



# February's Psychology Month

Let's Talk About Healthy Workplaces

## Coping with workplace stress

By Kevin Rice, R.Psych.  
Marsh-Knickle & Associates

While some stress is a normal and healthy part of life, excessive stress interferes with our productivity and poses challenges to our physical and emotional health, so it's important to find ways to keep it in check.

Fortunately, there's a lot that you can do to manage and reduce stress at work. Please read on for a list of suggestions, put together by a local Psychologist (with acknowledgement to the work of Psychologist Dr. Jeanne Segal) who's talked with many of you out there and learned from your real-life successes in dialing down stress.

I should add that these tips are equally applicable whether you're dealing with water-cooler politics in a cubicle culture or hauling a full load of pins to an open road (or Black-berry-to-Black-berry on the Information Super-highway).

### Time management

- Create a balanced schedule: Analyze your schedule, responsibilities, and daily tasks. Try to create a balance between work and family life; social activities and solitary pursuits; daily responsibilities and downtime. All-work-and-no-play is a sure recipe for burnout.

- Don't over-commit yourself: Avoid scheduling things back-to-back or trying to fit too much into one day. All too often, we underestimate how long things will take. If you've got too much on your plate, distinguish between the 'should' and the 'must.' Drop tasks that aren't truly necessary to the bottom of the list or eliminate them entirely. Make to-do lists and cross off items as you accomplish them. Plan your day and stick to the schedule — you'll feel less overwhelmed.

- Plan regular breaks: Make sure to take short breaks throughout the day to sit back and clear

your mind. Also, try to get away for lunch and breaks, perhaps walking around the block, or sitting on a park bench. This time will actually help you be more, not less, productive.

- Fight through the clutter: Taking the time to organize your workspace can help ease the sense of losing control that comes from too much clutter. Just knowing where everything is saves time and cuts stress.

### Task management

- Have realistic expectations: While Canadians are working longer hours, we can still only fit so much work into one day. Having unrealistic expectations for what you can accomplish sets you up for failure — and increased stress.

- Resist perfectionism: If you are one of those folks who obsess over every detail and micromanage

APNS Top Categories	Top 10 PM Practices used in NS Organizations	Percent (%) of respondents
Employee Involvement	1. "Open-door" policy	89.1
	2. Open line employee supervisor meetings	79.3
	3. Participation in on-job performance evaluations	61.8
	4. Participate problem solving	54.5
Work-life balance	1. Flexible work scheduling	64.1
	2. Flexible leave options	59.2
	3. Part-time options	45.5
	4. Job swap	20.9
Employee Growth & Development	1. Job rotation/training	25.5
	2. Continuing education courses	22.2
	3. Professional development programs	20.9
	4. Additional training if employee performance needs improvement	19.1
Health & Safety	1. Personal drug plan	81.8
	2. Training	62.9
	3. Written safety policies	56.4
	4. First aid training	37.8
Employee Recognition	1. Written verbal appreciation/Recognition	72.2
	2. Monetary bonuses based on performance	54.5
	3. Employee successes displayed in print and/or electronic document	50.9

**A Saint Mary's University research team headed by Dr. Arla Day, Dr. Kevin Kelloway and MSc student Krista Randell surveyed 110 organizations across Nova Scotia about the Psychologically Workplace Practices that they adopt. A list of the most common practices reported by these N.S. organizations is presented in this diagram.**

## Nova Scotia Board of Examiners in Psychology

### What is a psychologist and why do I care?

- treat children, adults, couples, families
  - diagnose psychological and emotional problems
  - consult, counsel, provide therapy and assessments
  - consult to individuals, groups, organizations
  - help people attain better physical and mental health
  - help people achieve better personal, social and vocational adjustment
  - teach and apply psychological theory and principles
  - design, conduct and communicate psychological research.
- Psychologists are licensed professionals and that is important because licensing protects the public. Licensing holds professionals to rigorous standards and makes them accountable.
- "Psychologist" is a title protected by law that governs the practice of psychology in Nova Scotia.

It is important to know that many terms are not licensed titles. For example, the term "psychotherapist" and singular terms such as "counselor" and "therapist" are not licensed terms.

There is no assurance of the qualifications of anyone using only these titles and no professional body to handle complaints about their practices.

