Addressing Psychosocial Factors in the Workplace – A Partnership between Union and Employer

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Occupational Health Clinics for Ontario Workers – MayDay 2022 Webinar Series
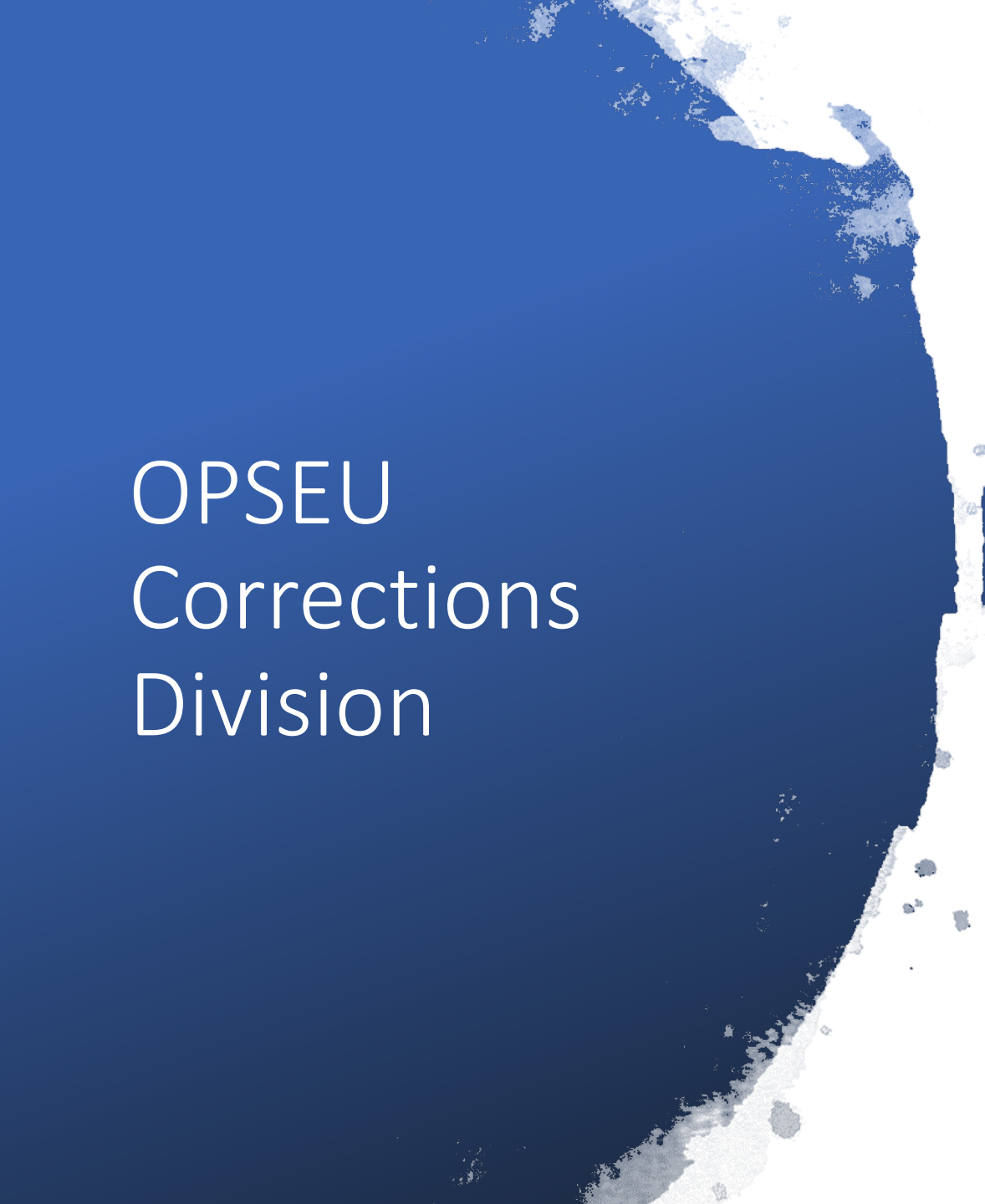
May 13, 2022

Outline

- Provide a brief overview of the Ministry of the Solicitor General's Correctional Services Division (Employer) and the OPSEU Corrections Division (Union)

- Discuss the implementation of the COPSOQ in correctional workplaces in Ontario

- Describe the joint project underway to mitigate psychosocial hazards in correctional workplaces

Ministry of the Solicitor General

- Formerly know as the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services

- Is the ministry in the Government of Ontario responsible for public security, policing, emergency management, provincial correctional centres and detention centres

- Examples include the Ontario Provincial Police, Emergency Management Ontario and the Office of the Fire Marshall

- Solicitor General is Sylvia Jones (elected MPP)

- Deputy Solicitor General; Community Safety is Mario Di Tommaso

- Deputy Solicitor General; Correctional Services is Karen Ellis

Ministry of the Solicitor General – Correctional Services Division

- SolGen - Correctional Services includes the following divisions:
  - Institutional Services – 25 Adult Institutions in the province
  - Community Services – 121 Probation and Parole Offices across the province
  - Operational Support Division – comprised of many departments which provide support to IS and CS, including recruitment and training.

OPSEU Corrections Division

- Approximately 9,000 members in
  - Adult correctional institutions
  - Adult probation and parole offices
  - Correctional Services Training and Recruitment Centre
  - Youth probation offices
  - Youth facilities
- Adult and Youth are in separate ministries and have separate provincial committees
- Focus today is on the adult institutions and offices within SolGen

