About PF2: Organizational Culture

What are Psychosocial Factors?

Psychosocial factors are elements that impact employees' psychological responses to work and work conditions, potentially causing psychological health problems. Psychosocial factors include the way work is carried out (deadlines, workload, work methods) and the context in which work occurs (including relationships and interactions with managers and supervisors, colleagues and coworkers, and clients or customers).

What is PF2: Organizational Culture?

GM@W defines PF2: Organizational Culture as the degree to which a work environment is characterized by trust, honesty, and fairness. In general, organizational culture has been described as "a pattern of basic assumptions invented, discovered, or developed by a given group." These assumptions are a mix of values, beliefs, meanings and expectations that group members hold in common and that they use as behavioural and problem-solving cues. The critical task is to determine which of these assumptions enhance the psychological health and safety of the workplace and the workforce.

Why is Organizational Culture important?

Organizational trust is imperative for any positive and productive social processes within any workplace. Trust is a predictor of cooperative behaviour, organizational citizenship behaviours, organizational commitment, and employee loyalty, all of which in turn help retain and attract employees. When an organization has a health-focused culture, employee well-being, job satisfaction and organizational commitment are all enhanced. A work culture with social support also enhances employee well-being and can provide a positive environment for employees who may be experiencing psychological conditions such as depression and anxiety.

What happens when a workplace does not have good organizational culture?

Culture 'sets the tone' for an organization; if that culture is negative it can undermine the effectiveness of the best programs, policies and services intended to support the workforce. An unhealthy culture creates more stress in the workplace, which lowers employee well-being. If an organization has a culture of 'profit at all costs' and constant chaotic urgency, it can create an environment in which burnout is the norm.

How can Organizational Culture be improved?

Start by conducting the GM@W Organizational Review and/or the GM@W Survey and reviewing the results. If **Organizational Culture** is identified as an area of concern or relative strength, refer to the GM@W Action Resources for a practical strategy and evidence-based and effective suggested actions that can improve **Organizational Culture**. It is also important to discuss the findings with employees to gain a further understanding of the results and to obtain input into possible interventions. Furthermore, it is important to evaluate the undertaken interventions over time to ensure they are effective and to take corrective action where needed. Consider reviewing the resources below. Finally, refer back to the GM@W website on occasion for new ideas about how **Organizational Culture** can be enhanced.

Further information about Organizational Culture:

- Canadian Psychiatric Research Foundation. (2007). When Something's Wrong: Strategies for the Workplace. In *Education & Awareness*. Retrieved from http://cprf.ca/education/workplace.html

- Findler, L., Wind, L., & Mor Barak, M. E. (2007). The challenge of workforce management in a global society: Modeling the relationship between diversity, inclusion, organizational culture, and employee well-being, job satisfaction and organizational commitment. *Administration in Social Work, 31*(3), 63-94. doi: 10.1300/J147v31n03_05

- Gilbert, M. & Bilsker, D. (2012). *Psychological Health and Safety: An Action Guide for Employers*. Retrieved from http://www.mentalhealthcommission.ca/SiteCollectionDocuments/Workforce/Workforce_Employers_Guide_ENG.pdf

- Härtel, C. (2008). How to build a healthy emotional culture and avoid a toxic culture. In N. M. Ashkanasy & C. L. Cooper (Eds.), *Research companion to emotion in organizations* (pp. 575-588). Northampton, MA: Edward Elgar Publishing.

- Hodge, B.J., & Anthony, W. P. (1988). *Organizational theory*. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

- Lansisalmi, H., Peiro, J., & Kivimaki, M. (2000). Collective stress and coping in the context of organizational culture. *European Journal of Work & Organizational Psychology, 9*(4), 527-559. doi: 10.1080/13594320050203120

- Schein, E. (1990). Organizational culture. *American Psychologist, 45*(2), 109-119. Retrieved from http://www.machon-adler.co.il/readers/reader56.pdf

- The Great-West Life Assurance Company. (2012). PF2: Organizational Culture. In *Centre Resources by GM@W Factor* and *On the Agenda*. Retrieved from http://www.workplacestrategiesformentalhealth.com

- The Health Communication Unit. (2009). *Organizational culture: From assessment to action*. Retrieved from http://www.thcu.ca/Workplace/pdf/2009_03_10_Organizational_Culture.pdf

- Zhang, A., Tsui, A., Song, L., Li, C., & Jia, L. (2008). How do I trust thee? The employee-organization relationship, supervisor support, and middle manager trust in the organization. *Human Resource Management, 47*(1), 111-132. doi: 10.1002/hrm.20200

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