



SKLAR WILTON
& ASSOCIATES

TRUST AS THE FOUNDATION FOR MENTALLY HEALTHY WORKPLACES:

A GUIDE FOR EMPLOYERS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	3
The Need for Action	4
The Connection between Workplace Trust and Mental Wellness	5
Key Components of Mentally Healthy Workplaces	6
The Role of Employers	7
Best Practices for Creating a Mentally Healthy Workplace	7
The Road Ahead	14
Appendix	15
• Mental Wellness Index	15
• Sources	16

Partnering to Create Mentally Healthy Workplaces



Great Place to Work® (GPTW) is the global authority on high-trust, high-performance workplace cultures. Through proprietary assessment tools, advisory services, and certification programs, GPTW recognizes the world's Best Workplaces™ in a series of national lists including those published by The Globe & Mail (Canada) and Fortune magazine (USA). Great Place to Work® provides the benchmarks, framework, and expertise needed to create, sustain, and recognize outstanding workplace cultures. Visit us at www.greatplacetowork.ca or find us on Twitter at @GPTW_Canada.



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Sklar Wilton & Associates is a brand and retail consultancy that has worked for more than 30 years with some of Canada's most iconic brands to help them unlock growth and build stronger brands. SW&A was named a Best Workplace in Canada in 2017, 2018, and 2019 by the Great Place To Work® Institute. SW&A was also recognized as the number one Employee Recommended Workplace among private small businesses by the Globe and Mail and Morneau Shepell in 2017 and 2019. In memory of their founder, Luke Sklar, SW&A launched Headway, an initiative to help companies across Canada embrace best practices for mental health in the workplace. For more information about Headway, please email Headway@SklarWilton.com or join the LinkedIn group, <https://www.linkedin.com/groups/8768946/>.

INTRODUCTION

Workplace mental health is on the corporate agenda, and for good reason. The business costs of mental illness in Canada exceed fifty billion dollars a year. The social costs of mental illness are immeasurable. In today's economy, which is based on human qualities such as connectivity, innovation and collaboration, business leaders must create workplaces that honour and respect our human strengths and vulnerabilities.

This employer guide provides a new way of thinking about workplace mental wellness in a more integrated and holistic way. Our current research suggests that trusting relationships at work lay the foundation for mentally healthy workplaces, and there is no aspect of the workplace that is unaffected by trust. We have examined the key relationships between workplace trust and mental wellness, and based on this research, have provided concrete tips for creating more trusting relationships at work.

Our Research Methodology

The primary source of data used for this research is Great Place to Work's Trust Index® Employee Survey. Each year, Great Place to Work surveys over 10 million employees from 6 thousand organizations in 60 countries, making it the world's largest annual workplace study. For this project, Great Place to Work Canada examined over 66,000 Canadian employee surveys completed in 2018, plus aggregate data from over 300 participating Canadian organizations on the policies and people practices that support their workplace culture.

