

Canadian Food Inspection Agency



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Mental Health Peer Support Program (PSP)

Policy

October 2014

RDIMS 4612908

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Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) Peer Support Policy (PSP)

1. POLICY STATEMENT

The CFIA is committed to supporting a safe and healthy workplace. The PSP contributes to this objective. The objectives of this policy are:

- building a supportive community at work
- supporting and empowering employees coping with mental health challenges; and
- championing mental health peer support in the workplace.

The expected result is a supportive network that is made available to all CFIA employees with the intention of promoting a safe, healthy, engaged and productive workforce.

2. POLICY REQUIREMENTS

Confidentiality:

Within the context of the PSP, confidentiality of peers (the identity of, and information related to) is kept in strictest confidence and all PSP members, including Peer Supporters, PSP Steering Committee members and the PSP Lead, are required to respect it. Confidentiality can only be breached when there is:

- Imminent threat of harm to oneself.
- Imminent threat of harm to others; and
- Suspicion of, or known, child abuse or serious neglect.

Roles and Responsibilities:

Supervisors and managers will allow the peer and Peer Supporter reasonable time to avail themselves of PSP support services. For detailed information concerning roles & responsibilities of PSP participants including Peers, Peer Supporters, the PSP Lead and PSP Steering Committee members, and the PSP's Code of Conduct please refer to the PSP Guide and the PSP Steering Committee Terms of Reference (attach links).

Access:

PSP services can be accessed during working hours; however, CFIA facilities may be made available by the CFIA, at its discretion, after core working hours if agreed upon by both the peer and Peer Supporter. PSP services can be provided on CFIA property or off- site. Because the activities under the PSP are voluntary and are not related to employees' substantive job duties, both the peer and Peer Supporter agree when they meet that they are not engaged in work for the CFIA or for additional remuneration.

Remuneration:

Peer Supporters are volunteers and are not to be remunerated for their services.

3. CONTEXT

The purpose of this document is to establish the policy requirements related to the PSP, and as such, serve as the basis on which decisions are taken. It outlines the parameters under which actions are to be carried out to achieve the goals of the PSP.

This policy was developed in consultation with both Bargaining Agents (PIPSC and PSAC), and is complemented by, and meant to be read in conjunction with, the PSP Guide (RDIMS# 4569405).

4. DEFINITIONS

Peer Support:

- Peer support is a confidential, volunteer, non-clinical, mental health support that utilizes the wisdom that comes from lived experience with a mental health challenge.
- Social and emotional support from a person with lived experience can inspire hope and empower others in similar situations.

Mental Health Challenge:

- A mental health challenge refers to a wide spectrum of circumstances, such as feelings of depression or anxiety, feeling overwhelmed, substance abuse, or adopting self-destructive behaviours. It also includes life challenges such as a marriage breakdown, workplace stress or conflict, traumatic situations, health challenges and/or loss of a loved one or colleague.

Peer Supporters:

- Peer Supporters are CFIA employees who have faced mental health challenges, either personally or through the experience of a loved one, and are now in a positive state of recovery and/or readiness. They have volunteered, and have been accepted, as a Peer Supporter, and have successfully completed peer support training.

Peer:

- A peer is a CFIA employee who chooses to connect with a CFIA Peer Supporter.

PSP Steering Committee:

- This committee consists of CFIA employees interested in assisting in the successful implementation, management and sustainability of the PSP.

5. AUTHORITY

The *CFIA Act* states: “The President may set the terms and conditions of employment for employees of the Agency and assign duties to them.” “The President may delegate to any person or power, duty or function conferred on the President under this Act or any other enactment.” The President has delegated authority for the Peer Support Program (PSP) to the Vice President, Human Resources Branch.

Note: The PSP is a voluntary service, complimentary to, and not a replacement for, professional medical and clinical care.

6. APPLICATION

The PSP is available to all CFIA employees, including those on personal or disability leave, those experiencing mental health challenges, and/or those emotionally affected by a family member or loved one experiencing or having experienced a mental health challenge.

7. EFFECTIVE DATE

This policy takes effect November 1, 2014.

8. MONITORING

The PSP Lead is responsible for the application of this policy and supporting instruments, and for taking corrective action in the case of non-compliance.

9. REFERENCES

- CFIA Code of Conduct
- PSP Code of Conduct
- CFIA's Values and Ethics Policy
- CFIA's Policy on the Prevention and Resolution of Harassment in the Workplace
- CFIA's Violence Policy
- CFIA's Conflict of Interest and Post-Employment Policy

10. ENQUIRIES

- Please refer enquiries about this policy to the PSP Lead at PSP.PPA@inspection.gc.ca