

**Fostering mental health in
the workplace: Practical
guidance**

February 8, 2023

Housekeeping

- This webinar is eligible for 1 CPD hour. You will receive the CPD code as part of the post-webinar survey.
- This webinar will be recorded, and the recording, slides and Q&A will be posted on our website under Professional Development – eLearning & On Demand—on-demand webinars—Office of the Registrar.
- Time has been set aside for Q&A at the end, but please feel free to add your questions to the chat box at any time during the presentation.

Introductions

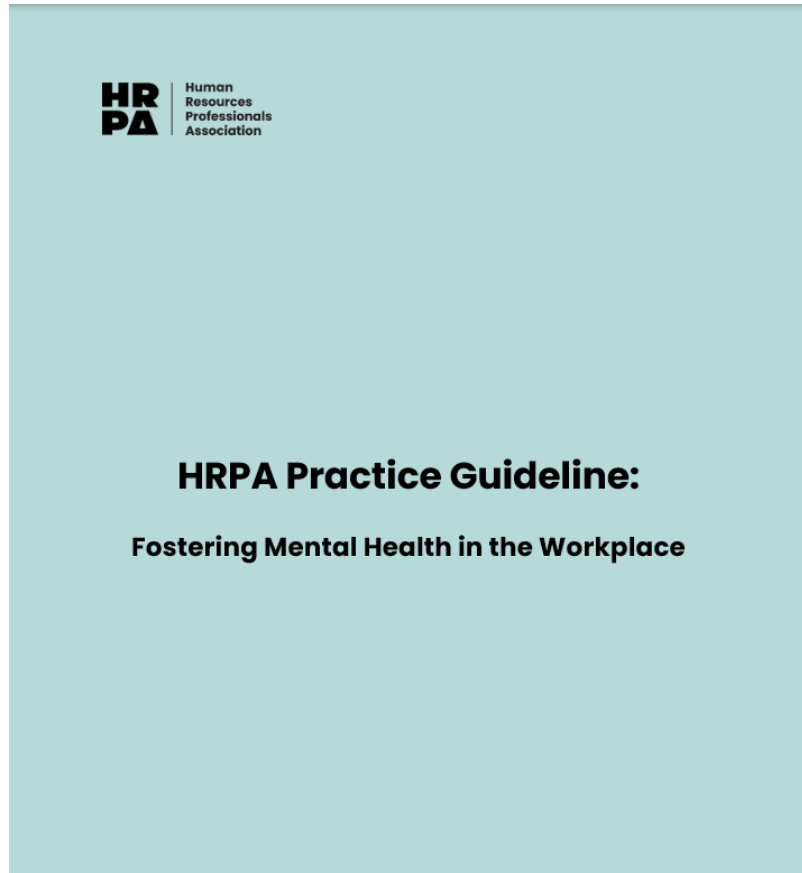


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HPRA

HRPA's New Practice Guideline



- Topic identified as one of the highest-ranking risks of harm stemming from the practice of HR
- Meant to help you mitigate risks and avoid common pitfalls
- Helps supplement the **Code of Ethics and Rules of Professional Conduct**
- All HRPA members and students are expected to review

Some stats

- An estimated **500,000 Canadians** in any given week are unable to work because of mental illness,
- **Nearly 21%** of the Canadian population (about 6 million individuals) will have some form of addiction in their lifetime,
- The Government of Canada estimates that **one in three Canadians** will face a mental health issue or illness, and
- The Royal Bank of Canada (RBC) found that **nearly one-third** of group disability claims with RBC Insurance are related to mental health.

