

Better Workplace Conference

March 18–20, 2025 | Virtual



Agenda

Pre-Event / March 6, 2025

2:00 p.m. [Virtual Workshop](#)

Stress Management for People Leaders

Speakers:

Natasha Jackson, Workplace Health Consultant,
BC Public Service Agency

Tabatha Thibault, Senior Research Associate,
Human Capital, The Conference Board of Canada

Liesel Reimer, Director, People Development for
the Ministry of Citizens' Services

To address and manage workplace stress, leaders need practical strategies to manage competing demands while also supporting their employees.

During this interactive workshop, attendees will:

- Increase their awareness of what stress is, what causes it, and how it impacts the workplace.
- Consider how stress impacts their leadership ability.
- Practice ways to reduce stress as a leader.
- Learn strategies to support their employees.

We will also share evidence-based insights from our Centre for Workplace Wellbeing and Effectiveness (CWWE) study that demonstrate the impact of social connectedness on workplace stress and employee mental health.

Day 1 / March 18, 2025

The Workplace of Today: Measuring Trends

12:30 p.m. [Members-only Session](#)

Fireside Meet and Greet With Keynote Speaker

Moderator:

Yanique Smith, Director, Diversity, Equity, Inclusion,
Mental Health & Wellness, Intact

Speaker:

Dr. Shimi Kang, Leading expert in change, leadership,
innovation, and wellness

This session is part of the members-only Council for Safe Workplaces, Council on Workplace Health and Wellness, and Council on Inclusive Work Environments meeting. To learn more about becoming a member of one of these councils, please contact us.

1:15 p.m. [Break](#)

1:30 p.m. [Welcome Remarks](#)

Speaker:

Susan Black, CEO, The Conference Board of Canada
Conference Board CEO Susan Black will introduce our conference theme in greater detail, highlighting the importance of integrating evidence-based insights into our decision-making for the modern workforce.

1:45 p.m. [Keynote](#)

The Future-Ready Mind: Three Ways to Rethink Leadership in Our Ever-Changing World

Moderator:

Amy Fell, Corporate and Industry Training Lead,
School of Business and Media, British Columbia
Institute of Technology

Day 1 / March 18, 2025 (cont'd)

Speaker:

Dr. Shimi Kang, Change, leadership, innovation, and wellness expert

Three rising global trends—disease and burnout, workplace disconnection, and ongoing disruption—are impacting workplaces and presenting challenges to employees and organizations. Navigating these complexities involves fostering three critical future-ready skills: calm, to increase resilience; connection, to foster a sense of belonging and collaboration; and creativity, to drive adaptability and innovation.

Drawing on the latest science, Dr. Kang provides practical solutions and proven tools to mitigate pressing issues for organizations. And the best part? These tools are based on brain science, so anyone can use them.

Find out how neuroplasticity allows our brains to learn, change, and create in optimal ways.

2:45 p.m. **Break**

3:15 p.m. **Large Group Workshop**
Measuring Workplace Health and Establishing a Baseline

Moderator:

Natasha Malloff, Executive Director, Health, Benefits and Pensions, Human Resources, University of British Columbia

Speakers:

John Moore, Founder and CEO, Mental Fitness IQ

Tegan Slot, Director, Workplace Wellbeing, Public Services Health and Safety Association

This workshop will delve into approaches to measuring workplace health, exploring various metrics of organizational culture that most directly impact employee wellbeing and productivity.

Attendees will walk away from this session thinking about new ways to implement effective measurement strategies that drive meaningful improvements in workplace culture and employee satisfaction.

4:00 p.m. **Panel**

Policy over Politics: Reinforcing the Importance of DEI in a Changing Political Landscape

Moderator:

Michael Bassett, Director, Research Impact, The Conference Board of Canada

Speakers:

Sandra Cushnie, Senior Director, Global Diversity, Equity & Inclusion McCain Foods Ltd

Marni Panas, Director, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, ATCO

In a time when diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) principles are under increasing scrutiny, businesses find themselves at a crossroads. The backlash against DEI initiatives in the US has begun to ripple across borders, influencing Canada's political and cultural landscape.

This session will explore the intersection of business values, societal expectations, and the evolving political climate on both sides of the border through an insightful conversation featuring leaders from three prominent companies operating in both Canada and the United States. Panelists will share strategies for staying true to their values, reinforcing DEI policies, and maintaining focus on long-term goals amid external pressures. Attendees will leave with useful insights and a renewed sense of purpose in championing inclusion and belonging within their organizations.

Day 2 / March 19, 2025

Staying on Top of Current and Anticipated Needs Within the Workforce and Workplace

12:00 p.m. **Keynote**

Five Components of Building an Extraordinary Team

Speaker:

Lee Rubin, Team-building expert

We evaluate machines based on the entire unit's output, not the impressiveness of their individual parts. Extraordinary teams, like great machines, require certain components to hold their pieces together.