+10 MILLION
EMPLOYEES SURVEYED



FROM 6 THOUSAND ORGANIZATIONS IN
60 COUNTRIES

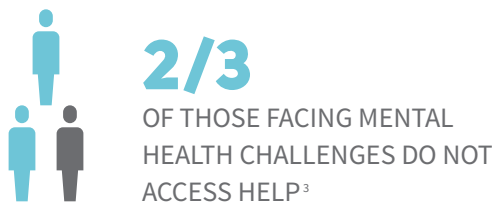


EXAMINED OVER 66,000
CANADIAN EMPLOYEE SURVEYS



OVER 300
PARTICIPATING CANADIAN ORGANIZATIONS

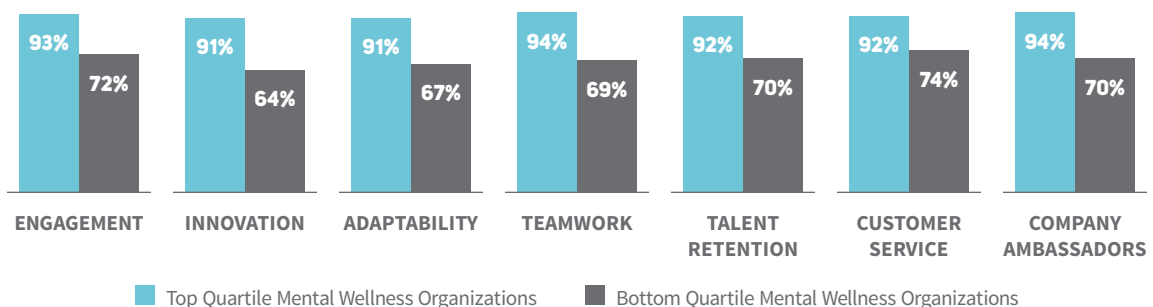
THE NEED FOR ACTION



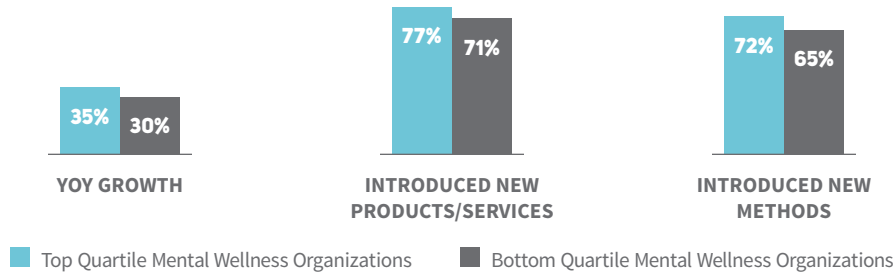
Better for People. Better for Business.

Great Place to Work research shows that organizations with strong mental wellness cultures not only have happier, healthier employees; they also experience numerous business benefits including greater employee engagement, stronger teams and a climate that fosters innovation and adaptability, which translates into better customer service and a stronger brand.

Outcomes of a Mentally Healthy Workplace – Trust Index Results



This delivers concrete benefits for organizations. Top quartile Mental Wellness organizations grow faster than their peers, and have higher rates of innovation (introduction of new products, services and methods) than bottom quartile Mental Wellness organizations.



THE CONNECTION BETWEEN WORKPLACE TRUST AND MENTAL WELLNESS

Over two decades of research confirms that workplace trust is the foundation for quality work and performance excellence. Employees who trust their managers give their best freely, and their extra effort goes right to the company’s bottom line. Managers who trust their employees allow innovative ideas to bubble up from all levels of the company. Employees who trust each other report a sense of camaraderie and even the feeling of being part of a family. Together they deliver far more than the sum of their individual efforts.

New research⁸ shows that workplace trust is also the foundation for mental wellness at work. When people experience a high level of workplace trust, they are much more likely to experience a workplace that is mentally healthy. And the reverse is also true – the absence of workplace trust makes it virtually impossible to experience mental wellness at work.

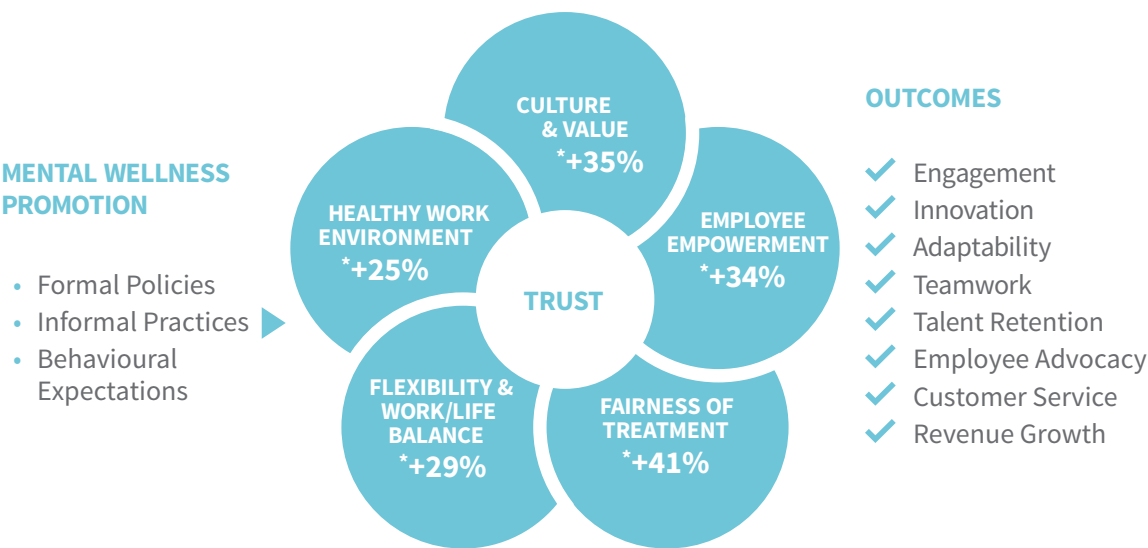
EMPLOYEES WORKING IN HIGH TRUST WORKPLACES EXPERIENCE
32% HIGHER LEVELS OF MENTAL WELLNESS



KEY COMPONENTS OF MENTALLY HEALTHY WORKPLACES

The Mental Wellness Framework shows that when organizations have a strong foundation of trust supported by formal policies, informal practices and behavioral expectations that specifically foster mental wellness, the result is a mentally healthy, high trust workplace that empowers employees to do their best work.

