



**CITY OF HAMILTON**  
**CITY MANAGER'S OFFICE**  
**Human Resources Division**

<b>TO:</b>	Chair and Members Audit, Finance and Administration Committee
<b>COMMITTEE DATE:</b>	May 16, 2019
<b>SUBJECT/REPORT NO:</b>	Workplace Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy (2019-2021) (HUR19010) (City Wide)
<b>WARD(S) AFFECTED:</b>	City Wide
<b>PREPARED BY:</b>	Gord Muise (905) 546-2424 Ext. 2655 David Lindeman (905) 546-2424 Ext. 5657 Miri Freimanis (905) 546-2424 Ext. 7141
<b>SUBMITTED BY:</b>  <b>SIGNATURE:</b>	Lora Fontana Executive Director Human Resources

**RECOMMENDATION(S)**

- (a) That staff be directed to execute the Workplace Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy (2019-2021) that continues to foster, promote and support overall health and wellbeing, encourage dialogue and remove stigma associated with mental illness; and
- (b) That staff report back to the Audit, Finance and Administration Committee on the progress made on implementing the strategy on a periodic basis.

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Human Resources continues to identify workplace mental health and wellbeing as a key priority for the City. It is fundamental to overall good mental health, ensuring that the workplace has an important role to play in maintaining and promoting good mental health and wellness.

In 2016, Council and Senior Leadership Team (SLT) approved a Workplace Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2016-2018. The strategy set out specific objectives for the organization and included the establishment of a Workplace Mental Health Action Committee (MHAC) to advise on the implementation of the strategy and make recommendations to improve our policies and programs.

Recently, SLT approved 14 recommendations that were developed and provided by the MHAC. As a result, the following actions will be taken over the next three years as part of the Workplace Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy (2019-2021):

- Senior Leadership Team to complete either The Working Mind People Leader training or the Mental Health@Work certificate program.
- Mental health and wellbeing considerations will be incorporated into change management training and processes. Sufficient resources will be allocated to mitigate mental health hazards associated with workplace changes.
- Mental health promotion and stigma reduction campaigns to be held annually in May and October, with SLT visible participation.
- Undertake a review of relevant previous and future questions that ensure key indicators are incorporated into the questions within Our People Survey (OPS) in 2020.
- Human Resources to review the non-union benefit package and consider recommending more flexibility in choosing benefits that will improve access to psychological and other services promoting optimal mental health.
- SLT to set targets to train more employees in The Working Mind or Road to Mental Readiness training programs.
- Human Resources to examine current recruitment, job design and return-to-work processes and update where applicable to include cognitive demands.
- Promote the Manager Mental Health Toolkit through Howi and other platforms.
- Human Resources to begin tracking nature of illness and injury when available, for short-term sick absences using current disability management software.
- Replace the existing Zero Tolerance Program with a new program targeting preventing and responding to bad behaviour, harassment and violence against staff and users of city services i.e. (RZone).
- Develop and distribute checklists that staff can use to measure their individual and group respectfulness and civility in order to build better working relationships on their teams.
- Human Resources to identify best practices by benchmarking with other municipalities through established networks like the Single-Tier Municipal Group and the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO).

- Corporate Communications to include workplace mental health in its development of improved communication channels to ensure that key mental health and wellbeing resources are known and easy to find.
- MHAC to remain in place and meet quarterly.
- Mental health and wellness champions to be recruited and supported on a regular basis.

**Alternatives for Consideration – Not Applicable**

**FINANCIAL – STAFFING – LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

Financial: Covered by existing operating budgets

Staffing: Not Applicable

Legal: Ongoing compliance with workplace harassment and violence prevention obligations under the *Occupational Health & Safety Act* and *Ontario Human Rights Code*.

**HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

On May 19, 2016 Human Resources presented to the Audit, Finance and Administration Committee (AF&A) the Workplace Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy (2016-2018) which was subsequently supported at Council on May 25, 2016 (HUR16006 Workplace Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy).

The goals of the Workplace Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy (2016-2018) were to:

1. Raise awareness of mental health and wellbeing and reduce stigma associated with mental illness
2. Align the strategy with our People and Performance Plan
3. Provide People Leaders with the skills, knowledge, tools and supports they need to create a workplace that supports positive mental health and wellbeing
4. Provide employees with the skills, knowledge, tools and supports they need to improve personal resilience and achieve optimal mental health and wellbeing
5. Create a sustainability plan

To assist in our efforts to create a workplace that promotes optimal mental health and wellbeing, we adopted the P6 framework from the *Psychological Health and Safety: An Action Guide for Employers (2012)*. This guide, created by the Mental Health Commission of Canada, identifies actions an employer can take to enhance and protect employee psychological health and safety. The actions are evidence-based, practical and flexible.