While most organizations focus exclusively on building individual skills, elite organizations invest in the stuff that transform a collection of talented people into an extraordinary team. This keynote is packed with insights, humour, and tools to help listeners take their respective teams to a higher level.

1:00 p.m. **Break**

1:15 p.m. **Concurrent Sessions—Set A**

1:15 p.m.

Concurrent Sessions A1

Beyond Legal Minimums: Preventing Hazards to Physical and Psychological Health and Safety and Human Performance

Moderator:

Kim MacDonald, Psychological H&S Consulting, 13 FACTORS for Business Growth

Speakers:

Natasha Jackson, Workplace Health Consultant, BC Public Service Agency

Gordon Walsh, Principal Consultant, Energy Safety Canada and the Safety Centre of Excellence

Canadian organizations are grappling with how to meet and exceed evolving legal minimum obligations related to mental health and stress, changing employee needs, and workforce diversity. Leadership's responses to mistakes and challenges to the status quo can make or break an organization's ability to innovate, engage and motivate employees, and sustain a positive health and safety culture.

Day 2 / March 19, 2025 (cont'd)

Presenters will share innovative strategies and actions that combine traditional health and safety (OHS), psychological health and safety, and human and organizational performance principles, which can prevent harm, create new mindsets, and promote thriving workplaces. Hear about Australia's implementation of psychological health and safety legislation and how the Canadian energy sector and B.C. public sector are making health and safety part of their modernization efforts.

1:15 p.m. Concurrent Sessions A2

Beyond Benefits: Fostering Menopause Inclusivity in the Workforce

Moderator:

Lindsay Coffin, Principal Research Associate, The Conference Board of Canada

Speakers:

Marie-Chantal Côté, Senior Vice-President, Sun Life Health

Janet Ko, President & Co-Founder, Menopause Foundation of Canada

Speakers will provide foundational knowledge on perimenopause and menopause, examine how they intersect with a critical career stage for many women, and share strategies for organizations to reduce ageism and stigma, optimize performance, and strengthen talent management to support employees through every life stage.

Learn about new tools, strategies, and leadership best practices being developed and implemented by Sun Life in response to growing demand from Canadian employers for women's health-related workplace supports.

1:15 p.m. Concurrent Sessions A3

Harnessing Advanced Technology and AI to Navigate Workforce Transformation

Moderator:

Shairoz Moledina, Senior Manager, Well-being, HR Planning and Analytics, Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation

Speakers:

Pranav Arya, Manager of AI, TELUS

Allen Hornung, Director, Workforce Intelligence, Digital and Experience, Enbridge Inc.

Brent Lyman, Director of AI, TELUS

Stacy Pelletier, Senior Specialist, Digital Platform Strategy, Enbridge Inc.

Organizations are already using advanced technology and AI to create personalized support, training, and development experiences for their workforce that promote inclusivity and boost individual performance. We'll discuss the critical steps needed to ensure AI systems are bias-aware and accessible.

2:00 p.m. Break

2:15 p.m. Lightning Talks

Navigating the Future: Emerging Trends in Canada's Workforce

Moderator:

Bailey Farrell, Health and Safety Staff Officer, Power Workers' Union

Speakers:

Carrie Bjola, Chief Executive Officer, Service Hospitality

Chantal Dugas, CRHA, General Manager, DEI

Community Relations and Partnerships, Air Canada

Andrea Vrbancic, SVP, People & Culture, Axonify

Alison Wall, Director, Strategic Partnerships and Planning, Service Hospitality

New for 2025, organizations will share their innovative responses to current workplace challenges, including outcomes and learnings. These dynamic lightning showcases will provide attendees with practical insights from peers.

Submit a request to present at this session before March 6, 2025. Details are provided in your registration confirmation email.

3:00 p.m. Case Study

Health and Safety Case Study Awards

Moderator:

Jacqueline A. Stagner, Undergraduate Programs Coordinator, Faculty of Engineering, University of Windsor

Speakers:

Kara Edwards, Vice-President, Responsible Care, Chemistry Industry Association of Canada

Alison Wall, Director, Strategic Partnerships and Planning, Service Hospitality

Panelists:

Boshra Mollaei, Seneca Polytechnic

Milu Thomson, Lambton College

Quinn Santoro, Western University

Join us for this dynamic session celebrating innovation in health and safety. This year's case study competition tackled critical workplace safety issues, including workplace violence, working alone, and considerations for small businesses.

We'll announce the winners of the 2025 Health and Safety Case Study Awards and hear from finalists who will showcase their innovative solutions to the workplace safety issues in the case study. Attendees will gain practical insights and fresh approaches to health and safety challenges while celebrating the next generation of safety leaders.

