Work smarter, not harder: Addressing moral injury by building on assets

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@CCHL_CCLS   #CWHLC2023

Our story

2017

2019 – 2022

2022 onwards

Advocacy leads
to funding

Established as the Centre of
Excellence on Post-Traumatic
Stress and Related Mental
Health Conditions

We are the
Atlas Institute for
Veterans and Families

What we do

Our work is for military and RCMP Veterans and Veteran Families:

DEVELOP
RESOURCES

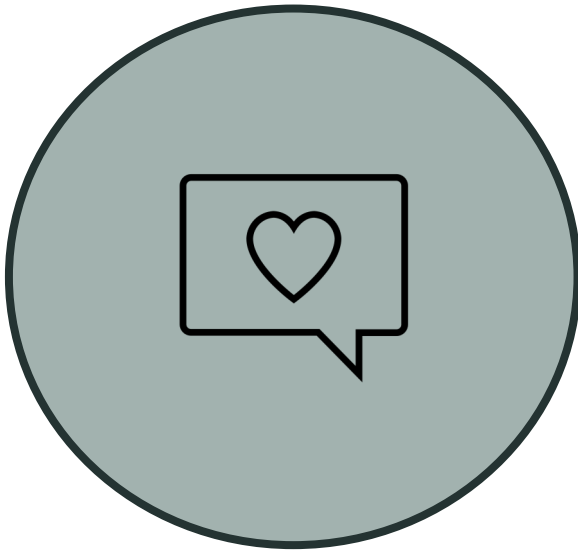COACH AND
TRAIN SERVICE
PROVIDERS

CONNECT
COMMUNITY
MEMBERS

RESEARCH

Learning objectives

- Understand moral injury and the continuum of moral stressors within health care
- Understand actions to address moral injury at individual, team and organizational levels
- Apply tools to strengthen prevention and early intervention

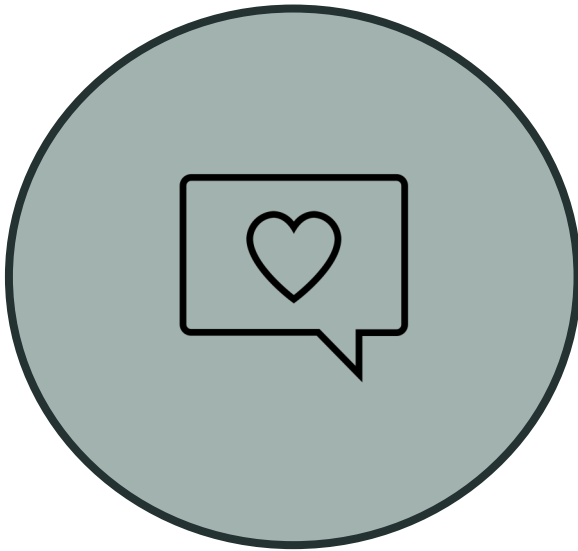# Hearing from you...

What health care sector do you work in?

Hearing from you...

In one word, describe how you feel about being a health care leader in the current context.

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In one word, describe how you feel about being a health care leader in the current context.

ⓘ Start presenting to display the poll results on this slide.

Recent headlines

Burned-out workers from health care system now make up majority of counsellor's clients

Katina Feggos says long hours, isolation and pandemic stress are behind rising burnout

Steven Webb · CBC News · Posted: Dec 18, 2022 7:00 AM EST | Last Updated: December 18, 2022

'We are absolutely destroyed': Health workers facing burnout, even as COVID levels ease

By Teresa Wright · Global News
Posted June 5, 2022 7:00 am · Updated June 6, 2022 2:43 pm

VANCOUVER | News
B.C. health-care workers at 'breaking point' seeking mental help in growing numbers

Overworked health workers are "past the point of exhaustion"

Diana Duong and Lauren Vogel
CMAJ February 27, 2023 195 (8) E309-E310; DOI: https://doi.org/10.1503/cmaj.1096042

Manitoba
Over half of Manitoba health-care workers have considered quitting: report

