



A newsletter developed for you by the Healthy Workplace Committee

Let us know what you think about this issue, and what you'd like to read in future editions of the Healthy Workplace newsletter. Our intention is to provide information and inspiration that supports your mental, physical and nutritional well-being.

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WORKPLACE CULTURE

Bullying in the Workplace

“Disrespect at work is costing Canadian companies \$20,000 per employee per year in absenteeism, lost productivity, and stress-related illnesses,” says **Erica Pinsky**, an expert in the field of workplace behaviour, based in Vancouver. She says that, “Bullying makes people sick. It also leads to people quitting. Over 80 percent of people who are bullied quit. Workplace bullying is so prevalent that one in four employees is affected.”



Generally, bullying is any behaviour that humiliates, intimidates or demeans a person. Unlike harassment and discrimination, which is addressed legally in workplaces with legislation and policies, bullying is a behaviour that is less definable, and so not easily addressed. Bullying is rarely based on gender or race; it's generally about power. Those who are targets feel disrespected. Several studies have revealed that workplace bullying is more common than racial or sexual harassment.

Denise Koster, also an expert in the field who will be speaking to WSIB staff and management at Simcoe Place on October 9, notes that, “Bullying does not just affect the parties involved, but all organizational stakeholders. The organization is affected by low morale, increased absenteeism, lost efficiency, high staff turnover, reputational loss and law suits.

Bullying is a behaviour that is less definable than harassment, and not as easily addressed.

“Because bullying in the workplace is the one type of violence where the victim is standing alone,” says Denise, “victims of bullying may suffer from stress-related illnesses, blame themselves, doubt their self-worth, and bring their stress home to their families. Generally,” she says, “people put up with bullying behaviour for two years before they do anything about it. By then, their self esteem is damaged.”

Denise's advice: On an organizational level, establish an anti-bullying policy. On a personal level, support each other. She recommends that staff members seek support from their co-workers, their management, their Union, or their Employee Assistance Provider (EAP) – Shepell.fgi. Note also the Administrative Policy 60.01.02 currently in place on Workplace Violence, Discrimination and Harassment.

HAPPY
AUTUMN



Prepare thyself for raking leaves

Summer's over -- amazing but true. The good news is that autumn is here, and that means brisk walks in cool weather and fun times raking leaves. Here's a short primer to get you in shape.



Stretch your back before raking

- Place your hands slightly above your hips with your fingers on your back.
- Gently lean backwards a little bit. You should be bending from your waist.
- Hold this position for 15 seconds then relax. Repeat this stretch several times before you start raking and also during raking breaks.



Stretch your arms before raking

- Swing your left arm across our body, towards your right shoulder.
- Lift up your right arm and place it on the outside of your left arm, near your elbow.
- Gently pull inwards with your right arm. You should feel the stretch in your left arm and shoulder. Hold this position for 10 seconds. Repeat on opposite side.

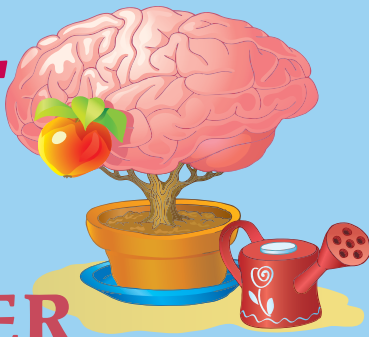
HEALTHY LIFESTYLE

Brain health: It's all about how we treat each other

According to Bill Wilkerson, founder of Canada's Business and Economic Roundtable on Mental Health, "Today's brain-based economy calls upon our cerebral skills – our minds – to do the heavy lifting." This is causing a shift in focus to the impact of "emotional hazards" and "brain-based illnesses" such as depression and anxiety on workers and the workplace. The brain-based economy is redefining workplace health and safety hazards as we currently know them. A workplace diet of constant interruptions from e-mail and phones, not enough time to get work done, and a struggle to maintain work-life balance can trigger mental distress. Senior managers, he contends, are now spending as much time on "people issues" as on financial matters in an effort to reshape organizational culture to reflect the new reality.

Wilkerson concludes with the belief that: "Culture is about how we treat each other. It's a way of living versus a way of talking." His advice for a mentally healthy workplace: **Live the Golden Rule.**

10 Ways to BOOST your BRAIN POWER



MEDITATE : Meditation is known to increase IQ, relieve stress, and promote higher levels of brain functioning.

DRAW A PICTURE : Drawing stimulates the right-hemisphere of the brain and inspires creativity.

EXERCISE : Long-term exercise has been proven to increase brain power and even create new neurons in the brain.

DEEP BREATHING : Deep breathing increases oxygen levels and blood-flow to the brain. 10-15 minutes of daily deep breathing can make a huge difference in the quality of your life and brain's functioning potential.

LAUGH : Laughter causes a natural release of the brain's endorphins — chemicals that drown out pain and increase overall well-being. Laughter is a well-known natural stress reducer.

ENGAGE IN DEBATE : A good, healthy debate strengthens the brain's ability to think quickly and apply intelligence to verbal situations.

LISTEN TO MUSIC : Studies have proven that listening to music strengthens the right-hemisphere of the brain and literally changes the structure. Those same studies have found that people who listen to music are generally smarter and have more emotional intelligence than those who don't.

SOLVE PUZZLES : Solving puzzles is a great way to stimulate your brain's ability to critically think and process information. Puzzles help integrate the brain; they require activity in the left-hemisphere to work with, and transfer information to, the right hemisphere's visual center.

BE EMPATHETIC : Being empathetic and trying to understand the emotions of others is a skill that your brain can learn. Being empathetic is definitely a powerful trait to have and allows your brain to relate to the emotions of others.

THINK POSITIVE : If you are currently very good at thinking positively, chances are good that you already have a more powerful brain than those "Negative Nellies." Take 10 minutes daily to think more positive and start noticing an improvement in thinking abilities and problem solving skills.