## **P6 Framework**

<b>Policy</b>
Commitment by organizational leadership to enhance psychological health and safety through workplace interventions
<b>Planning</b>
Determination of key psychological health indicators across the organization, selection of actions, and specification of objectives.
<b>Promotion</b>
Actions taken to promote the general psychological health of the workforce.
<b>Prevention</b>
Actions taken to prevent the occurrence of significant psychological problems or mental disorders – may occur at the primary, secondary or tertiary level.
<b>Process</b>
Measure short - and longer - term outcomes
<b>Persistence</b>
Sustainment of effective actions in a process of continuous improvement.

## **POLICY IMPLICATIONS AND LEGISLATED REQUIREMENTS**

None

## **RELEVANT CONSULTATION**

- Senior Leadership Team
- Workplace Mental Health Action Committee

## **ANALYSIS AND RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION(S)**

### **Mental Health & Wellbeing Strategy (2016 – 2018) Accomplishments:**

**Objective:** Consolidate and analyze the employee data

- Information was gathered from multiple sources, including prescription benefits, employee and family assistance program, short-term and long-term disability claims, worker's compensation claims and resource usage, (see Organizational Health Evaluation Report (HUR19002)).

**Objective:** Establish an advisory committee on Workplace Mental Health and Wellbeing comprised of stakeholders from across the organization including departmental and union leadership as well as Human Resources.

- Sponsored by the Executive Director, Human Resources, a multi-stakeholder Workplace Mental Health Action Committee (MHAC) was established in 2017. Two sub-committees were struck for the development of a stigma reduction campaign and identifying resources to support People Leaders. The committee developed the Shifting Minds anti-stigma awareness campaign, a tool kit on workplace mental health resources for People Leaders and completed a gap analysis of our practices against the national standard for workplace psychological safety. The analyses resulted in a list of recommendations presented and subsequently endorsed by SLT.

**Objective:** Establish a communication strategy to reach all employees.

- Awareness of available resources was facilitated through: distribution of new wellness brochures highlighting available resources for employees and supervisors, e-mail blasts, monthly wellness newsletters, in-person outreach sessions delivered by the Workplace Wellness Specialist at team meetings and other departmental events, intranet postings on eNet and Howi, showcasing service providers at Extended Management Team and Safety and Health Week events and through the online video series, Shifting Minds.

**Objective:** Promote our Employee and Family Assistance Program (EFAP) and mental health supports.

- As per the previous objective, multiple avenues were used to raise awareness and increase the use of EFAP services. As a result, utilization rate rose slightly from 2016 to 2018.

**Objective:** Provide education for our People Leaders on creating a psychologically safe and healthy workplace. This was achieved through the following initiatives:

**a) Mental Health@Work Certificate Training for Leaders**

This certificate program was arranged through Queen's University and Mourneau Shepell and aligns with the National Standard for Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace. The program helps People Leaders better understand mental illness and poor mental health, the stigma surrounding it and its effect on individuals and the workplace. Its primary objective is to increase employees' comfort level in discussing mental illness and give them the skills to improve their mental health and support each other. To date, 240 People Leaders across the organization have been certified through the program. Another 75 to 100 will be certified annually in the coming years.

**b) The Working Mind**

This program was developed by the Mental Health Commission of Canada and helps all employees in the workplace better understand mental illness and poor mental health, the stigma surrounding it and its effect on individuals and the workplace. There are two sessions in the program: one for employees without direct reports and one for People Leaders. To date, 200 People Leaders and 595 frontline staff have received the training.

**c) Manager's Workplace Mental Health Toolkit**

The Workplace Mental Health Action Committee (MHAC) also developed a tool kit for People Leaders that identifies available resources to help them deal with situations in the workplace that could contribute to stress and poor performance. The topics include:

- Workplace Stress
- Relationship Building
- Communication (difficult conversations, discussing sensitive topics)
- Managing workload, priorities, poor performance
- Bullying (co-worker)
- Interpersonal Conflict (defusing situations)

**Objective:** Provide targeted workshops for our employees based on needs identified through Return to Work Services and our EFAP provider.