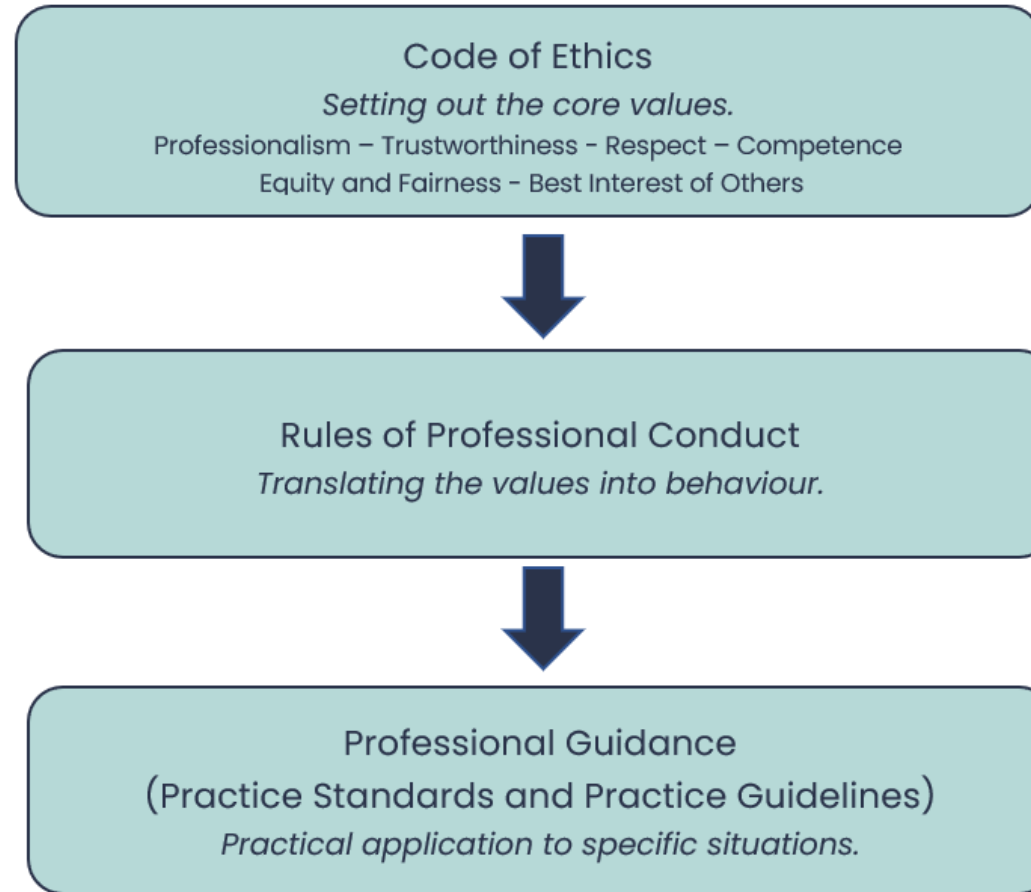
Recap on Practice Guidelines

Practice Guidelines provide guidance on how a Practice Standard and/or the Code/Rules should be interpreted and aspects to consider as it relates to a specific HR topic.

They also:

- Show the public what they should expect from registered HR professionals
- Play a key role in HRPA's mandate of public protection
- Are not a substitute for professional judgment, but provide guidance on how to act in particular circumstances – keeping in mind that not all provisions will apply to everyone

Guidance Hierarchy



What does the Code of Ethics and Rules of Professional Conduct State?

All registered HRPAs professionals, students and firms must comply with HRPAs Code of Ethics and Rules of Professional Conduct, which includes exhibiting **respect** and **best interests of others** by:

- Promoting and maintaining a healthy, safe and inclusive workplace and not engaging in or condoning any acts of psychological violence, harassment, intimidation, and/or discrimination.
- Being alert to and making appropriate accommodations for those who are vulnerable and/or have suffered trauma.

What does the Code of Ethics and Rules of Professional Conduct State?

All registered HRPAs professionals, students and firms must comply with HRPAs Code of Ethics and Rules of Professional Conduct, which includes exhibiting **respect** and **best interests of others** by:

- Separating or providing a safe space in the workplace for impacted individuals of psychological violence.
- Respecting principles of equity, diversity, inclusion and belonging by fostering an environment that offers safety, belonging and inclusion for all, valuing differences between each unique individual and understanding, accepting, and treating everyone fairly.

How the Guideline was developed

Extensive research from a wide variety of sources

In consultation/collaboration with subject-matter experts, including senior staff member from CAMH, legal counsel, HRPA's Professional Standards Committee (PSC), and HR professionals

Thorough approvals process:

PSC → Governance & Nominating Committee → Board of Directors

Risks of Harm to the Public

Failure to foster and accommodate mental health in the workplace can result in:

- Worsening stress
- Increased isolation
- Health and safety issues
- Claims and/or applications for damages in respect of violations of human rights and occupational health and safety obligations
- Harm to the reputation of the profession

How can I use the Guideline in practice?

- Regularly review the Guideline, including but not limited to when:
 - you want to access key definitions, symptoms, risks, and free resources/supports related to mental health and addictions,
 - planning policies and practices to help foster mental health in the workplace, and
 - you need a reminder of appropriate individual actions and behaviours to take that can help foster mental health
- While the Guideline cannot address every situation, it can be used to supplement professional judgment.
- The Guideline is public and can also be shared with your colleagues.