### The Nova Scotia Board of Examiners in Psychology (NSBEP) protects the public.

Psychologists are required by law to deliver competent, ethical and professional services. They are accountable to the public, through the Nova Scotia Board of Examiners in Psychology (NSBEP). NSBEP meets rigorous professional requirements and adheres to prescribed standards, guidelines and ethical principles. You are protected when you use a psychologist because psychologists must adhere to the Canadian Code of Ethics for Psychologists, and Standards for service and conduct, which are established by the NSBEP. The NSBEP is responsible for protection of the public and investigates and addresses complaints against Psychologists. There is no such public protection for practitioners designated only by such terms as counselor, therapist or psychotherapist.

Only those individuals who meet specific requirements for education, examinations, and supervision are entitled to use the term, "Psychologist", or to provide "psychological services", by virtue of the Psychologists Act of Nova Scotia.

Psychologists have at least these qualifications:

- a doctoral or masters degree in psychology
- two years of supervised experience in the case of a doctoral degree, or four years, in the case of a masters degree, and
- have passed a standardized, written examination and an oral examination.

Psychologists (Candidate Register) have the same educational qualifications and are in the process of completing their supervised experience.

Who are psychologists in Nova Scotia? As of February 3, these are the Psychologists and Psychologists (Candidate Register):