- 42 workshops were conducted by our EFAP provider Homewood Health.
- Chronic Pain Self-Management Workshops for Employees were delivered jointly by the Human Resources Occupational Health Nurse (OHN) and the Healthy Workplace Specialist to employees who live with chronic or ongoing pain. The workshop provides skills to improve quality of life on and off the job.

**Objective:** Assess our efforts at protecting our first-responders from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and supporting employees in accessing treatment and make improvements, as required

- Hamilton Paramedic Services (HPS) management and worker representatives jointly developed a peer-to-peer critical incident support team and program. The team will respond quickly to support paramedics who have been exposed to traumatic events or ongoing work-related stress. Paramedics were also provided with a presentation on the multiple mental health supports available through employer sponsored programs and community resources.
- The Fire Department will begin delivering the Mental Health Commission of Canada's Road to Mental Readiness workplace mental health training program to Firefighters this year.
- Paramedics and Firefighters are also provided with access to psychological supports through enhancements to the EFAP and other services.

**Objective:** Provide educational resources for all employees that promote good mental health and remove the stigma of mental illness

#### **d) Anti-Stigma Campaign – Shifting Minds**

The City of Hamilton's Workplace Mental Health Action Committee (MHAC) was formed as part of the City's Mental Health and Well Being Strategy and aims to help reduce the stigma surrounding mental health by encouraging conversations and self-reflections in the workplace. There is a focus on how employees think about themselves and others and how employees seek required support. The campaign includes videos that cover:

- Respect
- Rethink
- Reconnect
- Renew
- Resources



#### **e) LifeSpeak On Demand**

LifeSpeak On Demand is an expert-led online streaming video resource dealing with a wide variety of health, family, eldercare, personal growth and development, and work-life balance topics. Employees and their families are able to access the support they need to overcome hurdles and accomplish goals. The program was expanded to now include all topics in the LifeSpeak library.

**f) Non-violence Crisis Intervention Training**

Non-violence Crisis Intervention® (NVCi) classroom training focuses on prevention of violence in the workplace and offers proven strategies for safely defusing anxious, hostile, or violent behaviour at the earliest possible stage. It provides employees with a safe way to resolve situations when confronted by anxious, hostile or violent behaviour, while still protecting the important relationships with those in their care.

**Objective:** Monitor the outcomes of our programs provided to our employees.

- Feedback on effectiveness and satisfaction was gathered from all training programs. Our EFAP provider also undertakes quality assurance audits of its services. Overall satisfaction with our EFAP provider's counselling and Life Smart Coaching services is about 85%.

**Objective:** Get a measure of the prevalence of employees who are dealing with mental health issues and to monitor their perception of the City's support in creating a psychologically healthy and safe workplace; ask employees a series of evidence-based questions as part of the City's organizational culture survey.

- The Our People Survey (OPS) included Health, Safety and Wellness as one of the key measurement areas. Questions in this section sought to understand engagement drivers related to an employee's health and wellness with additional questions included on psychological wellness built on the National Standard of Canada for Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace. Questions covered include:
  - Supervisor Support
  - Workload Manageability
  - Fair Distribution of Workload
  - Inappropriate Behaviors Not Tolerated
  - Importance of Mental Health

Overall, the City had positive results in the areas related Health, Safety and Wellness. The index average was 71.8% for Psychological Health. The results indicate that the majority of respondents to the survey feel positive about Health, Safety and Wellness at the City of Hamilton.

- Information was also gleaned from our long-term disability provider and WSIB experience to identify the extent of mental illness as a driver for these absences.
  - In 2016, mental health diagnoses accounted for 39% of LTD claims received. This percentage was reduced to 27% of all claims in 2018.
  - Work-related WSIB lost time claims for mental health rose from 4.5% of all lost time claims in 2016 to 7% in 2018.



## **Workplace Mental Health Action Committee (MHAC) Recommendations**

The City of Hamilton's Mental Health Advisory Committee (MHAC) was established to guide the implementation and evaluation of the Workplace Mental Health Strategy. The 24 members on the committee are comprised of leadership from across the organization including union representatives. The committee is accountable to the Senior Leadership Team through sponsorship from the Executive Director of Human Resources.