Defining Mental Health, Addictions and Mental Illness

Mental Illness

“Reduced ability to function effectively over a prolonged period of time because of:

- significant levels of distress
- changes in thinking, mood or behaviour
- feelings of isolation, loneliness and sadness
- the feeling of being disconnected from people and activities.”

– Government of Canada

Mental Illness

Mental illness takes many forms, including, [but not limited to]:

- mood disorders that affect how you feel, such as:
 - depression
 - bipolar disorder
 - anxiety disorders, which cause intense and prolonged fear that is not based on actual threat or danger
 - schizophrenia, which causes mixed-up thoughts, delusions or hallucinations
 - personality disorders
 - a type of mental disorder in which someone has unhealthy patterns of thinking, functioning and behaving
 - eating disorders, which influence eating behaviours and are accompanied by negative thoughts about body shape and weight, such as:
 - anorexia
 - bulimia.”
- Government of Canada

Mental Health

“The state of your psychological and emotional well-being. It is a necessary resource for living a healthy life and a main factor in overall health. Good mental health allows you to feel, think and act in ways that help you enjoy life and cope with its challenges.”

– Government of Canada

- The Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) importantly notes that **a person can have a mental illness but also have good mental health, and a person without a mental illness can still have poor mental health**. Mental illness and mental health can change and fluctuate over time.
- Workplaces can be a significant contributor to poor mental health outcomes particularly for marginalized populations, including visible minorities and members of the LGBTQ2S+ communities.

Burnout

- Causes extreme emotional, mental, and physical exhaustion that can interfere with everyday enjoyment, including enjoyment stemming from a person's career, friendships, and/or family.
- Managing stress and day-to-day tasks can become challenging.
- Often caused from stressful circumstances, such as working long hours, or caring for an ill loved one.
- Can cause feelings of hopelessness and dread.
- If left untreated, serious illnesses can occur, such as depression or heart disease.

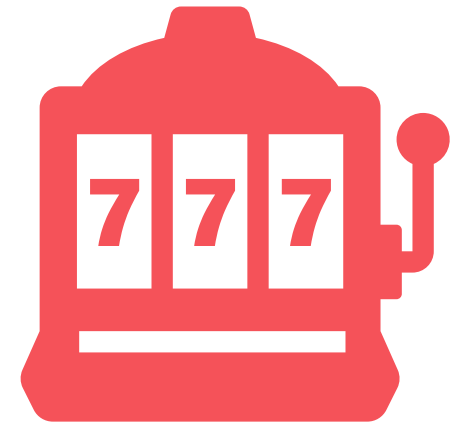


Addiction

A “complex process where problematic patterns of substance use or behaviours can interfere with a person’s life.

Addiction can be broadly defined as a condition that leads to a compulsive engagement with stimuli, despite negative consequences. This can lead to physical and/or psychological dependence.

Addictions can be either substance related (such as problematic use of alcohol or cocaine) or process-related, also known as behavioural addictions (such as gambling or internet addiction).” – CMHA



Legal Responsibilities

Mental illness and substance addictions (including drug and alcohol) are recognized as disabilities under the Ontario *Human Rights Code*.

Employers have the duty to accommodate people living with mental illnesses or addictions up to the point of undue hardship.



How to Foster Mental Health in the Workplace

Recognize the risks to mental health from workplace practices

Things to think about:

- Job demands
- Whether employees feel they have a voice
- Rewarding employees
- Equity
- Support
- Workplace fairness
- Respect
- Growth and development

Recognize symptoms of mental illness, addiction, and poor mental health

The following are examples of symptoms of mental illness and/or poor mental health to be aware of, however it is important to note that each individual is different, and symptoms may manifest differently:

- Difficulty concentrating
- Distracted easily
- Excessive worrying
- Difficulty with making decisions
- Lack of interest or engagement
- Low mood
- Feeling overwhelmed
- Outward sadness- such as crying
- Fatigue and trouble sleeping – or oversleeping
- Disengagement, including talking less and avoiding socializing
- Difficulty controlling emotions
- Drinking more and/or taking drugs
- Irritability
- Aggression

Recognize symptoms of mental illness, addiction, and poor mental health

Additionally, symptoms of addictions to be aware of, according to the Canadian Centre for Addictions, include:

