



## Pooled Registered Pension Plan

The federal, provincial and territorial finance ministers agreed to work together to form the PRPP during their summit in Alberta on Dec. 20.

### What is the PRPP

The PRPP would be a private defined contribution multi-employer retirement savings plan offered to employees of small and medium-sized businesses as well as the self-employed, funded by the contributions of participating employers and employees and administered by third party administrators.

### How the PRPP Will Work

Although the finance ministers will have to work out the details, here's the general framework for how the PRPP will work:

**Plan administration:** One of the reasons small and medium-sized businesses can't provide their own pension plans is that they don't have the resources to administer them. But with PRPPs, the burdens of plan administration, e.g., managing contributions, disclosing plan information to members and paying out benefits, will be carried out not by the employer but a third party administrator.

**Role of employers:** Employers who choose to participate in PRPP arrangements—although some jurisdictions might decide to make employer participation mandatory—will have the following responsibilities:

- Selecting the plan and/or moving from one plan to another;
- Informing employees of participation in the plan;
- Enrolling employees in the selected plan;
- Determining the appropriate employer and employee contribution amounts;
- Making direct contributions and collecting and remitting employee contributions;
- Remitting tax on direct contributions to the CRA; and
- Notifying the administrator of new members or the termination of existing ones.

**Role of employees:** There will be 2 classes of members eligible to participate in PRPPs:

- Employed Members, i.e., employees of employers that offer PRPPs; and
- Individual Members, i.e., the self-employed and employees of employers that choose not to participate in the PRPP. In other words, employees can choose to participate in a plan even if their employers don't offer them.

Employed Members will be like members of regular DC pensions who enroll and make contributions through their employer. Individual Members, however, will have to carry out these functions for themselves.

### Portability of benefits

Member benefits will be portable.

- Employed Members may, upon termination of employment, choose to remain in the plan or move the benefits they've accrued to another plan or retirement savings vehicle;
- Individual Members may choose to stop participating in a PRPP at any time and move their benefits to another plan or retirement savings vehicle (subject to minimum investment periods established by the administrator); and
- Employers may decide to stop offering a particular plan at any time and either move to a new plan (in which case the employer would be responsible for enrolling its employees) or pull the plug on PRPP arrangements entirely.

**Locking-in of benefits:** As with conventional pensions, PRPP benefits will be locked in, i.e., the member can't withdraw them as cash without incurring tax penalties, subject to exceptions for financial hardship provided by the jurisdiction's pension law.

### What Happens Next:

The finance ministers will have to hammer out changes to their pension laws to implement the PRPP. The federal income tax rules will also have to be changed to provide for the PRPP. All of this is likely to take a full year at a minimum. Thus, the earliest the PRPP scheme could take effect would be some time in 2012.

Source HRInsider

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## Detect Mental Health Issues in the Workplace

### How do you recognize a mental health concern?

Here are some clues that may indicate an employee is suffering from a mental health concern. It's important to remember that the presence of these symptoms or behaviour patterns do not necessarily mean that an employee has a mental illness, however, in cases where performance has become an issue, you may want to take them into consideration.

#### Absenteeism

An indication that there might be a problem is when an employee starts missing a lot of work and begins calling in 'sick' for a variety of reasons.

#### Presenteeism

A harder to notice clue that may be even more revealing is when an employee is at work but is less productive or not getting things done the way they used to. This is known as presenteeism and there may be more people impacted by this than you think. Often the employee will start to isolate him or herself and avoid others. They may no longer eat lunch in the lunch room or go for coffee breaks with their colleagues.

#### Brain clues

Since a mental health condition may be affecting the employee's cognitive functioning, or the way in which they make decisions, you may want to look for clues related to their thinking and behaviour.

These 'brain' clues might include an inability to concentrate, missing deadlines, not finishing things, or making more mistakes than usual. Sometimes out of embarrassment and fear of getting fired, the employee may hide these symptoms from their manager and others. They may lose energy, interest and motivation for the job as a symptom of slower brain functioning.