The MHAC met twelve times in 2017/2018, spending most of their efforts on comparing City programs against the national standard on psychological health and safety in the workplace as well as creating the anti-stigma campaign (Shifting Minds) and a toolkit for People Leaders.

Based on the findings of the examination, MHAC recommended general considerations for the improvement of our mental health and wellbeing programming:

1. Increase senior leadership commitment and visibility through participation in training programs and communication campaigns.
2. Ensure employee mental health and wellbeing continues to be a key consideration in decision making including technology changes, reorganization of work, staff movement and allocation of work.
3. Continue to reduce the stigma associated with mental illness and promote good mental health through campaigns like Shifting Minds, promote staff events such as Mental Health Week in May and Mental Health Illness Awareness Week in October each year.
4. Ensure that Our People Survey (OPS) continues to include examination of key indicators related to mental health and wellbeing amongst staff.
5. Consider providing increased access to psychological health services by redistributing employee benefit resources.
6. Continue requiring mental health training for all supervisors and consider extending the requirement to all staff through programs like The Working Mind.
7. Include examination of cognitive demands for job tasks when developing job descriptions, job postings and return-to-work planning.
8. Ensure that the Manager's toolkit developed by the MHAC is available to all supervisors and updated periodically.
9. Measure the prevalence of mental health issues by tracking nature of illness or injury for short-term disability absences.

10. Ensure programs and policies for employees and the public are in place that will help create supportive, respectful and civil workplaces by identifying bad behavior, addressing it in a timely and effective manner, as well as promoting positive behaviours.
11. Create tools that measure individual and group respectfulness and civility to build better working relationships.
12. Benchmark our programs with other employers.
13. Improve communications channels so that employees are provided with timely information that affects their work to improve engagement, increase connection between groups and relieve stress associated with lack of awareness of critical information.
14. Continue the work of the MHAC to advise on the Workplace Mental Health Strategy 2019-2021 and support mental health champions in the workplace.

### **Specific Actions for 2019- 2021 (aligned to MHAC recommendations)**

In response to the recommendations from MHAC, the following actions will be taken over the next three years:

- Senior Leadership Team (SLT) to complete either The Working Mind people leader training or Mental Health@Work certificate program.
- Mental health and wellbeing considerations will be incorporated into change management training and processes, including sufficient resources allocated to mitigate mental health hazards associated with workplace change.
- Mental health promotion and stigma reduction campaigns to be held annually in May and October, with visible SLT participation.
- Undertake a review of relevant previous and future questions that ensure that key indicators are incorporated into the questions within the OPS in 2020.
- Human Resources to review the non-union benefit package and consider adding more flexibility in choosing benefits that will improve access to psychological and other services promoting positive mental health.
- SLT to set targets to train more employees in The Working Mind or Road to Mental Readiness training programs.
- Human Resources to examine current recruitment, job design and return-to-work processes and update them to include cognitive demands.
- Promote the Manager Mental Health Toolkit through Howi and other platforms.
- Human Resources to begin tracking nature of illness and injury, as appropriate, for short-term sick absences using current disability management software.

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OUR Vision: To be the best place to raise a child and age successfully.

OUR Mission: To provide high quality cost conscious public services that contribute to a healthy, safe and prosperous community, in a sustainable manner.

OUR Culture: Collective Ownership, Steadfast Integrity, Courageous Change, Sensational Service, Engaged Empowered Employees.

- Replace the existing Zero Tolerance Program with a new program targeting preventing and responding to bad behaviour, harassment and violence against staff and users of city services i.e. (RZone).
- Develop and distribute checklists that staff can use to measure their individual and group respectfulness and civility in order to build better working relationships on their teams.
- Human Resources to identify best practices by benchmarking with other municipalities through established networks like the Single-Tier Municipal Group and Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO).
- Corporate Communications to include workplace mental health in its development of improved communication channels to ensure that key mental health and wellbeing resources are known and easy to find.
- MHAC to remain in place and meet quarterly, with continued sponsorship from the Executive Director of Human Resources.
- Mental health and wellness champions to be recruited and supported.

## **ALTERNATIVES FOR CONSIDERATION**

Not applicable

## **ALIGNMENT TO THE 2016 – 2025 STRATEGIC PLAN**

### **Our People and Performance**

Hamiltonians have a high level of trust and confidence in their City government.

## **APPENDICES AND SCHEDULES ATTACHED**