Report says frequency of burnout higher in Manitoba than elsewhere in Canada

CBC News · Posted: Apr 24, 2023 11:15 PM EDT | Last Updated: April 25

Health
Surgery backlogs, staff shortages, no family doctor: New report highlights Canada's health-care crisis

Canada saw 13% drop in surgeries in early years of COVID-19 pandemic, data suggests

Lauren Pelley · CBC News · Posted: Aug 02, 2023 4:00 AM EDT | Last Updated: August 2

Grim diagnosis for health-care workers

Opposition releases confidential report revealing burnout, job desperation in Manitoba highest in Canada

By: Danielle Da Silva
Posted: 6:00 AM CDT Tuesday, Apr. 25, 2023

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Addressing the "moral" in moral injury

Source: Haidt, 2012

What is moral injury?

Defining moral injury

*"A **betrayal** of what is right, by someone who holds **legitimate authority**, in a **high stakes** situation"*
— Dr. Jonathan Shay (emphases added)
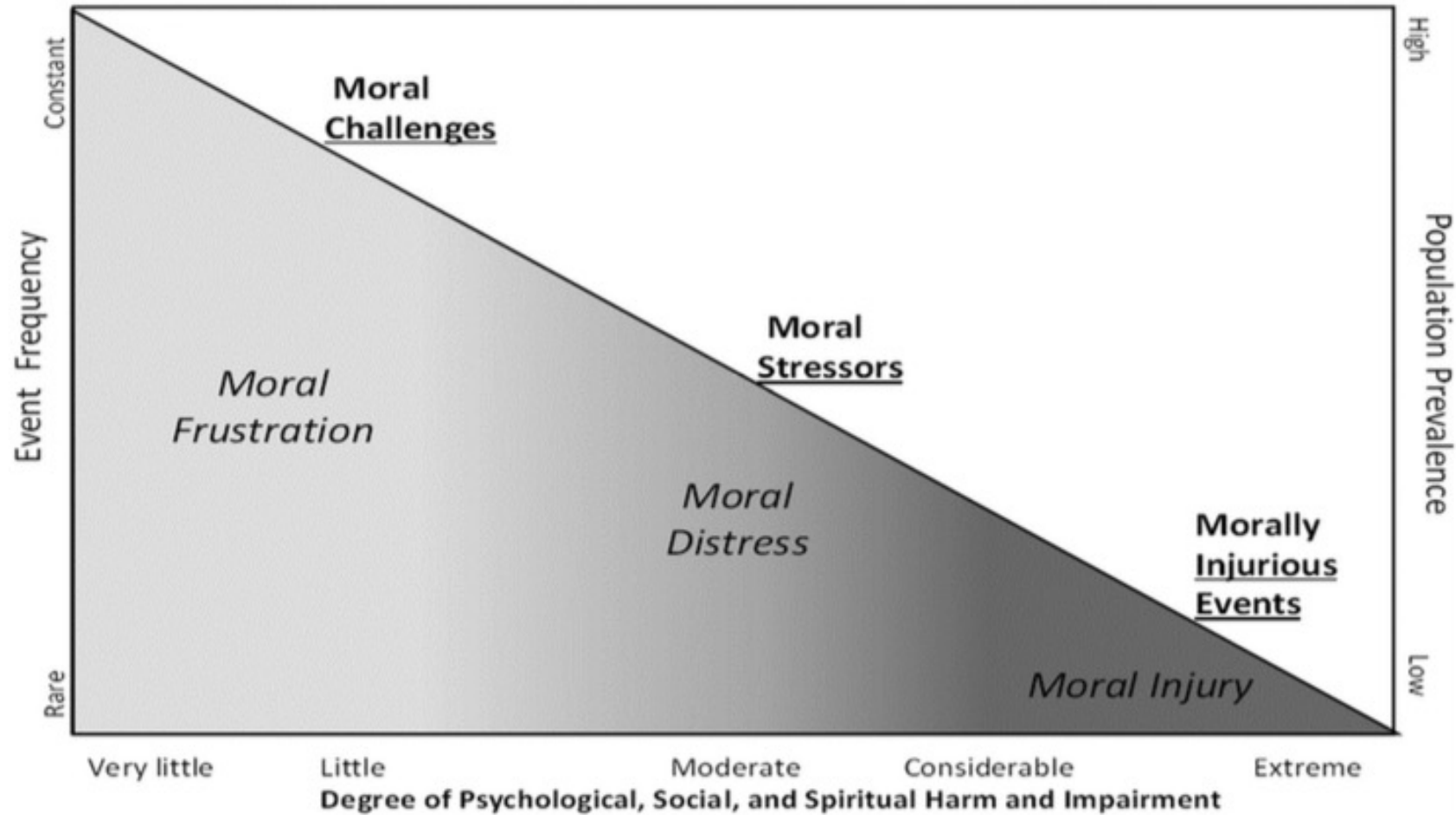
- First identified and studied in the military and Veteran context
- No consensus definition, but measures to assess and treat MI are in development