OPSEU/SolGen Provincial Health and Safety Committee

- PJOHSC – Provincial Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee to address health and safety issues
  - 3 OPSEU Institutional Services representatives (elected)
  - 1 OPSEU Probation and Parole representative (elected)
  - 1 OPSEU Ministry Employee Relations Committee Co-Chair (elected)
  - 1 OPSEU Health and Safety Officer (staff)
  - 5 Employer representatives – at the senior manager level (e.g. director or deputy director) – with 1 from Community Services
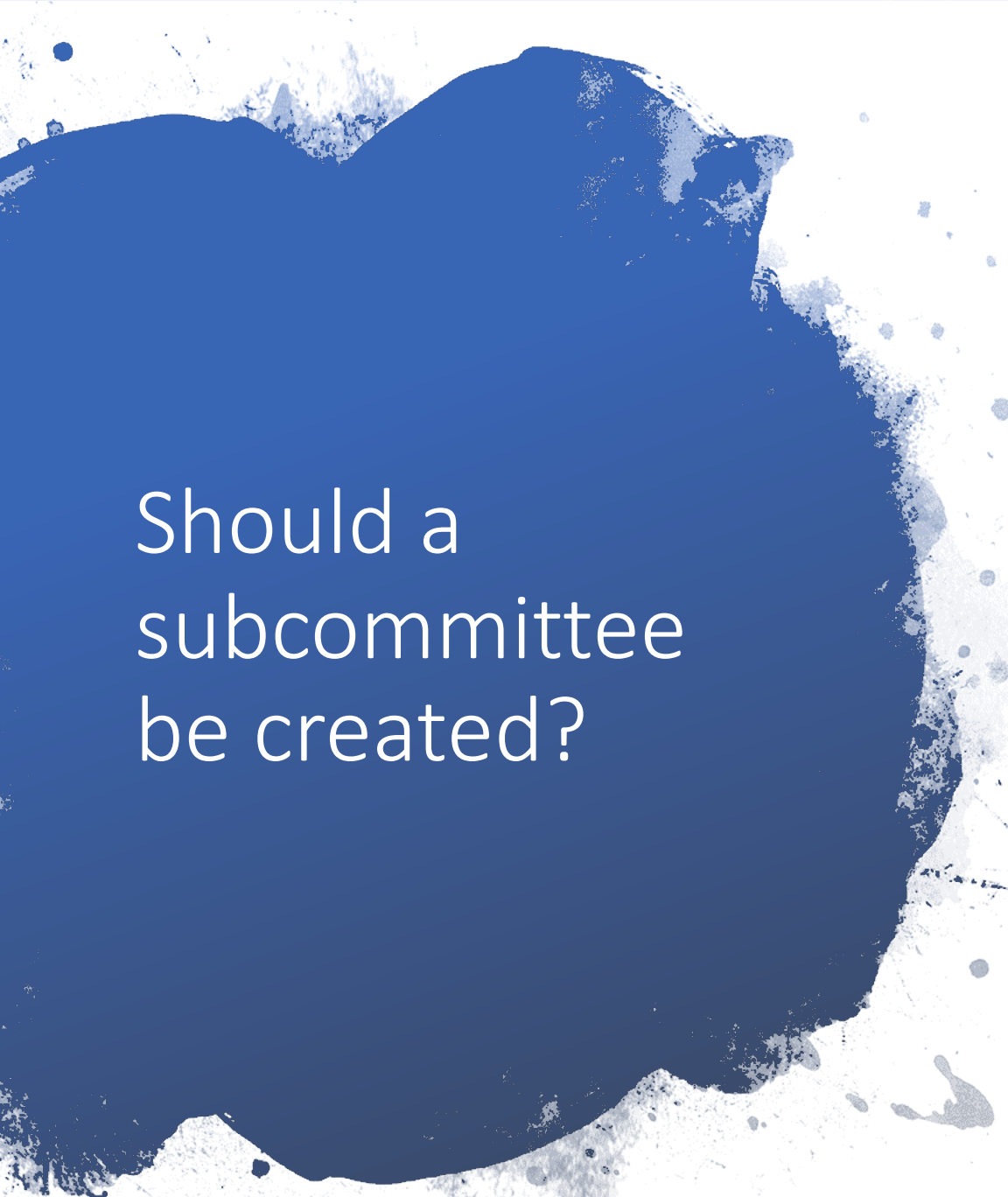
Setting the Stage

October 2012 – Ombudsman releases the *In the Line of Duty* report

- Investigation into how MCSCS and OPP have addressed operational stress injuries
- Recommendations included:
    - Development and implementation of a province-wide confidential survey to identify how many Ontario police officers are impacted by operational stress injuries
    - Requirement for all police services to provide information on education, training, supports, services to address operational stress injuries

November 2012 – Cotton Report

- Recommendations included:
    - Internal study to be completed on causes and levels of stress
    - Develop proactive primary interventions
    - Training for managers in leadership and management competencies

Should a subcommittee be created?

January 2013

- Occupational Stress Injury (OSI) mandate is created through language in the collective agreement between OPSEU-Corrections and the Crown
- Following the ratification of the collective agreement, the Parties agreed to form a subcommittee of the Provincial Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee (PJOHSC)
- OSI subcommittee began meeting in September 2013
- Scope includes:
  - Reviewing trends of violence in the workplace
  - Recommending a strategic plan to meet the physical and psychological demands
  - Recommending training to recognize signs of occupational stress
  - Identification of support programs to treat OSIs
- Current membership:
  - 3 Employer and 3 OPSEU representatives – from both institutions and community services
  - Employee Wellness Unit as a resource

5 Steps to Organizational Change

Learn → Organize → Assess → Change → Evaluate

2013

OSI Subcommittee Needed To Learn

OSI Subcommittee engaged in various learning activities starting in 2013
- Reviewed existing literature including the Cotton report and Line of Duty report
- Reviewed existing CSA Psychological Health and Safety standard
- Researching and reviewing published academic articles (including SOBANE, IRSST)
- Presentations from OHCOW, OPP, US Department of Justice, Institute of Corrections (USA), and other first responder organizations

Joint Recommendations Submitted

September 2015

Joint recommendations from the OSI subcommittee were submitted for review

1) Development of a clear framework to prepare staff from point of hire and supporting them at all levels of their career
2) **Complete a survey to establish a baseline "pulse" of the organization**
3) Mandatory awareness training on OSIs
4) Review of current supports and development of a Peer Support Program
5) Anti-stigma campaign

Where are we now? (Part 2)

Learn → Organize → Assess → Change → Evaluate

2013 → Learn

2015 → Organize

Assess – But Assess What?

- As a result of the joint recommendations, the Employer created a new unit specifically to implement strategies from the OSI table
  - Today, this unit is called the Employee Wellness Unit
- Union and Employer agreed to implement a survey to establish a baseline of the organization
- Discussions began in 2016 on how to implement the survey
  - What did we want to measure?
  - What survey would be used?
  - How would it be administered?