- Falick, Teri Diania, M.A.
- Faulkner, Pauline, M.A.
- Feasom, Isobel, Ph.D.
- Feld, Lars, B.Ed.
- Fok, John D., Ph.D.
- Fougere, Dawn, M.Sc.
- Fougere, Kerri, M.A.
- Fowler, Michael John, M.Ps.
- Fox, Barbara, Ph.D.
- Fransis, Shila, M.Sc.
- Gee, Hans F., M.Sc.
- Gerest, Frederick, Ph.D.
- Gibson, Doreen K., M.A.
- Gilbert, Joseph, Ph.D.
- Glabbe, Lisa, Ph.D.
- Glabbe, John, Ph.D.
- Garland, Debra, M.A.
- Germans, Lisa, M.A.
- Gerrard, Patricia, Ph.D.
- Gilgan, Amy, Psy.D.
- Gillis, Mary Annette, M.A.
- Glebe, Lily, Ph.D.
- Glebe, Stephen, M.Sc.
- Goddard, Lisa M., M.Sc.
- Goodland, Dion, Ph.D.
- Goodwin, Shelley, M.A.
- Gorman, Maureen, Ph.D.
- Gould, Darlene, M.Sc.
- Goulson, Stephen Michael, M.Sc.
- Graham, Lisa, M.Sc.
- Grant, S. Margaret, M.Sc.
- Gratwicke, Jane, M.A.Sc.
- Greenberg, Norman A., Ph.D.
- Guerra, Joanne, Ph.D.
- Haley, Hugh, Ph.D.
- Haley, Jennifer, M.A.
- Hall, Carolee, M.Sc.
- Hanley, Joan, Ph.D.
- Hans, S. Gerald, Ed.D.
- Harrill, Jody, M.A.Sc.
- Harris, S. Paul, M.A.Sc.
- Harrop, Brenda, M.Sc.
- Hartley, Shannon, M.A.Sc.
- Hartley, Chris, M.A.Sc.
- Hartley, Susan, Ph.D.
- Hartman, Lesley, M.A.
- Harvey, Elizabeth, M.Ps.
- Harris, Phyllis L., M.Sc.
- Hayden, Lisa, M.A.
- Hayes, Charles A., Ph.D.
- Henrick, Jennifer, Ph.D.
- Hennessey, Michael, M.A.
- Higgins, Heald, Ph.D.
- Hill, Carol L., Ed.D.
- Hines, Ferris, Anne, M.Sc.
- Holt, Julia, Ed.D.
- Horsfall, Peter, Ph.D.
- Hovess, Joanne, Ph.D.
- Hudley-Carruthers, Katharine A., Ph.D.
- Hughes, Donna, M.A.Sc.
- Humphrey, Carolyn Ann, Ph.D.
- Humphries, Kelly, M.A.
- Hunt, Michael, M.A.
- Hutt-MacLeod, Daphne D., M.A.
- Hynes, Janet Louise, M.Sc.
- Ike, Phillippe, M.A.
- Jefferson, Steven, Ph.D.
- Jerratt, Susan E., Ph.D.
- Johnson Emberly, Debbie, M.Sc.
- Johnson, Christine, M.A.
- Johnson, Shannon, Ph.D.
- Johnston, Stephanie G., M.A.
- Jones, David R., M.A.
- Jones, Kevin Scott, M.A.
- Joulin, J. Kelly, M.A.Sc.
- Juarling, Stacy, M.A.
- Karamanos, Nicholas, M.A.
- Kella, Brad, Ph.D.
- Kelly, Barbara Ann, M.A.
- Kennedy, Norma, Ph.D.
- Kilburn, Michael Peter, M.A.
- King, Sara, Ph.D.
- Konissavous, Olga, M.Psy.
- Konopack, Robert, Ph.D.
- Kraus, Richard, Ph.D.
- Kunichy, Gayle, Ph.D.
- Lampy, Reginald, Ph.D.
- Leader, B. Todd, M.Sc.
- LEZayer, Constantine, M.Ps.
- Leffler, Collette, Ph.D.
- Lehr, Ron, Ph.D.
- Leizer, Michael Patton, Ph.D.
- Lennox, Irmingard, Ph.D.
- Lindsay, Katharine, M.Sc.
- Logan-Smith, Lauraine, M.A.
- Lozier, Bruno J., Ph.D.
- Louise, Helen, Ph.D.
- Ludlow, Wendy L., Psy.D.
- MacCormack, Terrence, Ph.D.
- MacDonald, Maureen Clare, M.A.
- MacDonald, Valerie, Ph.D.
- MacDonald, Wayne, Ph.D.
- MacDonald, M. Jean, M.A.
- MacDougall, Judith, M.A.
- MacDowd, Mary, M.A.
- MacGillivray, Amy, M.A.Sc.
- MacGillivray, Richard G., Ph.D.
- MacInnis, Elizabeth W., M.A.
- MacIntyre, John, M.A.
- MacFaulds, Polly K., Ed.D.
- MacKay, Angela, M.Sc.
- MacKay, Martha, M.Ed.
- MacKinnon, Maureen, M.A.Sc.
- MacLachlan, Heather, Ph.D.
- MacLean, Barbara, M.Sc.
- MacLellan, Anne, M.A.
- MacLeod, Parker, J., Ed.M.
- MacLeod, Kyla, M.A.
- MacLeod, Matthew, M.A.Sc.
- MacNeil, Sheila, Ph.D.
- MacPhee, Angela, M.Sc.
- Mahon, Nadine, M.A.Sc.
- Maloney, Anne, Ph.D.
- Manning, M. Christine, M.A.
- Marcin, Betsy C., Ph.D.
- Marlin, Richard, Ph.D.
- Marshall, Maria, Ph.D.
- Marsh-Knickle, Lauren, M.Sc.
- Martin Wells, Jennifer, M.A.
- Mathewchuk, Alana K., Ph.D.
- Mauro, Gloria Rose, M.A.
- McAfee, Susan, Ph.D.
- McCarthy, Mary E., Ph.D.
- McCormick, Holly, Ph.D.
- McCorrick, Brian J., Ph.D.
- McEwen, Stephen, Ph.D.
- McEwen, Robin, A., M.Sc.
- McGee, Jeanette, Ph.D.
- McGowan, Jeanette, Ph.D.
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- McGrath, Patrick, Ph.D.
- McInerney, Robert, Ph.D.
- McIntyre, John E., M.A.
- McKinnon, Margaret, M.A.
- McLaughlin, Elizabeth, Ph.D.
- McNeill, Gillian Margaret, M.A.
- McRae, Bradley, Ed.D.
- McWilliams, Lachlan, Ph.D.
- McWilliams, Corriella, M.Ed.
- Menéndez, David, Ph.D.
- Miles, Robert, Ph.D.
- Millman, Edson H., M.A.
- Mills, Joanne, M.A.
- Miller, Clark, Jacqueline, M.Sc.
- Morrison, Ghislain, M.A.
- Mori, Penelope, M.A.
- Mullane, Jennifer, Ph.D.
- Murray, Patricia, M.Sc.
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- Neuman, Sandra, M.Ed.
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- Penner, Alison, Ph.D.
- Penner, Angela, Ph.D.
- Penny, Ann Marie, Ph.D.
- Perratt, Stephen B., Ph.D.
- Perry, Joan Allen, M.Sc.
- Pick, Deborah, M.Sc.
- Pilon, David Joseph, Ph.D.
- Proctor, Anne, Ph.D.
- Pry, Elaine, Ph.D.
- Quinn, Marie E., Ph.D.
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- Potter, Susan M., Ph.D.
- Potter, Mark, M.A.
- Pruce, E. Lisa, Ph.D.
- Pure, Karen, Ph.D.
- Purvis, Gregory A., M.Sc.
- Pye, Carol, Ph.D.
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- Roberts, Beth, Ph.D.
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- Roth, Jason, M.A.
- Roussel, Jean Robert, M.Ps.
- Rule, Valerie Anne, M.A.
- Russell, Mark, M.Sc.
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- Sankar, Terri, M.A.Sc.
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- Seagram, Belinda, Ph.D.
- Sheeran, Donald Patrick, Ph.D.
- Seymour, Carla, M.Sc.
- Shelton, Donald Patrick, Ph.D.
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- Shirley, Cara M., M.A.Sc.
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- Simoneau, Monique, M.A.
- Singh, Lerman, M.A.
- Smith, Doreen M., M.A.
- Smith, Isobel M., Ph.D.
- Smith, Melissa W., M.A.
- Smith, Rebecca, M.A.Sc.
- Sothi, Sarinder Singh, Ph.D.
- Sperry, John, Ph.D.
- St. Amund, Michelle, Ph.D.
- Stammock, Andrew, Ph.D.
- States, JoAnne, Psy.D.
- Stee, Annd, M.A.
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- Wall-MacDonald, Julie, Ph.D.
- Wasson, Angela, Ph.D.
- Webster, Allison, Ph.D.
- Weinman, Ann A., M.Ed.
- Wheeler, John, Ph.D.
- Whiffin, Arlene, M.Sc.
- White, Robert, M.A.
- Wilkins, Janet, Ph.D.
- Wilson, Alan, Ph.D.
- Winn, Barbara, M.A.
- Wiser, Darcy, Ph.D.
- Wolke, Vicki, Ph.D.
- Wong, Julie, M.Sc.
- Worthington, Vanessa, M.A.Sc.
- Woulff, Nina, Ph.D.
- Yoracuk, Flora, Ph.D.
- Yorko, Wayne Matthew, M.A.
- Young, Stacey Marie, M.A.Sc.
- Zahr, Richard, M.A.
- Zinck, Beverly D., M.A.Sc.