You can also look for other clues like how they get along and interact with their co-workers. They may have mood swings, or be irritable, argumentative, angry, difficult, tearful, down or sad.

#### Physical clues

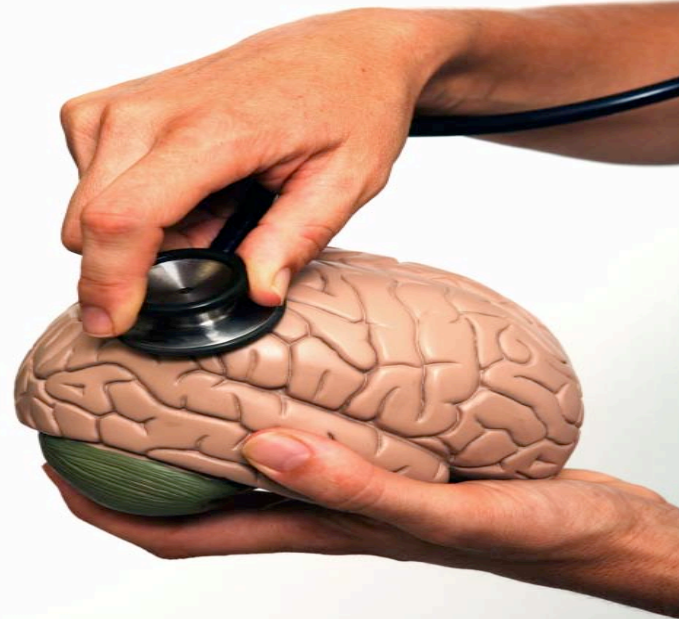
Sometimes the employee doesn't say a thing but their body language might give some clues. You may notice that they look like they have stopped taking care of themselves, have poor hygiene or appear to have slumped shoulders. They may also move slower than usual, not be able to sit still or become physically aggressive. Even the way they talk can be a clue. They may speak slowly and quietly, or exhaust you with their fast nervous talk, repetitive worries, comments, yelling, swearing, etc.

#### Pay attention to the clues but don't jump to conclusions

You may simply notice that something has changed with the employee or that things just don't seem quite right. Make sure you stop, take a look and listen if you think something is wrong. Use your powers of deduction before jumping to any conclusions about an employee who may be having difficulty. If you think there are enough clues to indicate that something is wrong, you may wish to have a private chat with the employee and discuss any performance issues or unusual behaviour. During this discussion, you may suggest that if they need help, they may use the Employee Assistance Program or any other available resources.

Paying attention to changes in behaviour may help you determine an employee is suffering from a mental health concern and help you to manage these types of situations in your workplace appropriately.

Source: Manulife



## Get Youth Working!

The Get Youth Working! Youth Skills BC Workplace Pilot Program is designed to provide participants with the skills that are required to be successful in the labour market through a combination of on-the-job training, work experience, and formal skills development training. This program is designed specifically for unemployed and non-EI eligible youth between 15 and 29 years of age.

Through this Program, employers may request funding from the Bowman Employment Services to hire and provide on-the-job training to an eligible youth under the "Hiring Incentive" component of the program. Employers may also request assistance and funding from BES to develop a training plan for the newly-hired youth and financial support to implement the "Supplementary Training" component of the program.

The Program gives qualified employers \$2,000 per youth (age 15-29) they hire. Each employer may hire up to 3 participants (\$6,000 in total), plus \$1,000 in training funds for the new hire. The \$2,000 helps off-set the costs of on-the job training and training funds can be used to help acquire recognized credentials.

Funding up to a maximum of \$2,000 per participant is available to an Employer as a Hiring Incentive for each participant hired under the program. Funding of up to \$1,000 per participant will be available for training activities where a training plan has been approved by BES and a signed Hiring Incentive Agreement is in place. A maximum number of **three (3)** participants may be hired under the YSBC Program.

#### Employer Criteria

- In operation for at least one year
- In good standing with WorkSafe BC
- Must employ youth for a minimum of 3 months
- Must employ youth for a minimum of 30 hours per week

For more information on how to apply visit: [www.getyouthworking.ca](http://www.getyouthworking.ca)

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