The Tale of Two Surveys

CIPSRT

Canadian Institute for Public Safety Research and Treatment

- Focus on traumatic incidents and diagnostic questions

- Included traumatic events outside of work

- Some coverage of psychosocial factors in the workplace

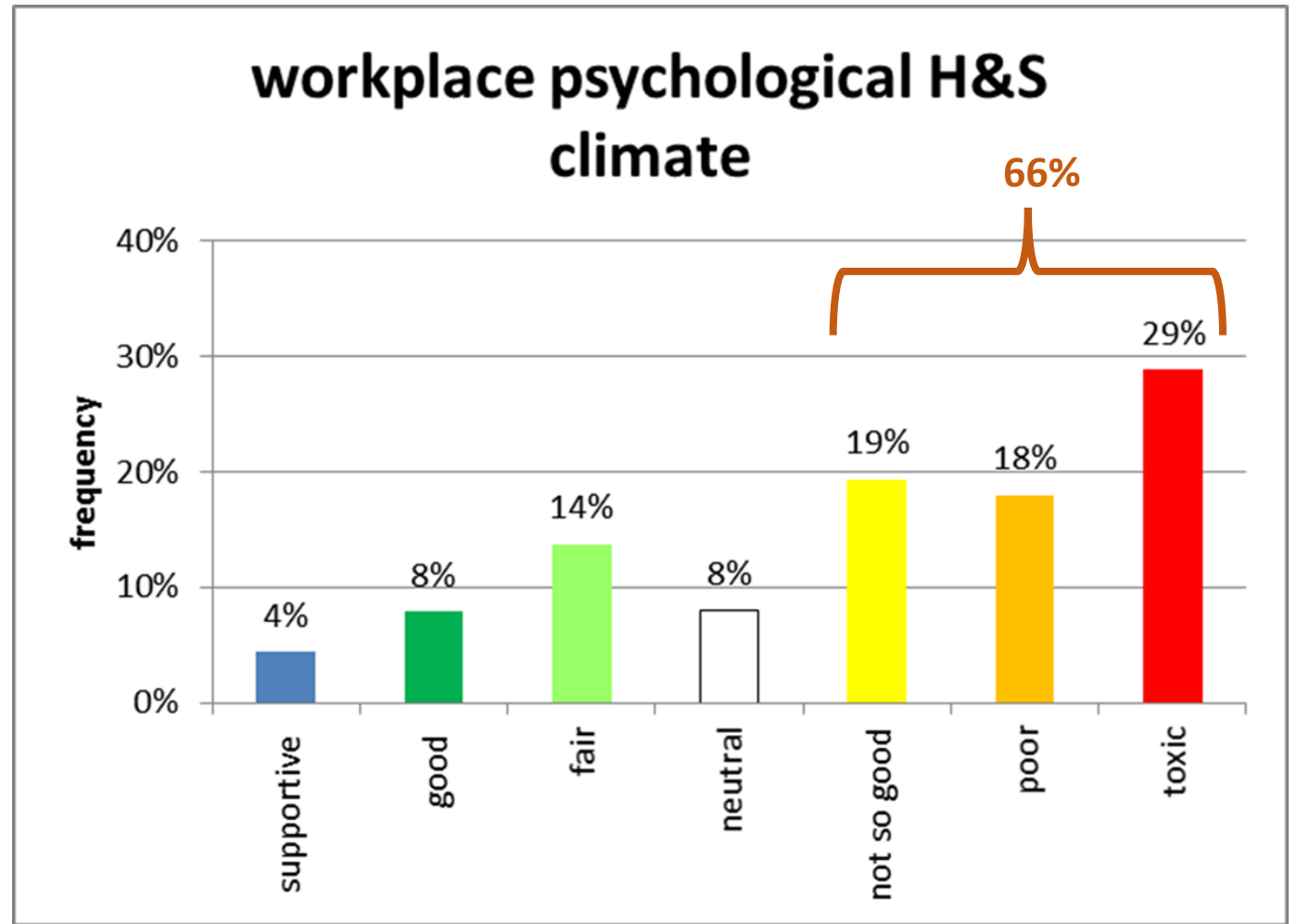## COPSOQ

Copenhagen Psychosocial Questionnaire

- Focus on psychosocial factors in the workplace

- Questions of physical hazards in the workplace

- Some coverage of traumatic incidents
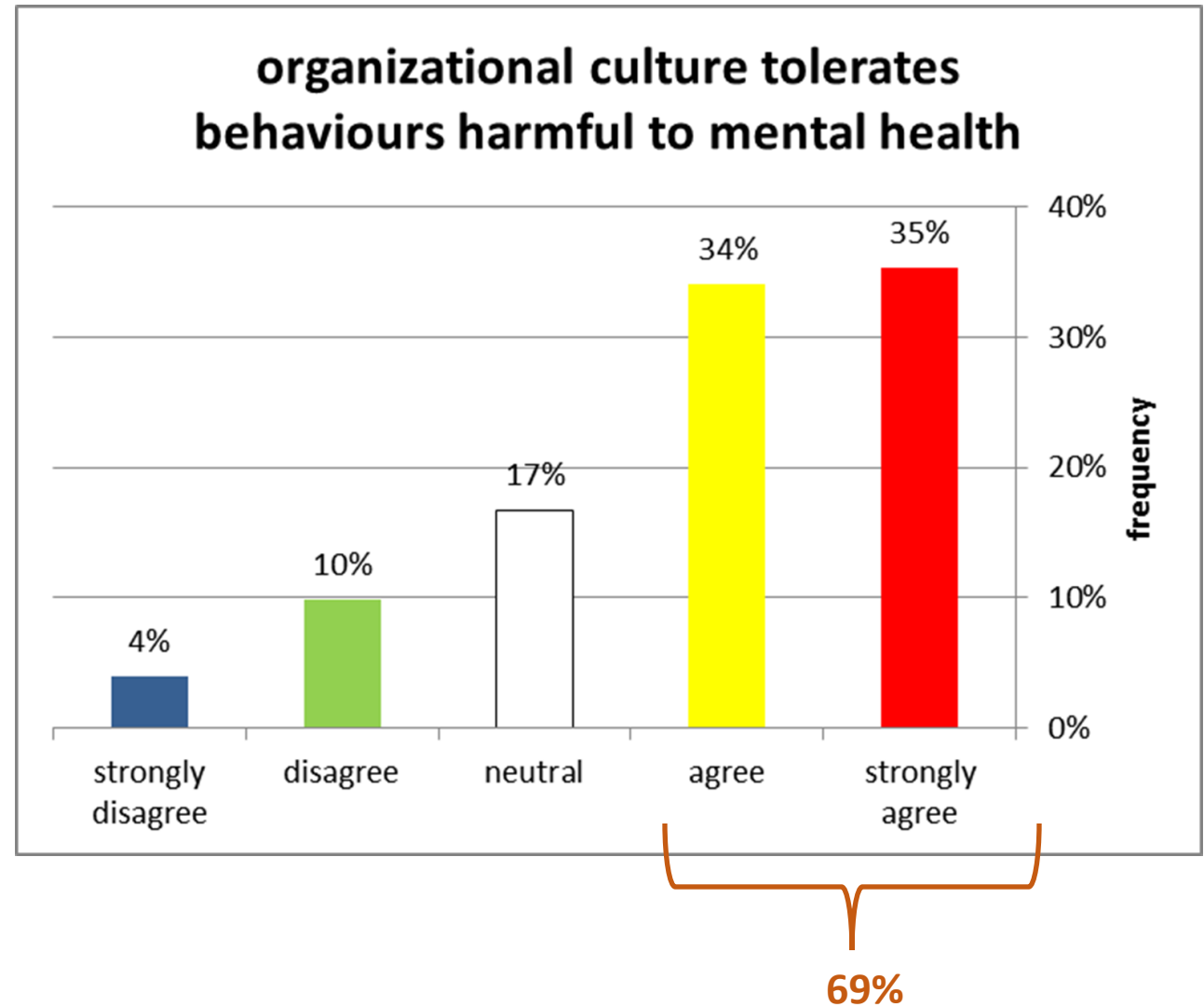
Survey Plan Organized