- Frequent lateness or absences at work
- Trouble focusing, especially in the morning, and making frequent errors
- Low concern for personal appearance and hygiene
- Appearance changes, including sudden weight loss, flushed skin, bloodshot eyes, or weight gain
- Overly defensive attitudes about anything related to their personal life or any sort of criticism related to work
- Drastic personality changes or shifts

Provide Training and Resources

- Accessible and mandatory training and resources on mental health for **all** employees that includes information on:
 - what to do in the event of a mental health crisis,
 - how to help colleagues and/or employees who may be facing mental illnesses or mental health concerns, etc. – with specialized information for leaders
- Embedded within training should be education on health and safety obligations, anti-racism and anti-discrimination
- Provide mental health resources and tools, including mental health support services in the community.
- Important resource: The National Standard in Mental Health, published by the Mental Health Commission of Canada

Encourage Positive Workplace Culture Practices

Work-life balance

Being open about
mental health
discussions

Clear commitment to
psychological health
and safety –
demonstrated from
leadership

Foster a supportive,
respectful, fair and
equitable work
environment

Support and
accommodate
employees

Seek employee and
colleagues' input and
opinions

Foster growth and
development
opportunities

Promote Positive Workplace Policies

Consider:

- Developing a long-term workplace mental health strategy that coincides with the overall business strategy and strategies/policies around diversity, equity and inclusion
- Working with Health and Safety reps and/or Joint Health and Safety Committee to regularly assess, identify and monitor psychological hazards in the workplace
- Offering flexible work arrangements
- Using data-driven approaches

Walk the Walk

- Treat colleagues and employees with respect, kindness, and care – including those with different ideas, values, beliefs, and backgrounds.
- Avoid bullying, harassment, discrimination, or acts of violence against others in the workplace. Speak out if encountering someone else doing so.
- Recognize and celebrate collective achievements in the workplace.
- Be accountable for all actions.
- Be aware of mental health resources and services available in the workplace and in the community.

Walk the Walk

- Regularly touch-base with colleagues and employees and check in on how they are doing – it's also important to check-in with yourself and how you are coping!
- Enforce and encourage workplace policies and practices that foster mental health, including the ones listed earlier in this guideline.
- Never assume what a person is going through – people's experiences with mental health, mental illness or addiction can differ widely.
- Remember the symptoms and signs of poor mental health, addiction or mental illness. Never jump to conclusions or assumptions and remember that poor mental health, addiction, or illness may be a cause of poor work performance.

Resources

List of resources are provided in the guideline (which can be accessed at: hrpa.ca/guidance), which include:

- [Mental Health Commission of Canada's National Standard for Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace](#)
- [Mental Health Commission of Canada's Implementation Resources](#)
- [CAMH's Mental Health Playbook for Business Leaders](#)
- [Mental Health Commission of Canada's Practical Toolkit to Help Employers Build an Inclusive Workplace](#)
- [Government of Canada's Psychological Health in the Workplace Guideline](#)
- [Psychologically Safe Leader Assessment](#)
- [Canadian Mental Health Association's Mental Health Meter](#)
- [Stress & Satisfaction Offset Score Self-Assessment](#)
- [Workplace Strategies for Mental Health](#)

What if I Need Additional Help?

- We have a dedicated email address for any questions about guidance issued: guidance@hrpa.ca.
- You can also email us with any feedback you may have on the Guideline.
- If you prefer reaching out to us by phone, you can schedule a phone call appointment online, or call us at: 1-800-387-1311 or 416-923-2324.

A Note About Other Guidance + Webinars

Visit www.hrpa.ca/guidance to access professional guidance and webinars, including:

- ✓ HRPAs modernized Code of Ethics and Rules of Professional Conduct
- ✓ Practice Guideline on Addressing Racism and Racial Discrimination
- ✓ Practice Standard on Conducting Workplace Investigations
- ✓ Practice Guideline on Social Media Use
- ✓ Practice Guideline on Terminations
- ✓ Practice Guideline on Fostering Mental Health in the Workplace

Questions



You can also submit questions
after this webinar by emailing
guidance@hrpa.ca



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A large, stylized graphic of the letters 'HR' dominates the center of the image. The 'H' is rendered in a vibrant red color, while the 'R' is in a solid black. Both letters are set against a light teal background that features large, rounded, overlapping shapes. The 'H' and 'R' are partially obscured by these teal shapes, creating a layered effect. The 'H' is positioned to the left of the 'R', and they are both centered vertically.

Thank You!