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Two broad types of PMIEs

1. Those that involve people acting against their own moral beliefs or failing to act in a way that supports them

2. Being exposed directly or indirectly to others' transgressions

Moral stressors and outcomes

National Standard for Canada for Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace

CSA GROUP™

BNQ Bureau de normalisation du Québec

CAN/CSA-Z1003-13/BNQ 9700-803/2013
National Standard of Canada
(reaffirmed 2022)

Psychological health and safety in the workplace —
Prevention, promotion, and guidance to staged implementation

Disponible en français
Santé et sécurité psychologiques en milieu de travail — Prévention, promotion et lignes directrices pour une mise en œuvre par étapes

Two additional factors specific to the health care sector:

- Protection from moral distress
- Support for psychological self-care

Moral injury and other problems with mental health

- Compassion fatigue

- PTSD

- Burnout

- Depression

- Anxiety

Why does moral injury matter for health care professionals?

Moral injury and health care

Assumption: The role of health care workers is to heal and cause no harm.

In professional situations that question this assumption, health care workers may experience moral/ethical dissonance.

PMIEs for health care workers

- Staff shortages leading to compromised quality of patient care
- Medication errors and preventable patient deaths
- Technology failures
- Non-supportive work environments
- Having to choose between safe working conditions and quality of patient care

Source: Kok et al. 2020, Stovall et al. 2020, Rowland 2021

Racial inequities and moral distress

Racialized health care workers and COVID-19

Moral injury

As a result of dealing with the stressors of systemic racism and care provision during COVID-19, racialized health care workers may be at **increased risk of experiencing psychological and moral distress and injury.**

The impacts of moral injury on well-being

Core domains of moral injury

Domains of moral injury

- Emotional experience (guilt, shame, depression, etc.)
- Identity (disrupted or lost sense of core self in relation to others, places and things)
- Self-regulation (reduced ability to monitor and manage emotions, thoughts, behaviours)
- Spiritual connection (loss of faith, leaving religious community)
- Concept of self and world (self-criticism, self-doubt, meaninglessness)
- Relationships (isolation, severed ties)

The flip side: Positive moral emotions during COVID-19

Some people may experience posttraumatic growth, in response to moral stressors

- Psychological resilience

- Self-esteem

- Compassion

- Engagement

Recognizing moral injury, promoting moral repair

Recognizing moral injury

- Not all PMIEs result in moral injury

- Be attentive to behavioural signs/changes
    - Isolation or withdrawal
    - Lack of purposeful behaviour
    - Anger or aggression

- Create a safe space to discuss PMIEs or moral injury
    - Acknowledge the moral stresses or difficulties inherent in the work
    - Show patience and compassion