- Through negotiations we agreed to complete both the CIPSRT and COPSOQ surveys in our organization

- Plan to make the survey available to all staff
    - Joint Employer and Union memo would be sent to all staff encouraging participation
    - Union agreed to send email link to survey through their email lists to ensure members out of the workplace would be able to participate

- OSI Survey launched in December 2017 and closed in June 2018

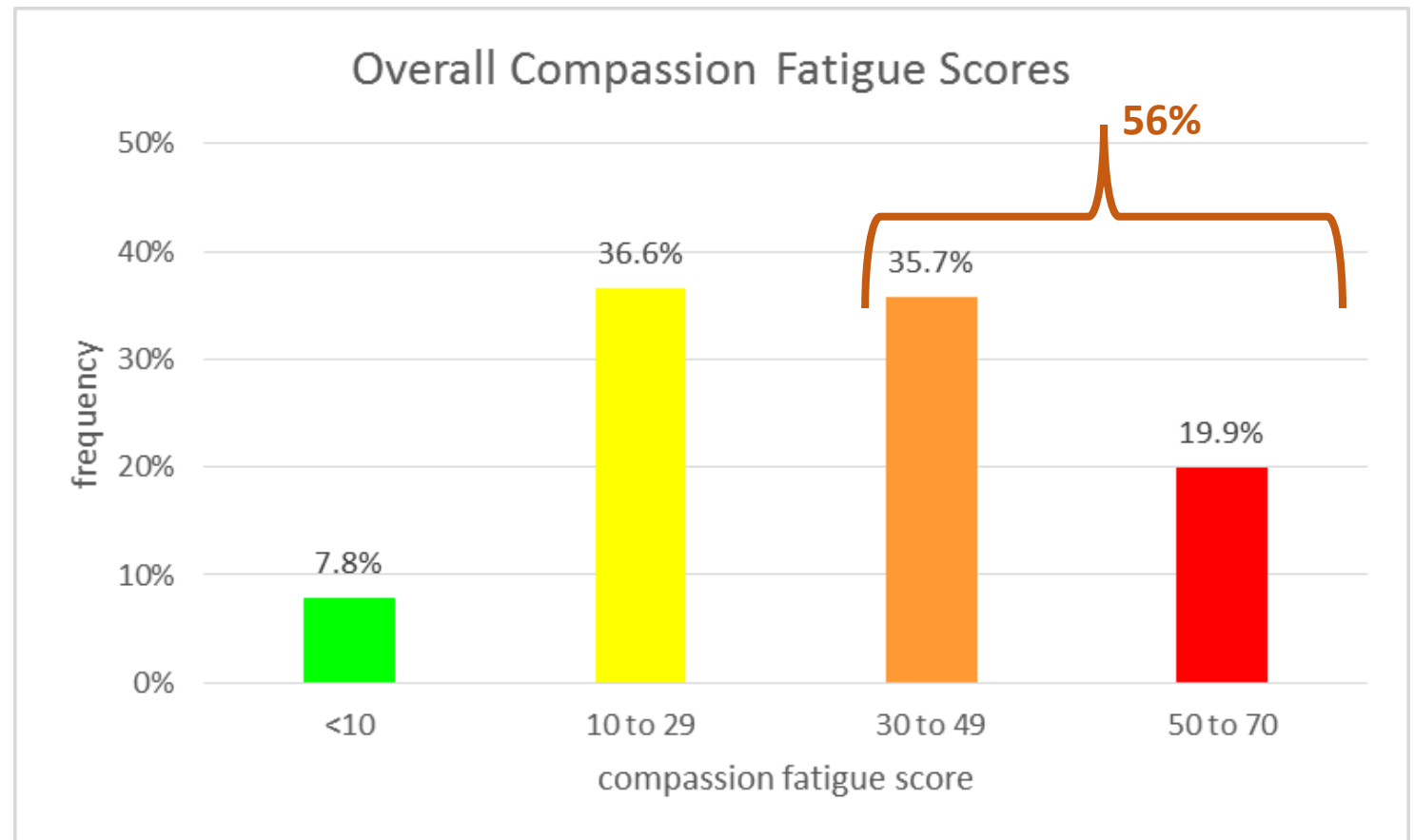- Results were presented in September 2018 to the OSI subcommittee

COPSOQ Results

workplace psychological H&S climate

66%

frequency						
4%	8%	14%	8%	19%	18%	29%
supportive	good	fair	neutral	not so good	poor	toxic