423-2238

www.nsbep.org

Any Questions? If you are unsure about whether the person you are seeing is a psychologist, or have any concerns about the ethical conduct of a psychologist, contact the Nova Scotia Board of Examiners in Psychology



# February is Psychology Month

## Let's Talk About Healthy Workplaces

### Workplace stress

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ages to make sure 'everything's perfect,' STOP! No project, situation or decision is ever, or will ever, be perfect, and you put undue stress on yourself by trying to reach this unachievable state.

- **Prioritize tasks:** Do the high-priority items first. If you have something particularly unpleasant to do, get it over with early. The rest of your day will be more pleasant as a result.

- **Break projects into small steps:** If a large project seems overwhelming, make a step-by-step plan. As Lao-tzu wisely remarked 2500 years ago, "The journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step."

- **Delegate responsibility:** You don't have to do it all yourself. If other people can take care of the task, why not let them? Let go of the desire to control or oversee every little step. You'll be letting go of unnecessary stress in the process.

#### General work-stress management

- **Cultivate allies at work:** Just knowing you have one or more co-workers who are willing to assist you in times of stress will reduce your stress level.

- **Talk it out:** Sometimes the best stress-reducer is simply sharing your stress with someone close to you. The act of talking it out is often an excellent way of blowing off steam and reducing stress.

- **Flip your negative thinking:** If you see the downside of every situation and interaction, you'll soon find yourself drained of energy and motivation. Try to think positively about your work (e.g., how others are helped by your efforts), avoid negative-thinking co-workers, and put yourself on the back about small accomplishments, even if no one else does.

- **Find humour in the situation:** When you — or the people around you — start taking things too seriously, find a way to break through with laughter. Share a joke or funny story.

