

The Impact of COVID-19 on Mental Health

Part III - Summary Sheet

March 2021

1. How Has COVID-19 Impacted Mental Health:

- COVID-19 has affected physical and mental health and safety.
- Successive waves of COVID-19 are having a cumulative effect on mental health. With each wave mental health declines further.
- Statistics vary heavily and change frequently depending on which COVID-19 wave is being referred to, time, population group, sector, province, etc.
- Common symptoms and diagnoses related to mental health issues related to COVID-19:
 - Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder
 - Anxiety and Generalized Anxiety Disorder
 - Depression, including clinical depression
 - Drug and alcohol use
 - Stress
 - Insomnia
 - Fear
 - Aggravation of pre-existing mental health conditions
- Persons from the following groups are at higher risk of the impact on mental health from COVID-19 and report changes in their mental health:
 - Indigenous persons
 - Younger women
 - Women in general
 - Younger persons in general (e.g. age 15 to 25)

- Visible minority groups
- Persons from the LGBTQ2+ community
- Gender diverse communities
- Persons with lower incomes
- Persons with a pre-existing mental health conditions, including substance use
- Persons with other pre-existing health conditions
- Persons with disabilities
- Persons who are unemployed, under-employed or otherwise financially impacted

2. **The *Workers Compensation Act*, OHS Regulations, Policy and Guidelines (non-exhaustive list):**

2.A. **Sections of the *Workers Compensation Act*:**

- 14 Purposes of the OHS provisions
- 21 General duties of Employers
- 22 General duties of Workers
- 23 General duties of Supervisors

2.B. **Sections of the OHS Regulations (also see the related Guidelines):**

- 6.33 Precautionary principle
- 3.23 Young and new worker orientation e.g. 3.23(2)(d) to (f) regarding violence and working alone
- 4.28 to 4.31 Violence e.g. violence related to the public refusing to comply with the Provincial Health Officer's Orders
- The OHS Regulation Guidelines that apply to the OHS Regulations
- The role of the Joint Health and Safety Committee (including the Terms of Reference/Rules of Procedure)

3. Recommendations and Application to COVID-19 Safety Plans and Other Health and Safety Measures in the Workplace:

- Psychological safety must be addressed in employer health and safety programs, including the WorkSafeBC COVID-19 Safety Plans.
- The Safety Plan must incorporate the Exposure Control Plan, including the eight primary components of the Exposure Control Plan e.g. the hazard and risk assessment, orientation, training, etc.
- Apply the CAMH recommendations (see the Resources document).
- Apply the CSA Group Psychological Standard: CAN/CSA-Z1003-13/BNQ 9700-803/2013 – Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace (see the Resources document).
- Ensure there is a Critical Incident Response Program.
- Be aware of EAP/EFAP and other Collective Agreement entitlements.
- Consider cumulative stress, secondary trauma and vicarious trauma.
- Consider protection for workers in high-risk settings e.g. provide additional supports.
- Ensure there is proper training for managers and supervisors.
- Have clear leadership and expectations. E.g. communicate about:
 - The Safety Plan including signs and symptoms of COVID-19, health and safety measures, etc.
 - Reporting structures
 - Accommodation of workers at high risk
- Use the CMHA Mental Health Continuum Model.
- Use the CMHA Workplace Factors Model.