- Promote self-care, personal meaning-making, social connection, non-judgment

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Promoting moral repair

- Accept reality of past moral wrongs and moral pain

- Forgive self and others

- Meaning-making
  - Prioritizing one's own values over strict or prescribed moral rules set by society.
    - Actively living values, including those violated, in the present
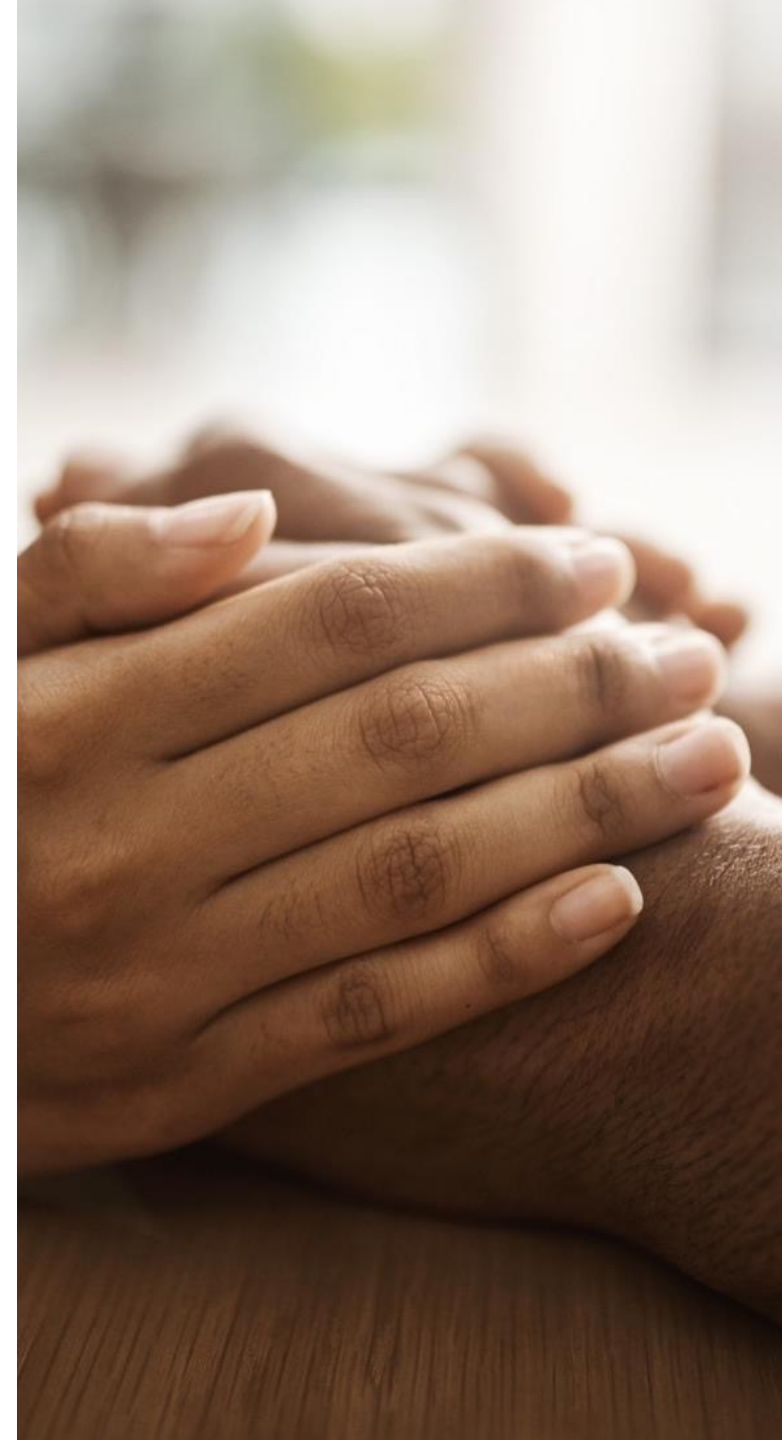
Promoting moral repair

- Practise self-compassion

    o Be open to moral pain and associated judgments as one element of human experience

    o Be aware of your sense of self that is distinct from moral pain

- Identify therapeutic social relationships

    o Create an atmosphere of acceptance

    o (Re)build strong social attachments

- Consider professional support

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Framework for managing PMIEs in the workplace

- An organization-wide approach

  o Requires responses at the organization, team and individual levels

- Social support

  o Has been shown to be a protective factor towards PTSD and related mental health conditions

- Peer support

  o Effective protective factor following trauma

What can organizations do?