- **Get enough sleep:** When you're sleep deprived, your ability to handle stress is compromised. When you're well rested, it's much easier to keep your emotional balance.

- **Get moving:** Aerobic exercise is an effective stress antidote that lifts mood, increases energy, sharpens focus and relaxes both body and mind. Every little bit counts. Don't forget to be mindful of your diet and eating patterns as you exercise, and watch out for the draw of alcohol, nicotine and other substances that give the impression of calming work stress in the short-run.

- **Don't just do something, sit there:** In addition to a healthy physical routine, it can be helpful to reserve some time each day for a 'centering' or reflective practice. Whether the goal is to access our body's natural 'relaxation response' or spend a few goal-less minutes simply being with our breath, we all possess the innate (though frequently turned off) ability to pause and turn on some powerful internal resources.

- **Put it in perspective:** Jobs are disposable. Your friends, families and health are not. If your employer expects too much of you, and it's starting to take its toll on your health, it may be time to start looking for a new job/new employer.

### Psychologically healthy workplaces

By **Natasha Scott, MSc & Sonya Stevens, MSc**  
 Association of Psychologists of Nova Scotia & CN Centre for Occupational Health & Safety, Saint Mary's University

Is there such a thing as a "psychologically healthy workplace" you may be thinking, 'Yeah right!'

Work is often associated with early mornings, deadlines, overtime and STRESS... how can work actually have a positive impact on our health? Surprisingly, recent research suggests it can! The American Psychological Association (APA) defines a psychologically healthy workplace (PHW) as a work environment that promotes employee health and well-being while at the same time boosting its business performance, so both the employees and the business are healthy.

As can be seen in the diagram, healthy employees have a positive impact on organizational functioning, and organizational functioning has a positive impact on employees' health and well-being. The APA has come up with five components of Psychologically Healthy Workplace practices (see diagram: Psychologically Healthy Workplace Components).

Obviously, the organizational and societal context (i.e., industry, economy, resources) influences what can be done within each of these components.

However, even small businesses with only a few employees

Components of PHW	Definitions & Examples Practices
<b>Employee Involvement</b>	Encouraging and providing opportunities for employees to express opinions, provide feedback, and contribute to work decisions
<b>Work-Life Balance</b>	Adopting practices that enable employees to balance responsibilities associated with work, family, and life. Such programs include sabbaticals or childcare assistance and flexible work schedules
<b>Employee Recognition</b>	Rewarding employees for their contributions to the organization. Recognition can be formal (e.g., performance-based pay increases, employee awards and recognition ceremonies) or informal (e.g., feedback such as "you did a great job")
<b>Employee Growth &amp; Development</b>	Providing training and development opportunities to employees to support professional development and career advancement. Example practices include in-house mentoring and coaching, training seminars and workshops, and tuition reimbursement for formal education programs
<b>Health &amp; Safety</b>	Investing in the mental and physical health of employees. Common practices include extended health benefits, safety training, sick leave, healthy lifestyle programs (e.g., nutrition, stress management), and subsidizing health activities (e.g., gym memberships, sports fees)

*Communication is integral to the success of all of these practices. In order for employees to take advantage of healthy workplace practices open and clear communication is needed.*

and minimal resources can do things that make a difference.

Healthy work practices can range from affordable and easily implemented (such as simply involving employees in decisions) to much larger and more complex practices (such as employee assistance programs).

Providing healthy work practices is something every organization can do, no matter their size and/or resources.

As Dr. Kevin Kelloway, Director of the CN Centre for Occupational Health and Safety at Saint



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Mary's University, says "It doesn't cost anything to treat people with respect."

For more information about APAs' Psychologically Healthy Workplace Program, visit [www.phwa.org](http://www.phwa.org)

### Mental health at work

By **David Mensink, PhD, R.Psych**  
 Dalhousie University

We usually think of our workplaces as just those places where we work. However, the workplace can be an excellent resource for improving our health. Engaging in meaningful and productive work helps build our self-esteem and confidence, and for those of us experiencing mental health problems, it can be a place that provides us with the support.

How might we improve the situation for those employees who might experience mental or emotional health challenges? There are three major things that managers and co-workers can do: 1. Identify those at risk or who might possibly become at risk; 2. Respond in a caring and helpful manner; and 3. Refer, if needed, for future or more extensive treatment.