COPSOQ Results

organizational culture tolerates behaviours harmful to mental health

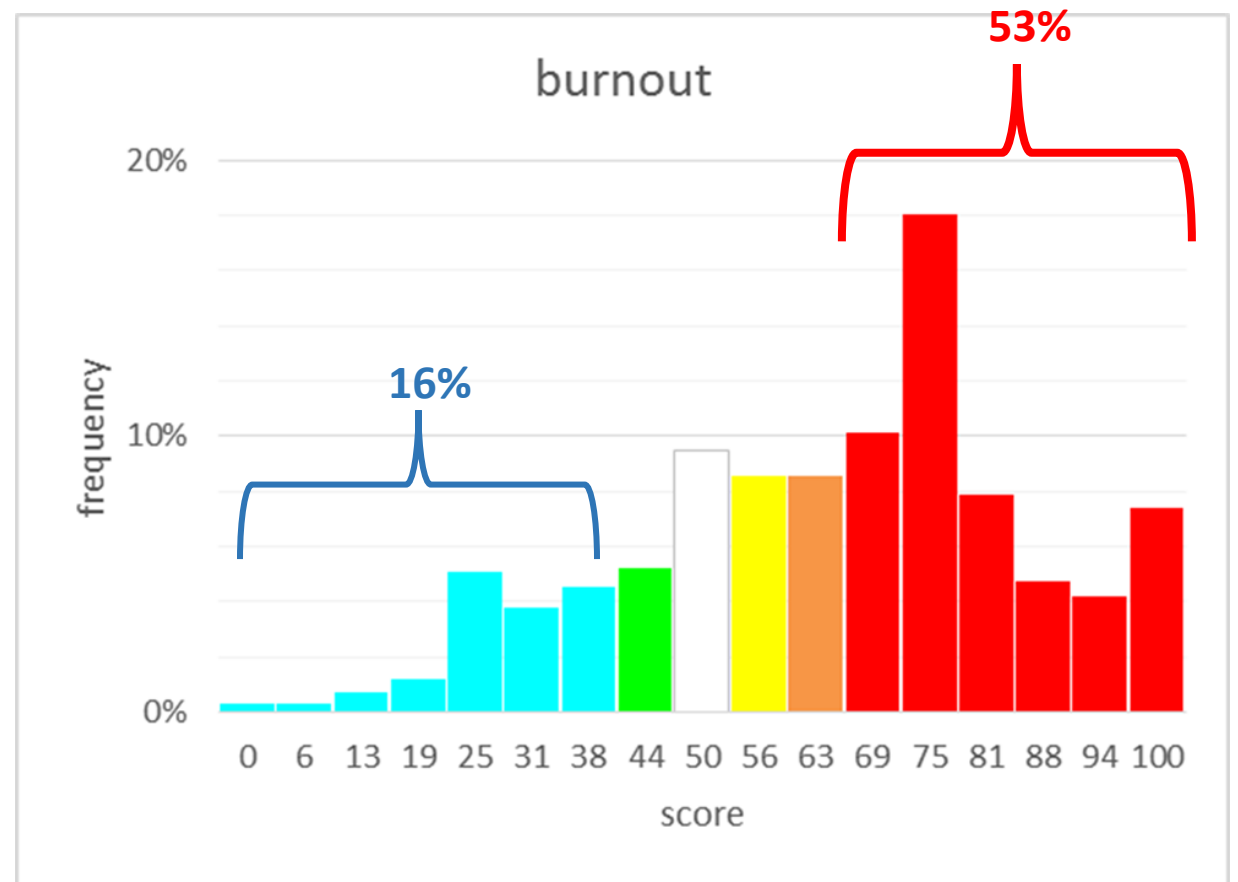| strongly disagree	disagree	neutral	agree	strongly agree
4%	10%	17%	34%	35%

69%

COPSOQ Results
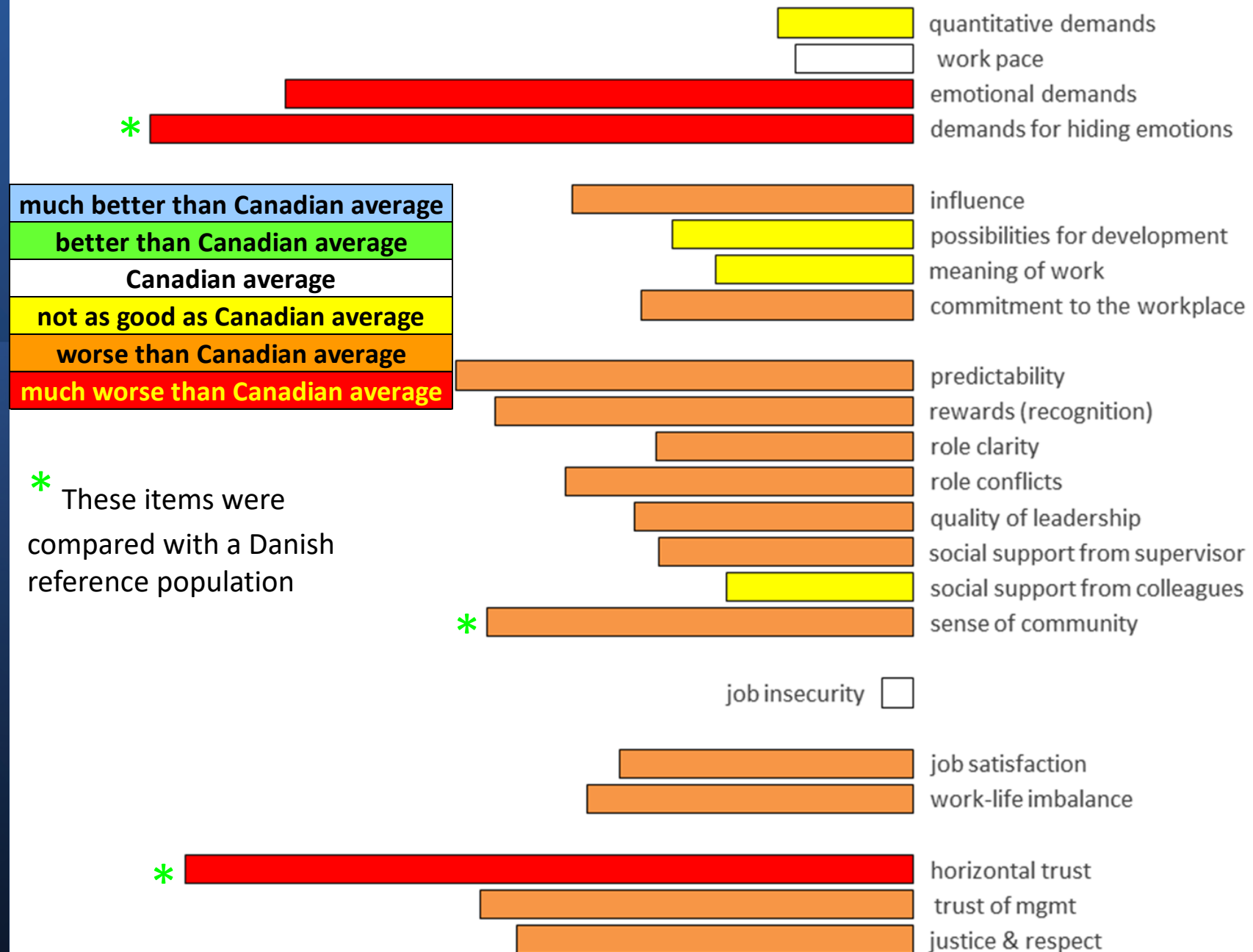

Overall Compassion Fatigue Scores

COPSOQ Results

much better than Canadian average
better than Canadian average
Canadian average
not as good as Canadian average
worse than Canadian average
much worse than Canadian average