- Provide strong leadership and establish cohesive teams with high morale

- Be prepared to discuss moral and ethical challenges

- Help team members make meaning of moral stressors

- Model positive coping and encourage self-care and help-seeking as required

- Celebrate successes — however small they may be

- Arrange regular check-ins with staff to monitor well-being

- Facilitate referral for further support or counselling if required
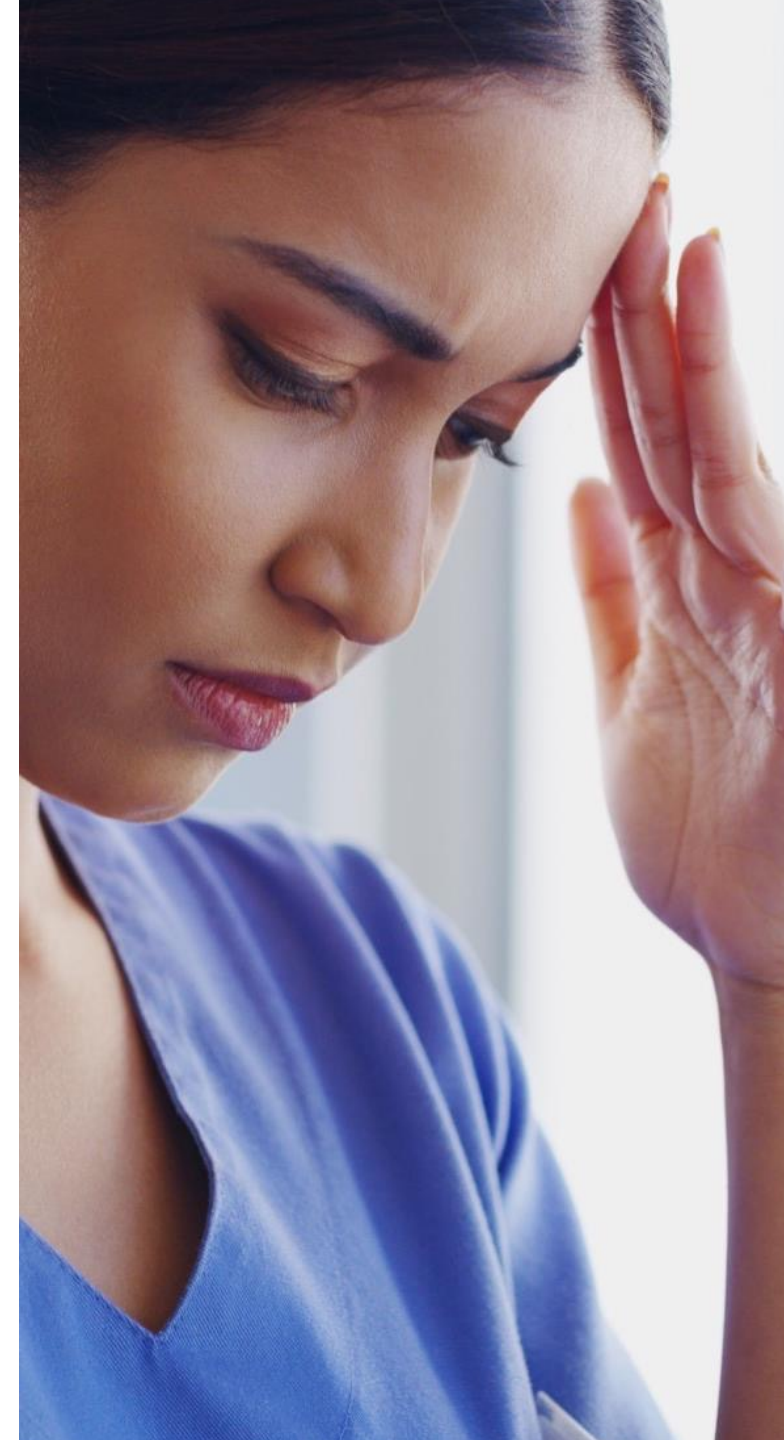
What can team leaders do?

- Promote cohesive teams with high morale
- Cultivate a culture of safety, non-judgment and care

- Discuss moral and ethical challenges

- Discuss PMIEs and potential social, emotional and behavioural responses to exposures
- Check in with personnel regularly
- Encourage debriefing
- Acknowledge and affirm experiences shared by staff
- Model positive coping skills and encourage self-care and help-seeking

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How can we self-care outside of the workplace?

