

## Organizational Risk Factors

Depending on the conditions in which it is carried out, work can be very rewarding and have positive effects on health. It can also be a source of suffering, conflict, harassment, and even disease. For over thirty years, a host of scientific studies and many articles published on the subject have come to the same conclusion: working conditions and work organization have an impact on the psychological health of workers. The following is a list of factors that have a negative impact on health and social relationships at work.



### Risk factors

- Little recognition of one's work
- Lack of support from colleagues or supervisors
- A workload that is too heavy or unfairly distributed
- Little flexibility in making decisions or little autonomy at work
- Lack of communication between management and workers or between workers themselves
- Ambiguity related to roles and duties
- Lack of organizational justice
- Few means for balancing work, family, and personal lives

However, it is important to note that when the exact opposites of the risk factors are in place, they become protective factors for health. For example, recognition of quality of work and effort is an important protective factor.



### Protective factors

- Recognition of one's work
- Support from colleagues or supervisors
- An appropriate workload
- Sense of autonomy and accomplishment at work
- Communication and dissemination of information
- Clearly defined roles and duties
- Organizational justice
- Various means for balancing work, family, and personal lives

Some situations must also be monitored because they are specifically associated with violence and harassment at work:<sup>1</sup>

- Lack of respect between staff members.
- Interpersonal conflicts
- Envy, jealousy, or rivalry
- Excessive competition
- Difficult interpersonal relationships (colleagues, supervisors, clientele)
- Lack of training or support following technological changes
- Inadequate or insufficient work tools
- A major change in the structure of the business or organization
- The arrival of a new manager, an internal promotion



## What about your working conditions?

Are some of these risk factors present in your workplace?

If so, tell your union representative which risk factors are present.

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1. Commission des normes, de l'équité, de la santé et de la sécurité du travail (CNESST). 2019. *Comprendre et prévenir le harcèlement psychologique au travail—Guide pratique de l'employeur* [Understanding and preventing psychological harassment at work—Practical guide for employers]. <https://www.cnesst.gouv.qc.ca/Publications/200/Documents/DC200-1003web.pdf>. [Consulted in April 2020].