Emotional factors (e.g., depression or anxiety) can affect how employees behave at work. For managers and co-workers to identify those either at risk or already experiencing mental health issues, it is important to know what signs to look for. Signs may include changes in functioning, lack of energy or lethargy, and social withdrawal. I encourage managers and co-workers to be fully aware of these signs so that something can be done to help the employee.

How do we then respond to our employees or co-workers in need? This is a very tricky area. Many managers and co-workers may wonder if it is "their place" to say something to the person in need or even to make it known that they might be noticing the signs of psychological difficulty. However, by offering support to the person in need they may recognize that there are others who really care for them.

It is difficult to write down a recipe for caring but there are a few guideposts. When approaching someone who you think may be experiencing mental health problems it is important to treat them with dignity and respect. Also in these situations effective speaking and listening skills are very helpful and providing practical information on what can be done is essential.

Finally, managers and co-workers can refer employees experiencing psychological and emotional challenges to professionals who can provide treatment. Examples of professionals would be physicians, counsellors, psychologists, employee and family assistance agencies, family service associations, community agencies, and so on. It is extremely important that one familiarize themselves with such services and options prior to talking with the person in need.

Our workplaces can, in fact, provide an important resource for those in psychological need. Caring employees can identify, respond, and refer others in need and in doing so enhance the psychological health of the workplace.

In fact, there is a great deal of evidence that facilitating earlier identification and referral of employees who are experiencing mental health challenges can not only improve the psychological health of the individual employee, but also improve the overall health of the workplace. This, in turn, increases the satisfaction and productivity of employees. In this way, our workplaces function as a mental health resource.

### Spotlight on College of Physicians and Surgeons of N.S.

The College of Physicians and Surgeons of Nova Scotia is the professional body responsible for regulating the province's medical profession and is dedicated to promoting and maintaining a psychologically healthy work environment.

The College was recently selected as one of Nova Scotia's Top-15 Employers, and was recognized in 2009 by the Nova Scotia Psychologically Healthy Workplace Award from the Nova Scotia Psychologically Healthy Workplace (NSPHW) Program for outstanding efforts in developing a psychologically healthy workplace.

Some of the healthy workplace practices that impressed the NSPHW committee were alternative working options, such as flexible work schedules, and opportunities to work from home.

The College also provides its employees tuition reimbursements, opportunities to cross-train, and a health fund which employees can access annually to subsidize recreational activities such as gym memberships.

Perhaps the most impressive thing about what the College is doing to become a PHW is resulting in a healthy workplace culture. After conducting a site visit to the College, one of the



Bonnie Bobryk Photography

A representation of the staff of the College of Physicians and Surgeons of N.S. with the psychologically healthy workplace award for 2009.

NSPHW committee members commented, "Perhaps what I found most impressive was not that they were 'conflict free,' but that they had a very psychologically healthy and sustainable process for dealing with conflicts when they arise."

There is a strong morale and sense of teamwork at the College. The College's hard work and efforts at creating a PHW has resulted in a happier and healthier employees. The college recognizes that in-

volvement from staff at all levels of the organization and a supportive leadership team are critical components of creating and maintaining a psychologically healthy workplace.

"I always tell people that it's a great place to work. You're always learning something new and you're encouraged to further yourself. You're always being challenged to stretch your limits and to master something new," said Mary Power, NSP&R, Program Manager, CPSNS.

### Nova Scotia Psychologically Healthy Workplace Program

Many Nova Scotia organizations, of all sizes are doing lots of these things without even realizing they psychologically healthy workplace practices. If your organization is excelling in one or more of the five areas outlined by APA, you should be recognized and awarded for your efforts and by applying for a Psychologically Healthy Workplace Award.

The Nova Scotia Psychologically Healthy Workplace (NSPHW) Program gives out these awards bi-annually to Nova Scotia organizations that are making outstanding contributions in one or more of the five areas listed above.

The NSPHW is an initiative of the American Psychological Association (APA), which aims to promote the

employee health and sustainability of Nova Scotia organizations and is co-sponsored by the CN Centre for Occupational Health and Safety and the Association of Psychologists of Nova Scotia.

You can start the application process now by going to: <http://www.nshealthyworkplaces.ca/PHW-awards.html>

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