MENTAL WELLNESS FRAMEWORK



*Employee Trust Index Scores for Top Quartile Mental Wellness Organizations versus Bottom Quartile Mental Wellness Organizations.

Full description of mental wellness components in appendix.

THE ROLE OF EMPLOYERS

It is clear that mental health issues have a significant impact on the workplace. What is not so clear is what employers can or should do to support employees who are struggling. We suggest taking a three-pronged approach. First and foremost, employers have a legal responsibility to *do no harm* to the mental health of employees by maintaining a workplace which is free from bullying and harassment. Second, mental illness is a serious condition that requires treatment and support from trained mental health professionals, and employers play a key role in providing for and connecting employees with the supports and treatments needed. Third, employers are encouraged to take this to the next level by fostering a strong mental wellness culture at work, which is the focus of the next section.

BEST PRACTICES FOR CREATING A MENTALLY HEALTHY WORKPLACE

1. Leadership Sets the Tone

As with any other workplace initiative, creating a mentally healthy workplace needs to start at the top. When executives openly embody mental wellness practices and participate in company wellness initiatives, it encourages team members to follow suit. Providing essential training to senior and mid-level managers ensures they have the skills needed to identify team members experiencing mental health issues and connect them with the supports they need.

It is also leadership's responsibility to encourage and role model candid conversations to reduce the stigma that prevents so many from speaking up. Stigma about mental health issues is the number one reason people who need help don't seek it. Leaders need to talk openly about mental health challenges and create forums that bring employees into the mental health conversation and equip them with tools to manage stress and the everyday challenges of life.

People who feel their executives embody the best characteristics of their organization are **228% MORE LIKELY** to agree their workplace is psychologically and emotionally healthy

People who believe that management shows a sincere interest in them as a person are **135% MORE LIKELY** to agree their workplace is psychologically and emotionally healthy

ATB Financial has partnered with the Mental Health Commission of Canada to deliver training to leaders on the mental health continuum. The aim of this is to help leaders identify signs of mental distress in team members and give them the knowledge and confidence to address it. The ultimate goal is to create an environment where team members are comfortable speaking about mental health struggles and feel safe to seek help while being fully backed by their leader.

Resolver is committed to engaging employees in the mental health conversation. This is a deeply personal area for them, as last year, an employee of theirs lost his battle with mental health and took his life. To honor his memory, they decided to highlight how any workplace can help support positive mental health. They hold regular mental health awareness days that include yoga and mindfulness workshops. They also created a Positivity Board in the common area for Resolverites to write words of encouragement, and to share useful tools for positive mental health.

Admiral Insurance Canada launched a new information board for staff with resources on a wide range of mental health topics, including tactics for maintaining healthy relationships, effective budgeting and financial decisions, and dealing with bullying. The topic changes monthly and each new display includes takeaway booklets with useful information and subject-specific links.

2. Create a Culture of Connection

Fostering closer relationships at work leads to stronger teams and happier employees. When employees feel they can bring their full, unique selves to the workplace, it creates a sense of safety and camaraderie.

People who feel they can be themselves at work are 218% MORE LIKELY to agree their workplace is psychologically and emotionally healthy	People who believe their workplace is friendly are 281% MORE LIKELY to agree their workplace is psychologically and emotionally healthy
<p><i>“People care at AppCentrica. They care about doing great work, care about doing interesting work, care about our customers, care about each other. The numerous perks are nice, but the people and the commitment to continually improve make this a Great Place to Work.”</i></p> <p>–AppCentrica Employee</p>	

Traction on Demand has an Office Happiness Team, whose role is to recognize when employees need support from their colleagues. The caring individuals that make up the team find creative ways to offer support, drawing from their self-managed budget.

When employees have gone through an unusually stressful or busy period either personally or at work, **Gardiner Roberts LLP** send flowers to let them know that the firm is sensitive to their particular situation or circumstance.

