

## Summary fact sheet on the use and indicators of the tool



### Supplement to the Tool for Identifying Psychosocial Risk Factors in the Workplace

#### Indicators included in the tool

##### 1- Work context and prevention measures in place

- A. Job and work context
- B. Illness absenteeism and presenteeism
- C. Occupational health activities or policy
- D. Activities or policy against violence and harassment
- E. Return-to-work activities or policy
- F. Work/life-balance activities or policy

##### 2- Key components of work organization

- A. Workload
- B. Recognition at work
- C. Social support of immediate supervisors
- D. Social support of colleagues
- E. Decision-making autonomy
- F. Information and communication

#### What is the Tool for Identifying Psychosocial Risk Factors in the Workplace?

This tool was created in response to the need for occupational health workers in Québec's health and social services network to have a tool that would enable them to briefly assess the likelihood that psychosocial risk factors are present in a workplace. It is a simple measurement tool that includes a pedagogical component designed to help workplaces identify actions or policy directions that should be implemented in order to improve workers' health.

More specifically, it is an interview tool for documenting 12 indicators concerning:

- 1- the work context and prevention measures in place within an organization
- 2- the key components of work organization

#### Indicators included in the tool

This interview tool is divided into two parts, each of which has six indicators.

The first part includes a descriptive indicator of job and work context and aims to determine the scope of both job insecurity and organizational changes under way or planned within an organization. It also includes an outcome indicator for the current and evolving situation with regard to illness absenteeism and presenteeism.

In addition, the first part of the tool serves to assess the culture of prevention within an organization. The latter's involvement in prevention activities reflects its culture, prevention values and what is sometimes called the psychosocial safety climate. A good psychosocial safety climate is associated with fewer psychosocial risk (PSR) factors and better performance on the part of an organization.

More specifically, the expression “psychosocial safety climate” refers to organizational policies, practices and procedures for protecting workers’ psychological health and safety. Activities or policies against violence and harassment and regarding occupational health, return to work and work/life balance are all part of this climate. Four separate indicators have thus been defined for these activities or policies in the first part of the tool. They serve to measure the importance attached by an organization to prevention activities. The second part of the tool consists of six empirically validated psychosocial risks on which organizations can act. These risks are workload, recognition at work, social support of immediate supervisors, social support of colleagues, decision-making autonomy, and information and communication.

## Why be concerned about this?

Several studies have shown that certain aspects of work organization have harmful effects on health, and particularly on mental health, cardiovascular health and musculoskeletal disorders. Psychosocial risks in the workplace are like any other type of health risk and, contrary to what some people might think, it is possible to measure them and to implement effective measures to control them.

## What practices should be implemented?

The Tool for Identifying Psychosocial Risk Factors in the Workplace was developed under the supervision of a scientific panel made up of researchers and specialists in the prevention of such risk factors. Comprehensive training developed by the Institut national de santé publique du Québec must be followed in order to use the tool. The tool’s aim is to provide an accurate picture of an organization’s work context, prevention activities and key work organization components by gathering information from workers who are well acquainted with the workplace and are considered credible and able to express themselves freely. It is recommended that the people chosen to interview these workers be specialized in occupational health, come from outside the organization and not be in a situation of conflict of interest. The tool can be used in all types of organizations, regardless of their size.

## Procedure for using the tool:

### 1 Preparation:

- Approach the workplace in a way that will provide an understanding of the issues facing it and help to identify its needs
- Collect data to characterize the workplace and identify priority sectors
- Enlist the participation of workplace stakeholders (equal labour/management representation)

### 2 Planning:

- Place someone in charge
- Define target groups
- Choose credible, voluntary key informants who are well acquainted with the workplace
- Create a homogeneous group without relationships of subordination

### 3 Assessment:

- Have two interviewers explain and carry out the assessment procedure
- The two interviewers conduct interviews roughly two hours long based on facts
- The interviewers rank the indicators

### 4 Summary report:

- Calculate the score obtained for each indicator in the workplace
- Decide which policy directions should be given priority

### 5 Communication of results:

- Present the results to the person in charge and, if applicable, to the health and safety committee and key informants
- Discuss the results to foster better understanding

### 6 Action plan follow-up:

- Create an implementation committee
- Prioritize risks and prepare an action plan
- Assess the feasibility of actions
- Assess the impact of interventions 12 to 18 months after the action plan has been implemented

## References and useful links

1. Online training provided by the INSPQ (French only): <https://www.inspq.gc.ca/formation/institut/risques-psychosociaux-au-travail-de-l-identification-la-prevention>
2. Vézina, M., C. Chénard, M.-M. Mantha-Bélisle and the Groupe scientifique sur l’impact des conditions et de l’organisation du travail sur la santé de l’INSPQ (2016). Grille d’identification de risques psychosociaux du travail, INSPQ (French only)