Psychosocial factors most associated with:

Major correlations with total Symptom Score
Emotional demands
Role conflicts
Reward (recognition)
Justice & respect
Trust of management

Major correlations with rating of psychological H&S
Rewards (Recognition)
Trust of management
Justice & respect
Predictability
Violence & harassment policy effectiveness

Major correlations with Commitment to the Workplace (Engagement)
Meaning of work
Rewards (recognition)
Predictability
Trust of management
Possibilities for development

Major correlations Job Satisfaction Score
Emotional demands
Role conflicts
Rewards (recognition)
Justice & respect
Trust of management

Where are we now? (Part 3)

Learn → Organize → Assess → Change → Evaluate

| 2013 | 2015 | 2018 |
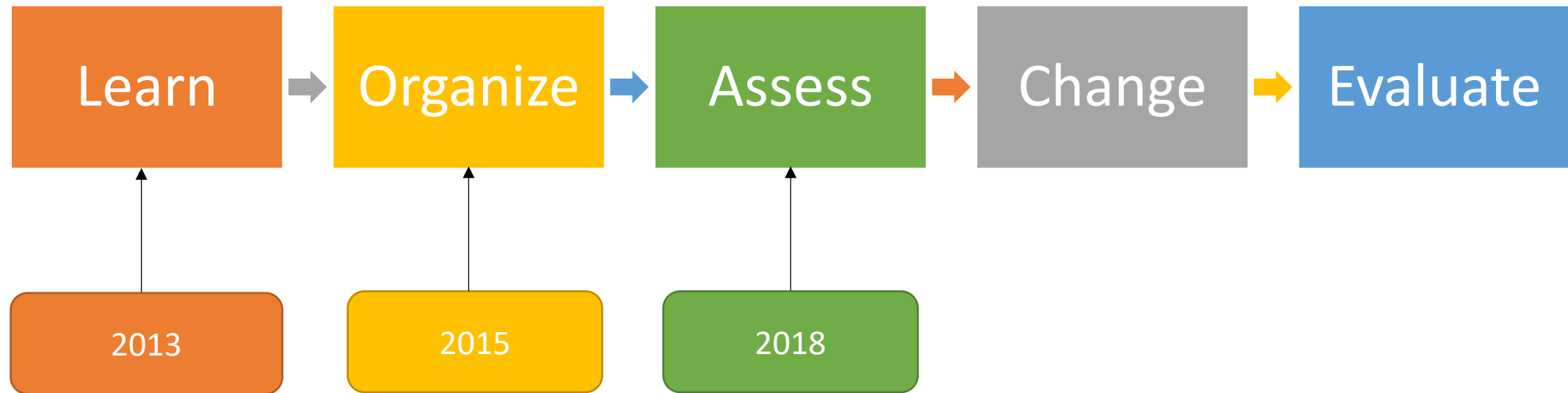
What happened next?

- First step was to understand the results and begin to formulate a plan on how to change

- Societal shift toward employee wellness and mental health awareness

- Employer began implementing many strategies – most of them targeting the individual level (both worker and manager)

- Limited work was being completed to implement organizational changes based on the OSI survey results
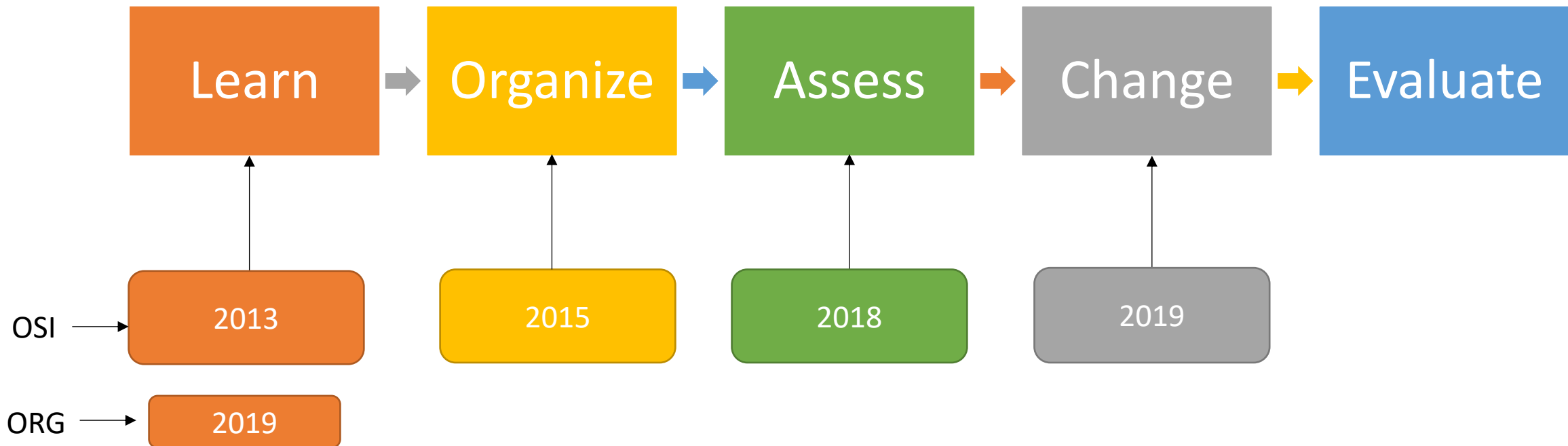
Individual versus Organizational Interventions

prevention level	individual	group (dept/shift/team)	organizational
	primary - coping and appraisal skills (resiliency)	same as organizational but more informal	primary - changing the culture, climate, work structure & organization
	secondary - wellness, relaxation techniques (mindfulness)	same as organizational but with personal interactions	secondary - awareness, Mental Health 1st Aid, screening (surveys)
	tertiary – CBT, therapy, counselling, medication, peer support	same as organizational but with more personal supports	tertiary - EAP, WSIB, recognition, Return to Work

Where was the Organization?