3. Foster Strong Communication

Clear and direct two-way communication is the cornerstone of mentally healthy workplaces. When people mean what they say, and say what they mean, respectfully and in real-time, employees know where they stand, which reduces the stress associated with second-guessing.

The key is clarity around expectations coupled with open and honest feedback that's shared across all levels of the organization.

People who feel that management makes its expectations clear are **159% MORE LIKELY** to agree their workplace is psychologically and emotionally healthy

To enhance communication skills and mutual understanding within the company, **The PEER Group** has rolled out DiSC Profile training to all staff. The aim of the training is to increase awareness of how employees respond to conflict, what motivates them, what causes them stress and their problem-solving styles, thus improving communication and teamwork throughout the organization.

The Conflict Lounge at **SAP Canada** is available to employees and managers globally. The Lounge offers employees individual, five-minute, one-on-one sessions with a conflict counsellor, either in-person or virtually. These sessions allow employees to speak in a confidential and quiet setting with a trained conflict expert about their specific workplace situation.

4. Instill Fairness

Employee perceptions of fairness at work are strongly connected with workplace mental health. Things like favouritism, unfair promotion or recognition practices and unequal face time with leaders can all have a negative impact on employee mental wellness. In a fair and inclusive workplace, leaders welcome and expect great things from all their employees, regardless of their background, position or personal characteristics.

People who believe they are treated as a full member regardless of their position are **231% MORE LIKELY** to agree their workplace is psychologically and emotionally healthy

People who believe their organization has a fair appeals process are **169% MORE LIKELY** to agree their workplace is psychologically and emotionally healthy

G Adventures recognizes that there are groups of individuals that inherently don't receive the same opportunities for growth and mentorship. To address this, they have introduced the Guidance Mentorship Program, which calls out their 'like me' biases and matches individuals with mentors based solely on development goals and coaching strengths.

Equal pay for equal work is not just a slogan at **Salesforce**. Three years ago, they made a commitment to ensure pay equality. Since then, they've conducted three global equal pay assessments, which has resulted in the company spending \$8.7 million to address unexplained differences in pay between men and women and across race and ethnicity.

5. Empower Employees to Do Their Best Work

Giving employees some say in how, when and where work gets done shows that the organization recognizes them as people with lives outside of work. Setting clear expectations and equipping employees with the tools and resources they need to get the job done sets employees up for maximum contribution and impact.

People who feel they are encouraged to balance their work and personal lives are **169% more likely** to agree their workplace is psychologically and emotionally healthy

FLEXIBLE SCHEDULES
94% OF TOP QUARTILE Mental Wellness Organizations offer employees flexibility in scheduling their work hours

TELECOMMUTING
92% TOP QUARTILE Mental Wellness Organizations allow employees to work-from-home or telecommute on a regular or as-needed basis

Kronos is a company that cares deeply about its people and their open paid time off policy is their way of showing this deep care and trust. Employees are free to use their time any way they need to in order to strike maximum work-life harmony.

For **Habanero**, the term work-life balance implies that someone is always sacrificing one part of their life for another - a zero-sum game. Bringing life to work is about respecting how passion works. Habanero strongly believes that their commitment to Habs is to help them have amazing lives, not just amazing work lives. The days when an organization's commitment to their people can start at 9:00 am and end at 5:00 pm are over.

6. Set an Annual Budget

Though mental wellness initiatives need not be expensive, assigning a budget demonstrates to employees a serious commitment to their mental health and well-being. Formal programs that support mental wellness as strongly as physical wellness are becoming more common as an increasing number of organizations realize the return on this investment.

83% OF TOP QUARTILE Mental Wellness Organizations offer workplace wellness or health promotion programs

55% OF TOP QUARTILE Mental Wellness Organizations offer subsidized fitness programs

“Our commitment to health and wellness is outstanding. Our company hosts 3 fitness classes weekly, a body sculpting class, yoga and a bootcamp right at our head office. It’s a great way to work out at the end of the day.”

–Lakeside Process Controls Employee

Intuit offers all employees an annual \$1000 Well-Being for Life Incentive, which reimburses them for expenses related to their physical, emotional and financial well-being, including massages, meditation, sports equipment, camping gear, financial advising services, house cleaning services and more.

SAS recently hosted their first Healthy Workplace Month. Each week employees received a newsletter of activities, including a wellness challenge to take small steps to a healthier self, and a stress-relief activity. They also brought in guest speakers and held free yoga, meditation, and boot-camp classes for employees. To wrap up the month, they held a draw for a complete medical assessment. Not only did this month give employees a chance to reconnect with their health, but they also were reminded of the many benefits that were already available to them through their SAS benefits plan.