- Learn more about moral stressors and moral injury
- Eat and rest well, exercise and maintain social connections
- Engage in stress reduction activities (relaxation therapy, mindfulness or other meditation)
- Engage in self-reflection and expression activities
- Connect with peers and support colleagues with shared experiences
- Seek professional support if you are feeling distressed or troubled by your experiences

Role of the community and government

The community and government must not overlook our responsibilities for:

- The quality treatment of health care workers
- The development of accurate and respectful narratives regarding the difficult professional choices they may be forced to make

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Moral injury toolkit

Moral injury: Toolkit for leaders

1   What is moral injury and what does it mean for my organization?

2   Asset-mapping through the lens of moral injury

3   Amplifying and enhancing existing supports

4   Planning for implementation

5   Evaluating, improving and keeping it going

Moral injury: Toolkit for leaders

1 What is moral injury and what does it mean for my organization?

🎥 Dr. Karen Cohen: The importance of listening

2 Asset-mapping through the lens of moral injury

3 Amplifying and enhancing existing supports

4 Planning for implementation

5 Evaluating, improving and keeping it going

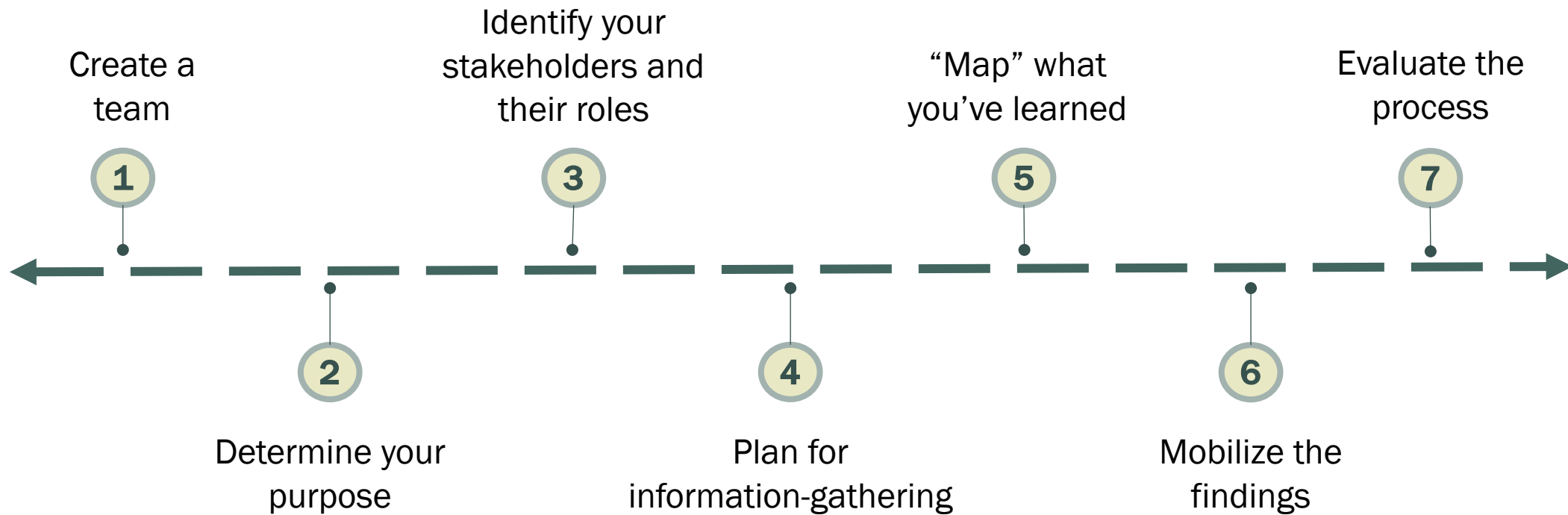## What is asset mapping and why is it important?

- Process of identifying and listing assets as an inventory of resources available

- Allows you to see what is already available to support your workforce in relation to a key area of concern

- Create plans for additional support, in an informed way, to address true gap areas

What is an asset?

