

About PSR10: Engagement

What is Guarding Minds @ Work?

Guarding Minds @ Work (GM@W) is an evidence-based strategy that assists employers in protecting and promoting psychological safety and health in the workplace. GM@W provides a comprehensive set of resources employers can use to effectively address the impact of 12 psychosocial risk (PSR) factors known to have a powerful impact on organizational health, the health of individual employees, and the financial bottom line. The PSRs were identified by researchers from the Consortium for Organizational Mental Healthcare (COMH) in the SFU Faculty of Health Sciences on the basis of extensive research and a comprehensive review of empirical data related to national and international best practices. The determination of the factors also reflects existing and emerging Canadian case law and legislation.

What is PSR10 – Engagement?

Guarding Minds @ Work defines PSR10, engagement, as present in a work environment where employees enjoy and feel connected to their work, and where they feel motivated to do their job well. Employee engagement can be physical, emotional and/or cognitive.

Physical engagement is based on the amount of exertion an employee puts into his or her job. Physically engaged employees view work as a source of energy. Emotionally engaged employees have a positive job outlook and are passionate about their work. Cognitively engaged employees devote more attention to their work and be absorbed in their job. Whatever the source, engaged employees feel connected to their work because they can relate to, and are committed to, the overall success and mission of their company.

Engagement is similar to, but should not be mistaken for: job satisfaction, job involvement, organizational commitment, psychological empowerment, and intrinsic motivation.

Why is PSR10 – Engagement important?

Not only is employee engagement important for individual satisfaction and psychological health, but it also leads to positive outcomes for the organization. The three-year Total Return to Shareholders (TRS) for companies with engaged workforces can be double that of the average company. In addition to profitability, employee engagement is related to greater customer satisfaction, enhanced task performance, greater morale, greater motivation, and increased organizational citizenship behaviours (discretionary behaviours that are beneficial to the organization and are a matter of personal choice).

What happens when employees aren't engaged?

A recent poll in the U.S. found that the economic impact of disengaged workers is an estimated \$300 billion annually in productivity losses. Furthermore, disengaged workers can lead to greater economic impact from psychological and medical consequences. In addition to financial hardships, a workforce that is not engaged is more likely to demonstrate greater employee turnover, workplace deviance (in the form of withholding effort), counterproductive behaviour, and withdrawal behaviours.

How can I improve engagement?

Start by having the organization or work team conduct the Guarding Minds @ Work Assessment (Organizational Audit, Initial Scan and/or PSR-12 Employee Survey) and reviewing the resulting reports. If engagement is identified as an area of concern, refer to the relevant Action Tools for a practical strategy and evidence-based and effective suggestions that can improve engagement. It is also important to discuss the findings with concerned employees within the organization to gain a further understanding of the results and to obtain input and participation in determining useful corrective actions. Also, consider the information in the readings and resources identified below. Finally, refer back to the GM@W website on occasion for new ideas about how engagement can be enhanced.

Further information about engagement can be found at:

- Harter, J. K., Schmidt, F., & Keyes, C. L. M. (2003, November). Well-being in the workplace and its relationship to business outcomes: A review of the Gallup studies. http://www.arnoldbakker.com/fileLib/Engagement%20Gallup_Harter.pdf
- Gallup Management Journal. (2006). Unhappy workers are unhealthy too. <http://gmj.gallup.com/content/14545/gallup-study-unhappy-workers-unhealthy-too.aspx>
- Kahn, W. A. (1990). Psychological conditions of personal engagement and disengagement at work. *Academy of Management Journal*, 33, 692-724. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/256287?cookieSet=1>
- The Great-West Life Assurance Company. (2009). PSR10: Engagement. In Centre resources by risk factor. <http://www.gwlcentreformentalhealth.com/english/slides.asp?l1=3&l2=157&l3=159&l4=170&d=159&scroll=10>
- Macey, W. H., & Schneider, B. (2008). The meaning of employee engagement. *Industrial and Organizational Psychology*, 1, 3-30. <http://www.learnership.co.uk/archive/29.pdf>
- Corace, C. (2007). Engagement: Enrolling the quiet majority. *Organization Development Journal*, 25(2), 171-175. <http://web.ebscohost.com/ehost/pdf?vid=11&hid=103&sid=f7fc57f5-4ede-4032-9198fb520bc15da1%40sessionmgr13>
- Rich, B. L. (2007). Job engagement: Construct validation and relationships with job satisfaction, job involvement and intrinsic motivation. (Doctoral dissertation, University of Florida). <http://proquest.umi.com/pqdweb?index=1&did=1216734441&SrchMode=1&sid=1&Fmt=14&VInst=PROD&VType=PQD&RQT=309&VName=PQD&TS=1262494041&clientid=6993>
- Trahant, B. (2007, Spring). Debunking five myths concerning employee engagement. *Public Manager*, 36(1), 53-59. <http://proquest.umi.com/pqdlink?vinst=PROD&fmt=6&startpage=-1&ver=1&clientid=6993&vname=PQD&RQT=309&did=1269830681&exp=01-01-2015&scaling=FULL&vtype=PQD&rqt=309&TS=1262494514&clientid=6993>

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