Learn → Organize → Assess → Change → Evaluate

OSI → 2013 (under Learn)

2015 (under Organize)
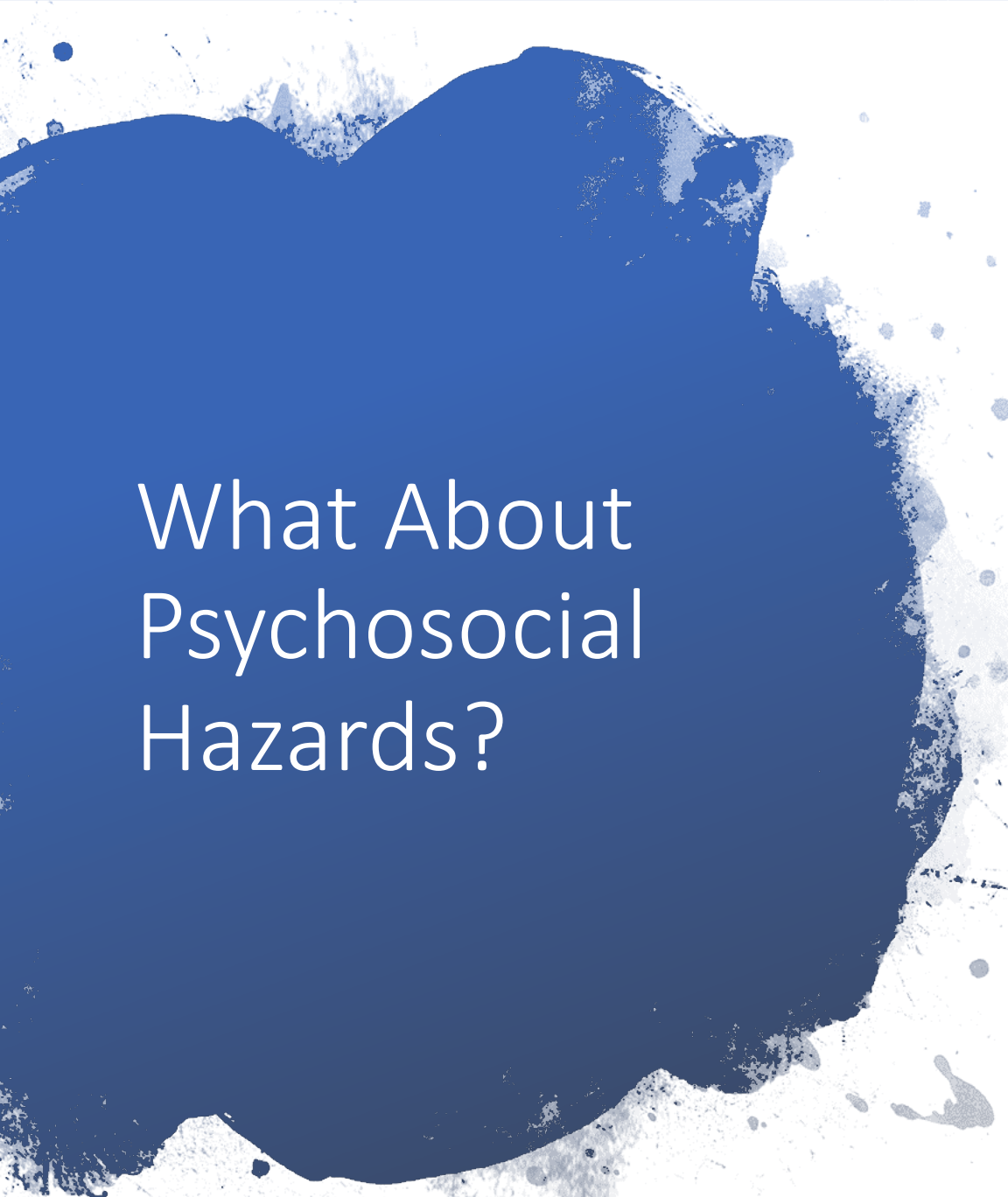
2018 (under Assess)

2019 (under Change)

ORG → 2019

We needed to return to H&S 101

When controlling traditional workplace hazards there are 3 options:

1) **Control the hazard at the source:** eliminate the hazard completely or place controls where the hazard enters the work site

2) **Control the hazard along the path:** limit workers' exposure as the hazard moves through the work site

3) **Control the hazard at the worker:** PPE issued to workers

What About Psychosocial Hazards?

At the source - Primary Intervention

- Treating the root cause & building resilience
- Examples include modifying job design, organizational adaptations, increasing flexibility, management policy/program changes, staffing model changes

Along the path - Secondary Intervention

- Early detection programs or building worker wellness strategies
- Examples include educating workers about symptoms and coping skills, wellness programs, screening tools for new hires

At the worker - Tertiary Intervention

- Treating the consequences of OSIs (ex – helping those injured)
- Examples include treatment programs, compensation recognition, return to work support, EFAP supports, therapy programs/options, peer support program,

Union's Push to Talk About Primary Interventions

- Took several attempts to get traction to talk about Primary Interventions
- Changes in key leadership positions for the Employer and Union delayed the process
- Needed to see that we were in this together
- Union wanted to implement the Québec model based off IRSST

Corrections Case Example

- Joint endeavor between Québec's Ministère de la sécurité publique and le Syndicat des agent de la paix en services correctionnels du Québec

- Engaged researchers from the Institut de recherche Robert-Sauvé en santé et en sécurité du travail (IRSST) to examine the problem of violence among employees

- Growing concerns with CO absenteeism and employment injuries

- Organizational factors were linked

- IRSST research hypothesis: targeting certain organizational work demands for change would help reduce violence among employees of the organization

Studies and Research Projects

REPORT R-739

Preventing Violence Among Employees of the Same Work Organization

Evaluation of a Participatory Intervention

Julie Dussault
Nathalie Jauvin
Michel Vézina
Renée Bourbonnais

irsst

IRSST Project Journey

- 1999 – Set up steering committee
- 2000 – Pre-intervention (baseline) survey completed
- 2004 – Follow-up survey completed without any intervention on organizational factors
  - Research team learned that an intervention is needed to change things
- 2006 – Implemented interventions to organizational factors and supported each facility with a coordination team
- 2007 – Follow-up survey to evaluate impact of interventions
- 2008 – Follow-up survey to evaluate impact of interventions

IRSST Project Structure (Québec Model)