"any factor or resource which enhances the ability of individuals, communities, and populations to maintain and sustain health and well-being"

— World Health Organization

How do you map your assets?
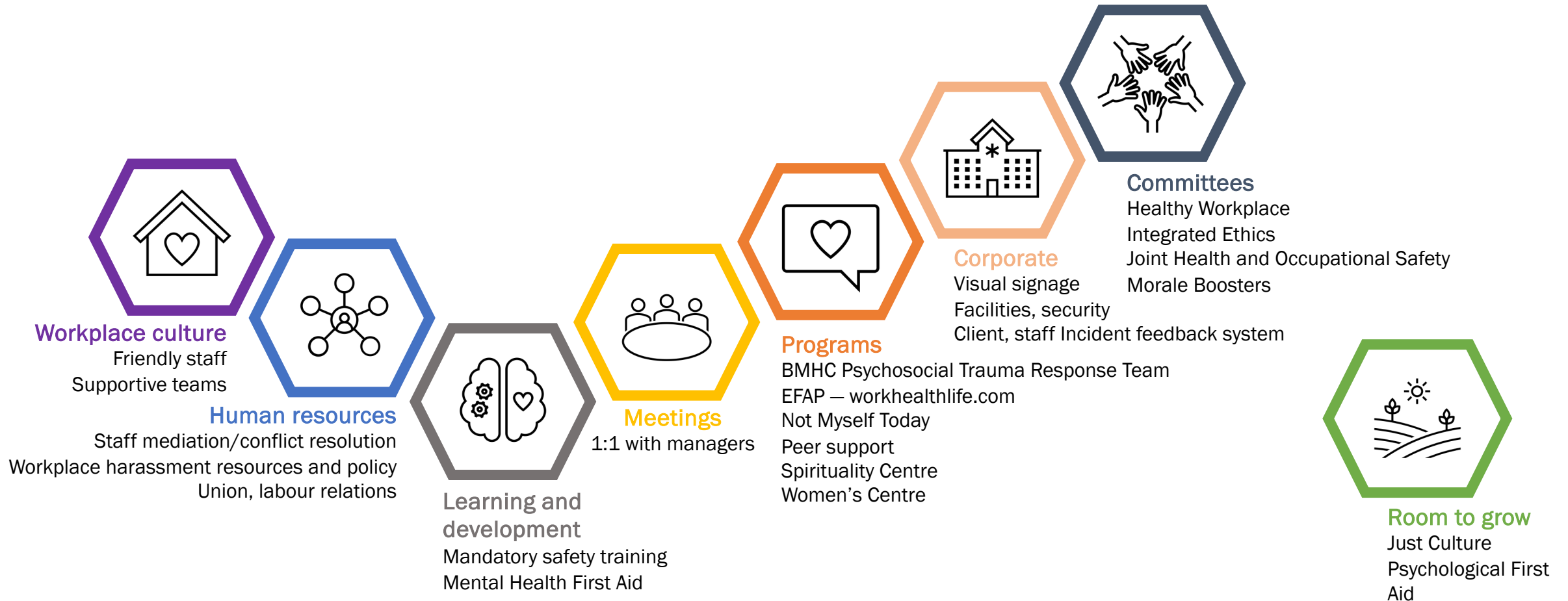
Create a
team

Identify your
stakeholders and
their roles

"Map" what
you've learned

Evaluate the
process

1

3

5

7

2

4

6

Determine your
purpose

Plan for
information-gathering

Mobilize the
findings

Psychological protection is present in a work environment where workers' feel able to put themselves on the line, ask questions, seek feedback, report problems or propose a new idea without fearing negative consequences to themselves, their job or their career. Psychological protection exists when:

- The organization is committed to minimizing unnecessary stress at work
- The organization makes efforts to prevent harm to workers from harassment, bullying, discrimination, violence or stigma
- Team leaders are prepared to discuss moral and ethical challenges

LEADS: Engage others, Achieve results, Develop coalitions

Workplace culture
Friendly staff
Supportive teams

Human resources
Staff mediation/conflict resolution
Workplace harassment resources and policy
Union, labour relations

Learning and development
Mandatory safety training
Mental Health First Aid

Meetings
1:1 with managers

Programs
BMHC Psychosocial Trauma Response Team
EFAP — workhealthlife.com
Not Myself Today
Peer support
Spirituality Centre
Women's Centre

Corporate
Visual signage
Facilities, security
Client, staff Incident feedback system

Committees
Healthy Workplace
Integrated Ethics
Joint Health and Occupational Safety
Morale Boosters

Room to grow
Just Culture
Psychological First Aid

Breakout discussion

Instructions

- On the provided handout, do some individual brainstorming of organization and team-level assets for the different categories (**5 minutes**).