7. Create a Physical Space that Supports Wellness

Physical surroundings also have a role in supporting mental wellness at work - or detracting from it. Things like natural light, fresh air, adequate desk space and a quiet oasis to rest and recharge all make for a mentally healthy workspace.

All of **Edelman Canada's** offices have been specifically designed to engage employees in a dynamic work environment and foster cross-practice collaboration, thereby creating a unified, office-wide culture – and ultimately helping to drive business growth. In Toronto's award-winning space for example, employees particularly love the outdoor patio, where they can work in the warm weather, hold breezy outdoor meetings, or enjoy time with colleagues throughout the day.

Klick strives to make conscious decisions that consider the cultural needs of all Klicksters. As an example, when the company caters food, which they do pretty often, they keep religious and preference-based limitations in mind. They also have a prayer and meditation room to support diversity and provide flexibility to those celebrating different things.

8. Promote Whole-Person Well-Being

People who take care of their physical and psychological health experience more positive relationships, more energy, enhanced clarity and focus, improved communication skills, better decision making and host of other benefits. Why wouldn't you want these people working for you?

“Most employees I interact with aren't just passionate about Stryker, but about life in general... People who have a zest for life are so much easier and pleasant to work with.”

–Stryker Employee

“I am fairly new to this organization, but I genuinely feel like they care so much about me. I see so much room for growth, and I have never felt that my future was as bright as when I became a part of the Cisco team... They just treat you the way humans should be treated.”

–Cisco Systems Employee

Sklar Wilton & Associates' Spirit 32 is a whole person development program that focuses on equipping associates with a mind, body, and spirit toolkit. Workshops and seminars are delivered on a regular basis and have included mental health awareness and leadership training, a 16-week mindfulness & meditation program, brain health, energy management, nutrition, sleep strategies, stress management, personal purpose and goal setting, and yoga classes. The program is inspired by and continually enhanced with input from an annual employee engagement survey. In addition, SW&A has recently launched Headway, a Canada-wide movement to help companies create workplaces that embrace best mental health practices.

As an engineering-heavy shop, **Wave** is committed to helping its employees develop deeper levels of self awareness and empathy. To this end they host My Voice My Lens workshops with a professional photographer that integrate self-portrait photography with leadership training and personal growth. These in-house, one of a kind workshops help participants build relationships, learn to express themselves and give and receive feedback. The added bonus - better selfies! They have taken 60 people through this program and seen astounding results.

9. Let Employees Know They Are Valued

Employee recognition is an important, yet often-overlooked component of workplace mental wellness. When employees feel valued, they are more likely to feel they make a difference to the organization's success, which encourages them to bring their best effort to work and feel proud of their contribution.

People who feel they make a difference are **151% MORE LIKELY** to agree their workplace is psychologically and emotionally healthy

People who feel that management shows appreciation for good work and extra effort are **138% MORE LIKELY** to agree their workplace is psychologically and emotionally healthy

"My mental health stays positive because I know my hard work will be recognized and rewarded."

–Cactus Restaurants Employee

The Thanks a Latte program at **Doctors of BC** is a peer-to-peer recognition program that embodies their four values and promotes a culture of meaningful recognition not only within an employee's immediate team, but between departments and up and down all levels of the organization. With this program any employee can give another employee a five dollar coffee card or a recognition points card in thanks for demonstrating any of their values. The coffee cards are good at local coffee shops and the points cards can be collected to earn Doctors of BC branded clothing and other items.

The President of **TJX Canada** sends out personal hand written notes to associates he's heard good news about. The notes are for things like promotions or special achievements. Their associates are thrilled to receive these personal notes of thanks and recognition, and 200 - 300 personal notes are sent per year.

10. Measure and Course Correct

Regardless of what your workplace mental wellness initiatives entail, you'll want to ensure they're having an impact. Afterall, you can't change what you don't measure. Tracking things like training participation, information session attendance, resource website visits and benefits usage will help you get a sense of whether these programs are resonating with your people. If not, solicit input from employees and fine-tune your offerings.

Ideally your mental wellness initiatives will be part of a broader wellness strategy with identified goals and objectives. As we've shown in this report, workplace mental wellness touches on almost every area of business, so your outcome goals may be specific (i.e. 'decrease the number of STD stress leave claims by 10% in the next year') or more transformational in nature (i.e. 'increase employee engagement by 20% over the next three years'). Tracking progress toward transformational goals will require an annual employee survey, such as Great Place to Work's Trust Index, to highlight progress on a number of key metrics relating to mental wellness.