Figure 2 — Structure of the intervention project
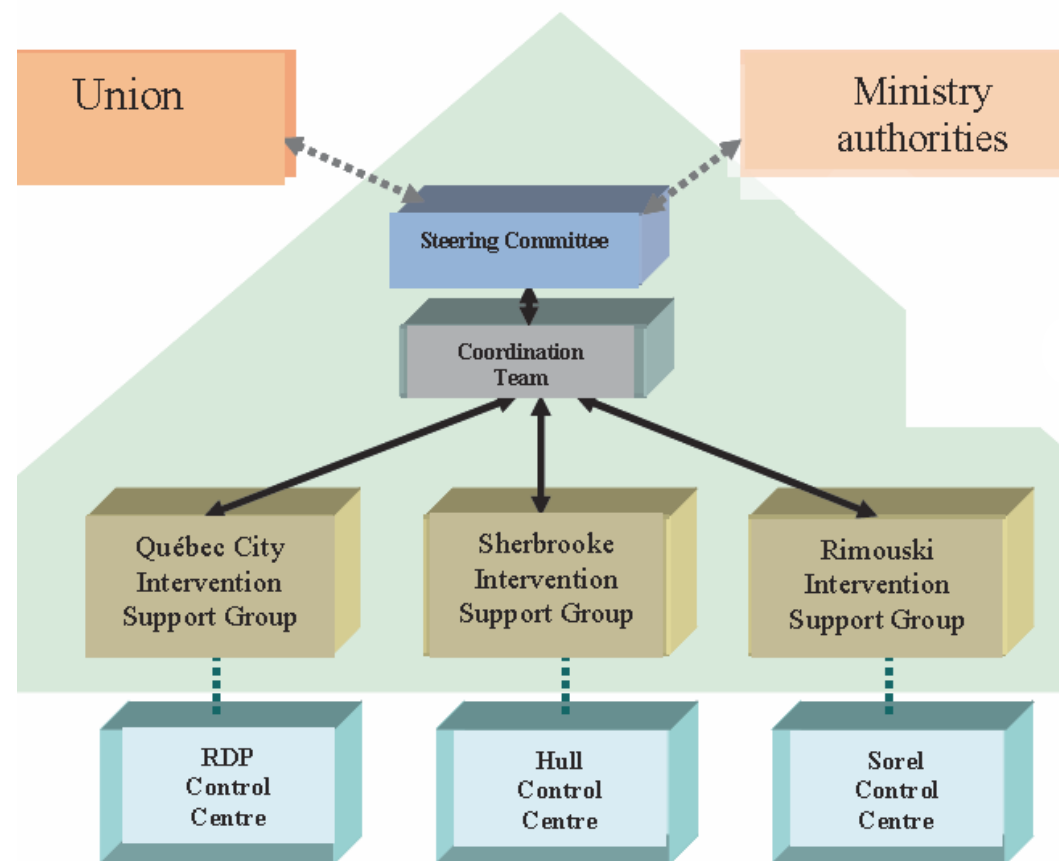
Québec Model – Detailed Overview

- Intervention support groups of the Québec Model were the JHSCs of the 3 identified institutions
  - Consisted of Correctional Officers, Senior Managers, and 2 IRSST Researchers
  - Met quarterly
- Local JHSCs selected the interventions to be carried out
- One of the major foundations in the project was worker participation in the process
- Joint Employer/Employee process and participation were cornerstones of the entire intervention
- Intervention involved having employees and their supervisors identify the organizational work demands at the root of the interpersonal violence as well as solutions for stopping and preventing the phenomenon

Québec Model — A New Way of Thinking

- Participants needed to set aside previous ideas and perspectives usual in the Detention Centre environment
  - Decisions historically made in an autocratic and bureaucratic manner
- Failures of previous projects created skepticism and resistance
- Joint objective of improving relationships among staff was key
- Challenge was to share these new values with all other employees and managers in the targeted institutions
- The extent to which this participatory and innovative model caught on hinged on the management philosophy of prison wardens
- Financial requirements remained an obstacle throughout the process

From Idea to Launch

- February/March 2020 – Union conducted a formal pitch to implement the Québec model – Employer representatives were receptive to the pitch

- March 2020 – COVID happened

- Fall 2020 – Employer formally indicated they supported the Union's plan

- November 2020 – Union provided presentation to all Regional Directors

- Winter 2020 & Spring 2021 – Union and Employer selected 5 experimental sites – 3 institutions and 2 community locations

- Summer 2021 – Project scope and timeline developed jointly between Union and Employer

- October 2021 – Project launched with local worksites

Project Model

1) **Local Worksites to Assess**
   - OSI Subcommittee to draft a 1-pager to be distributed to all staff at local sites
   - OSI Subcommittee to assist local worksites in understanding the Part 1 OSI survey results

2) **Local Worksites to Plan How to Generate Ideas**
   - Local worksites to develop methods for generating ideas
   - Multiple sessions held to maximize participation of frontline staff

3) **Local Worksites to Generate Ideas**
   - Brainstorming sessions held – flipcharts to remain visible for all sessions
   - 2-week period for ideas to be submitted confidentially via email to trusted person

4) **Local Worksites to Identify Change Ideas**
   - Local worksites to draft Ideas Document that will highlight top-10 ideas sourced from frontline staff
   - Local worksites to develop tracking system for implementation

5) **Local Worksites to Implement Change Ideas**
   - Local worksites to meet monthly to develop and implement plans
   - Local Administrators to implement action plan with support from labour relations committees and JHSC
   - Final roll-up report to be sent to OSI subcommittee

Project Plan

- **November 2021** – Local worksites finalized their project teams

- **December 2021** – With the assistance of OHCOW local worksites familiarized themselves with the COPSOQ results for their work locations

- **January 2022** – Detailed joint presentation to all local worksites on next steps of the project

- **January/February 2022** – Local worksites held brainstorming sessions with their staff and are in the process of providing reports of the results to the OSI subcommittee

- **February – September 2022** – Local worksite teams to meet monthly to implement plans developed from brainstorming sessions

- **September 2022** – Local worksite teams to send a roll-up report to the OSI subcommittee, including recommendations for consideration in larger organizational rollout

- **Early 2023** – Tentative schedule to launch a follow-up OSI survey

- **Late 2023** – discuss expanding project to other worksites

Challenges

- Intervening in psychosocial factors – not a visible injury or factor

- Changing organizational and workplace culture

- Unionized environment – bargaining cycle, internal dynamics, workplace labour relations, etc.

- Leadership changes – Union and Employer

- COVID – challenges of congregate care settings

Final Chapter - Where are we now?

Learn	➡	Organize	➡	Assess	➡	Change	➡	Evaluate

OSI →

2013	2015	2018	2019	2023?

ORG →

2019	2020-2021		2022	2023?