- At your table, discuss your responses and collectively identify 1–3 top themes, highlights or takeaways (**15 minutes**).

- Please assign a time-keeper, note-taker and presenter who can share back your top highlights in our large group debrief (**10 minutes**).

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Guidelines for engagement

- Success depends on participation

- Share your unique perspective

- Allow every voice to be heard

- Respect each others' thinking and value their contributions

- Ask "what's possible?" not "what's wrong?" and keep asking

- Staying on schedule is everyone's responsibility; honour time limits

- Embrace this as a chance to network and build new relationships!

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Debrief

Moral injury:
Toolkit for leaders

1. What is moral injury and what does it mean for my organization?

2. Asset-mapping through the lens of moral injury
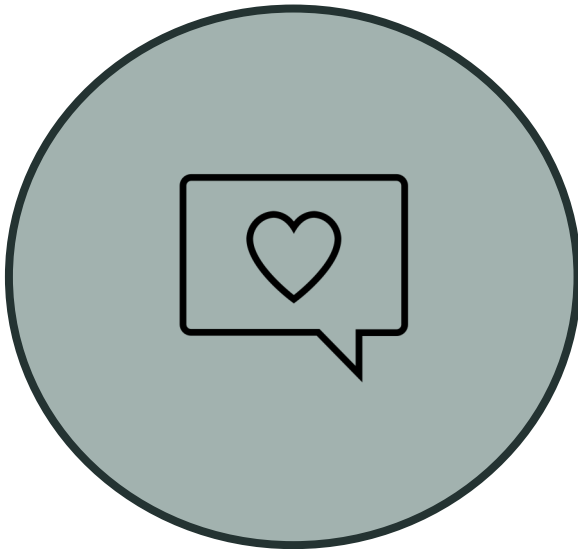
3. Amplifying and enhancing existing supports

4. Planning for implementation

5. Evaluating, improving and keeping it going

# Breakout discussion

Discussion question

The practice of gratitude, when embedded in organizational cultures, has wide-ranging positive effects for the person receiving thanks and acknowledgement and for the person providing it. This includes creating connectedness and trust and increasing resilience to stress.

What are examples of authentic expressions of gratitude that you've seen, either at a team level or organizational level?
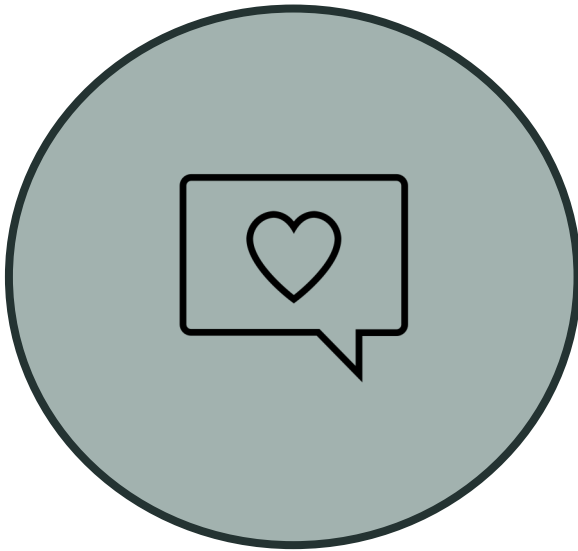
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Debrief

Q&A

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Closing

Write one thing that was most meaningful to you from the presentation/discussion.

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Write one thing that was most meaningful to you from the presentation/discussion.

ⓘ Start presenting to display the poll results on this slide.

Thank you!

For further information, please
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