THE ROAD AHEAD

Rapid advances in technology are changing the way we work. We are entering a new frontier in business, one that is about developing every ounce of human potential. In an economy which is now based on human qualities like connectivity, innovation and collaboration, organizations need to focus on and foster mental healthy workplaces, so all employees can bring their creativity, passion and best ideas to work.

Thousands of Canada's leading organizations have openly voiced their commitment to creating mentally healthy workplaces, because they know these environments are better for people and better for business. For organizations committed to developing mental wellness at work, this commitment must be backed up with action. Start the mental wellness conversation in your organization. Put workplace mental wellness on your strategic agenda. Back it up with a budget. Introduce mental wellness initiatives that make sense in your work environment. And above all, remember that mental wellness does not exist in a bubble – it must be built on a foundation of mutual trust, respect and fairness. As part of their Headway For Healthy Minds at work initiative, Sklar Wilton has developed a Mental Health Resources Roadmap. For the regularly updated digital version, join the LinkedIn group <https://www.linkedin.com/groups/9768946>.

APPENDIX 1 - MENTAL WELLNESS INDEX

Mentally Healthy Workplace Components

	Trust Index Statement
Culture and Values	
Transparency	Management keeps me informed about important issues and changes. I can ask management any reasonable question and get a straight answer.
Appreciation	Management shows appreciation for good work and extra effort. Everyone has an opportunity to get special recognition.
Respect	Management shows a sincere interest in me as a person, not just an employee. I can be myself around here.
Competent Oversight	Management trusts people to do a good job without watching over their shoulders. Management recognizes honest mistakes as part of doing business.
Flexibility and Balance	I am able to take time off from work when I think it's necessary. People are encouraged to balance their work life and their personal life.
Employee Empowerment	Management makes its expectations clear. Management does a good job of assigning and coordinating people. People here are given a lot of responsibility. I am offered training or development to further myself professionally. I am given the resources and equipment to do my job. Management involves people in decisions that affect their jobs or work environment.
Fairness of Treatment	People here are paid fairly for the work they do. I am treated as a full member here regardless of my position. Promotions go to those who best deserve them. Managers avoid playing favourites. People avoid politicking and backstabbing as ways to get things done. If I am unfairly treated, I believe I'll be given a fair shake if I appeal.
Heathy Work Environment	This is a physically safe place to work. This is a psychologically and emotionally healthy place to work. Our facilities contribute to a good working environment.

Mentally Healthy Workplace Outcomes

	Trust Index Statement
Engagement	I feel I make a difference here. My work has special meaning: this is not "just a job". When I look at what we accomplish, I feel a sense of pride. People here are willing to give extra to get the job done. I'm proud to tell others I work here. People look forward to coming to work here.
Innovation	We celebrate people who try new and better ways of doing things, regardless of the outcome.
Adaptability	People here quickly adapt to changes needed for our organization's success.
Teamwork	People care about each other here. There is a "family" or "team" feeling here. You can count on people to cooperate.
Talent Retention	Management hires people who fit in well here. I want to work here for a long time.
Customer Service	Our customers would rate the service we deliver as "excellent".
Company Ambassadors	I would strongly endorse my organization to friends and family as a great place to work

SOURCES

¹Employer Connect Workplace Mental Health Summit 2019, Morneau Shepell

²Mental Health at Work Report, National Employee Mental Wellbeing Survey Findings, 2017 (UK)

³Statistics Canada (2003), Canadian Community Health Survey (mental health and wellbeing)

⁴Canadian Medical Association, 8th Annual National Report Card on Health Care, 2008

⁵Mental Health Commission of Canada / Canadian Mental Health Association

⁶Mental Health Commission of Canada / Canadian Mental Health Association

⁷Top vs. bottom quartile Trust Organizations based on the percentage of employees that responded positively (agree “almost always” or “often”) to our Trust Index Employee Survey. Top vs. bottom quartile Mental Wellness Organizations based on the percentage of employees that responded positively (agree “almost always” or “often”) to our Mental Wellness Index. See Appendix 1 for a detailed description of our Mental Wellness Components and Outcomes

⁸Lowe, Graham, Pd.D. High Trust Workplaces Promote Employee Well-Being. HR Professional, February 2019

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