## HOW TO ASSESS WHETHER THE EFFORTS TO PREVENT AND EVALUATE PSYCHOSOCIAL RISKS HAVE ACHIEVED THEIR GOALS?

By its nature, the prevention of psychosocial risks at work involves a long-term organizational change process. This is especially true when legislation governs this prevention. For example, in Quebec, Bill 27, which modernizes the occupational health and safety framework, requires employers to assess and prevent psychosocial risks (PSR) related to work, on par with other health and safety risks (LSST, art. 51).

This type of mandated change could present several challenges, such as:
◉ Difficulty in gaining buy-in for the change due to a vision whose realization is deferred;
◉ Challenging resource and time management in addition to the management of daily operations.

To achieve the goals of preventing and assessing psychosocial risks (PSR), it is essential to establish a continuous evaluation process integrated into the various stages of prevention. This process should allow for adjustments throughout the implementation of the change.
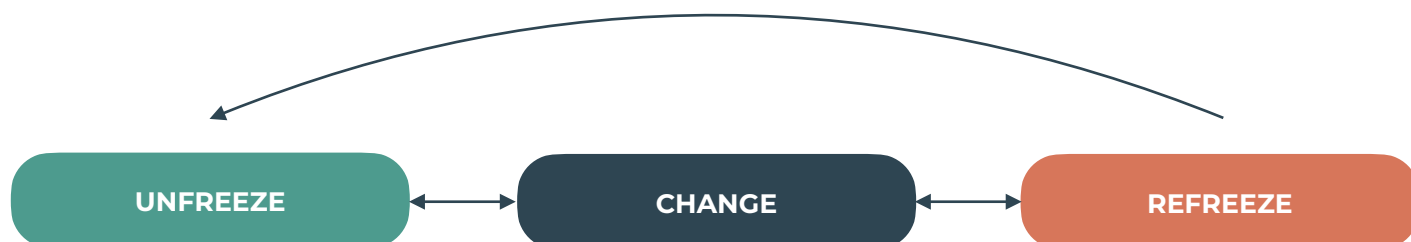
This process can be integrated into Lewin's change model (1951), which consists of three stages.

**Step 1 – Unfreeze:** Create awareness and emphasize the importance of preventing and assessing psychosocial risks (PSR). Actions that foster motivation for change are implemented.
**Step 2 – Change:** Implement new actions that facilitate the achievement of the goals for preventing and assessing PSR.
**Step 3 – Refreeze:** Integrate and consolidate the prevention and assessment of PSR into the daily operations of the organization to ensure sustainability.

A feedback loop is essential to this model to allow for adjustments as needed (e.g., returning to a previous step, changing goals during the prevention and assessment of PSR).

**1**

**Unfreezing Stage**

### 1. Determine the individuals responsible for the evaluation

The change management committee designates a subcommittee for evaluation and its potential leader from among its members as soon as the implementation of measures aimed at the prevention and assessment of PSR is announced. This facilitates the evaluation process and collaboration between those responsible for implementing the change and those overseeing the evaluation process.

> **Note:** The change management committee should consist of various stakeholders from your organization to consider different perspectives and experiences (e.g., human resources, senior management, middle management, employees). This will also enhance sustainable engagement and the longevity of the change.

### 2. Develop the Evaluation Plan

The subcommittee develops an evaluation plan that allows for both the assessment of the implementation process (Have we carried out the actions we planned? What obstacles did we encounter?) and the achievement of goals (Have we met the goals of the change? What should we do based on the evaluation results?). The evaluation plan should include the following elements:

- **Specific** evaluation questions
- **Indicators** for assessing:
    - Implementation (e.g., number of services evaluated, completion of planned communication sessions, attendance at steering committee meetings)
    - Achievement of change goals (e.g., absenteeism rates, job satisfaction, employee perceptions regarding PSR prevention)
- **Evaluation tools used** (e.g., questionnaires, individual interview templates)
- **Evaluation timing** (before, during, and after the change)
- **Number of individuals targeted** per service to encourage diverse perspectives (e.g., workers, managers)
- **Communication** moments with employees regarding the evaluation process and results

### 3.    Present the Evaluation Plan to the Change Management Committee

The evaluation subcommittee presents and validates the evaluation plan and tools with the change management committee.

### 4.    Communicate with Employees about the Evaluation Process

- Provide information regarding the upcoming evaluation process and present an overview of the evaluation plan to encourage participation.
- Create and distribute a summary sheet of the evaluation plan (e.g., via email, on telework platforms, through the intranet).

**Tips and Tricks**

- Schedule regular meetings for the evaluation subcommittee and the change management committee throughout the process to ensure the quality of the evaluation.
- Opt for short intervals between different evaluation moments to allow for quick adjustments based on the analysis of evaluation results.
- Use multiple data collection methods to maximize participation in the evaluation and enhance the validity of the results.
- Favour communication times that are already planned in employees' schedules (e.g., team meetings). Avoid communications during social times (e.g., lunch breaks).
- Prefer communication methods that facilitate exchanges with employees to clarify any questions as needed.

## 2 Change Stage

### 1. Implement the Evaluation Plan and Communicate Results
◉ Collect data and analyze each evaluation moment
◉ Meet with employees to present the evaluation results regarding:
  - The implementation process (e.g., progress on steps related to the evaluation and prevention of psychosocial risks [PSR]);
  - The achievement of goals (e.g., effectiveness of measures put in place to ensure the prevention of identified PSR).

### 2. Adjust the Strategy
Make sure to **adapt the planned actions** to ensure the prevention and assessment of PSR based on the results at each evaluation moment. This will optimize the **sustainability** of the change and prevent it from becoming just a passing trend!

◉ If the results indicate that the expected goals are not being met or if there are deviations from the deployment plan, consider alternative change strategies and new evaluation tools for assessing the adjustments.
◉ If the results show that you have achieved your expected goals, celebrate the successes!

**Tips and Tricks**
◉ Don't hesitate to return to the "Unfreezing" stage if necessary. This does not represent a failure but rather supports acceptance and success of the change.
◉ Continue to hold communication sessions with employees.
◉ Communicate transparently to demonstrate your consideration of the evaluation results.
◉ Feel free to adjust the evaluation plan as needed (e.g., if participation is low).

## 3 · Refreezing Stage

### 1. Continue to Celebrate Successes and Identify Challenges

**Highlight** the successes and remember to **maintain** the evaluative process during this period of consolidation and stabilization of the change to measure the final achievement of goals. This will help assess the sustainability of the goals pursued. If necessary, make adjustments as in Step 6.

### 2. Conduct a Retrospective Analysis

After a period of stability regarding the changes made and observed through the evaluation, the subcommittee can conduct a retrospective analysis. This will provide **feedback** on the implementation of the change and the evaluation process. The **insights** gained from this process can guide future changes within the organization.

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**Tips and Tricks**

**WARNING!** You might be tempted to end the evaluation. However, it is still necessary to continue evaluating the change to prevent a regression of your goals.

For the retrospective analysis:

- Choose a data collection method that allows for **rich content** (e.g., focus groups, questionnaires with multiple-choice and open-ended questions).
- Encourage **self-assessments** regarding the change and the evaluation process to bring forth insights for future changes.

**To cite this document**

## REFERENCES

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