

## CEP Magazine – April 2019

### Have you thought about psychological safety in your workplace?

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Over the past 150 years, the responsibility an organization carries for employee safety has evolved rapidly and drastically:

- The first health and safety legislation passed in Massachusetts in 1877.<sup>[1]</sup> The law required physical safety measures such as belt and shaft guards as well as fire exits.
- The first workers' compensation law came online in 1911,<sup>[2]</sup> and modern material-safety data sheets were introduced around 1960.<sup>[3]</sup>
- The Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970<sup>[4]</sup> created the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), which works to set and enforce standards of safe and healthful working conditions for all workers.

In recent years, workplace safety has increased in scope from just physical safety to include emotional and mental health. With regulations around the globe like Ontario's Human Rights Code,<sup>[5]</sup> Australia's Workplace Health and Safety Act,<sup>[6]</sup> and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act,<sup>[7]</sup> companies now have the responsibility to protect workers from unhealthy conditions and unsafe workplace relationships resulting in sexual harassment, bullying, or discrimination. In modern law, workplace hazards far surpass the boundaries of employee physical safety.

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