Don't miss this opportunity to explore innovative ways to prioritize safety, sustainability, and responsible care practices within your organization. If you're an emerging safety professional or know someone with a passion for health and safety, this session is a must-attend.

Partners:



Day 3 / March 20, 2025

Being at the Cutting Edge of Cultivating the Workplace of Tomorrow

12:00 p.m. Members-only Session

Fireside Q&A With Keynote Speaker

Moderator:

Eric Pfeiffer, Senior Consultant, Workplace Well-being

Speaker:

Lee Rubin, Team-building expert

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12:45 p.m. Break

1:00 p.m. Keynote

It Takes a Village: No One Is Meant to Go It Alone

Speaker:

Dr. Jody Carrington, Psychologist, human connection expert, and best-selling author

This engaging keynote will dive into the critical workplace issues of loneliness, polarization, and technology-induced burnout and will examine how external factors such as societal changes and economic pressures can significantly impact workers.

Learn useful approaches to help you lead the way in cultivating a psychologically safe environment, addressing diverse employee needs, and implementing strategies that prioritize rest and wellbeing. Empower your organization to build a healthier, more resilient workplace that's ready to thrive in an evolving future.

2:00 p.m. Break

2:15 p.m. Concurrent Sessions—Set B

2:15 p.m. Concurrent Sessions B1

Empowering Leaders and Teams Through Peer Support and Mental Health Programs

Moderator:

Jen Richardson, President & Managing Principal – HSE Consulting and Learning Services, CrossSafety

Speakers:

Paula Barbaresso, Senior Consultant, Mental Health and Well-Being, Intact

Kelly Ryan, Manager, Organizational Health, NAV Canada

Lyne Wilson, Assistant Vice-President, Talent Management, NAV Canada

Intact Insurance and Nav Canada will share how they have designed and implemented impactful mental health and peer support systems within an organization to empower both leaders and teams. They will explore innovative models founded on lived experience, practical tools that foster compassion and resilience, and organizational core values.

Attendees will walk away with useful insights on building organizational readiness, implementing cutting-edge mental health and peer support programs, and creating a supportive culture where leaders and individuals are empowered.

2:15 p.m. Concurrent Sessions B2

Leadership and Mental Health Disclosure in the Workplace: Creating a Culture of Safety and Wellbeing

Moderator:

Tiffany Rickard, Consultant, Mental Health and Well-being, Bell Canada

Speakers:

Anika Cloutier, Assistant Professor in the Department of Leadership and Organizations, within the Faculty of Management at Dalhousie University

Lilian Riad-Allen, Senior Director, Workplace Health, Safety, and Wellness, LCBO and Host of Lil on Life Podcast

Presenters will share insights into workplace mental health disclosure, discussing why employees choose to disclose or conceal mental health challenges from their leaders, and will summarize leaders' own decisions to disclose.

They will discuss an impactful initiative that has opened conversations about mental health at the LCBO, equipping leaders with the necessary tools to provide support and safety while building the competencies necessary to reduce stigma and encourage disclosure.

Attendees will leave with evidence-based knowledge and practical strategies to create a safer workplace where mental health discussions are normalized and well-supported.

2:15 p.m. Concurrent Session B3

Embedding Sustainable Mental Health and Employee Wellbeing Programs at Work

Moderator:

Tabatha Thibault, Senior Research Associate, Human Capital, The Conference Board of Canada

Speakers:

Desiree Quenneville, Wellness Coordinator, Health, Safety, Security, and Environments (HSSE), Canadian Nuclear Laboratories

Ashley Wood-Suszkowski, MHE & PhD candidate and Senior Manager, Health and Wellbeing, Purolator

Speakers will share insights from their work creating sustainable employee wellbeing and mental health strategies that prioritize long-term impact and measuring results. They will explore specific examples, focusing on design, implementation, and the evaluation processes that ensure their ongoing success. Attendees will learn best practices to embed sustainable mental health programs in the workplace, empowering their organizations to support employees' mental health over the long term.

3:00 p.m. Break

3:15 p.m. [Panel](#)

**Using Evidence to Actively Shape the Future
of the Workplace and Workforce**

Speakers:

Diogo Borba, Senior Research Associate,
Human Capital, The Conference Board of Canada

Dr. Jaime Chau, Country Health Manager and
Occupational Health Physician, Shell Canada

Maria Paquet, Vice-President, Human Resources,
Shell Canada

This session will explore how data and evidence can drive innovative practices in the Canadian workplace, with a strong emphasis on empowering employee voice and choice.

Attendees will gain insights from cutting-edge research on employee preferences in areas like safety, company culture, and benefits, highlighting new Conference Board research and its practical application. Presenters will also spotlight groundbreaking work being done to integrate listening strategies—moving beyond surveys to create more dynamic, data-driven employee experiences.