



THE
PUBLIC GOOD
INSTITUTE

Learning in Service of Tomorrow.

BRIEFING

Workforce Wellbeing Without Losing Accountability

A practical briefing for organizations trying to support people, reduce burnout, sustain accountability, and strengthen service quality.

Prepared by The Public Good Institute

Learning in Service of Tomorrow

PUBLIC RESOURCE | 2026 Launch Library



Executive Brief

Workforce wellbeing and accountability are often treated as competing priorities. In public-serving systems, they are inseparable. Exhausted, unsupported, under-trained, and unstable teams create risk for people served, staff, organizations, funders, boards, and public trust.

Core Position

A serious wellbeing strategy should reduce avoidable pressure while strengthening supervision, documentation, practice quality, psychological safety, and accountability.

The pressure points to watch

Pressure Point	Why it matters
Vacancy and turnover	Instability affects relationship continuity, supervision, training, safety, and service quality.
Overtime and sick time	These may signal workload, trauma exposure, scheduling pressure, moral distress, or poor support.
Documentation backlog	Backlogs can create risk, memory gaps, incident confusion, and delayed follow-up.
Supervision gaps	Staff need reflection, coaching, escalation pathways, and decision support in complex work.
Complaint and incident patterns	These may reveal service design issues, workload pressure, communication gaps, or systemic risk.
Psychological safety	Teams must be able to raise concerns without fear, blame, or retaliation.

Wellbeing With Accountability Framework

Commitment	Practical action
Name the work honestly	Acknowledge emotional labour, risk, moral distress, administrative burden, and public scrutiny.
Measure pressure	Track turnover, vacancies, overtime, sick time, documentation backlog, incidents, complaints, and supervision frequency.
Strengthen supervision	Use supervision for judgment, learning, emotional processing, quality, and escalation - not just task monitoring.
Reduce unnecessary burden	Remove duplicative documentation and meetings that do not improve care, safety, quality, or accountability.
Protect standards	Wellbeing should not mean lowering practice expectations; it should mean making good practice sustainable.
Learn from incidents	Use incidents to improve systems, staffing, training, documentation, and decision-making.

Leadership Questions

- 1 Where are staff carrying pressure that leadership does not see?
- 2 What work is essential, and what work is performative or duplicative?
- 3 What documentation protects people and practice, and what documentation drains capacity without adding value?
- 4 Are supervisors equipped to support judgment, accountability, and wellbeing?
- 5 What workforce data is reviewed by the board or senior leadership?
- 6 How are staff invited to speak honestly about risk, workload, safety, culture, and service quality?

Source Notes

These Public Good Institute resources are original educational and implementation materials. They are informed by public policy, governance, workforce, digital government, and Indigenous data governance sources, including the following:

Government of Canada - AI Strategy for the Federal Public Service 2025-2027

<https://www.canada.ca/en/government/system/digital-government/digital-government-innovations/responsible-use-ai/gc-ai-strategy-overview.html>

Canada - National Artificial Intelligence Strategy: AI for All

<https://ised-isde.canada.ca/site/ised/en/canadas-national-artificial-intelligence-strategy-ai-all>

Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat - Directive on Automated Decision-Making

<https://www.tbs-sct.canada.ca/pol/doc-eng.aspx?id=32592>

Government of Canada - Guide on the use of generative artificial intelligence

<https://www.canada.ca/en/government/system/digital-government/digital-government-innovations/responsible-use-ai/guide-use-generative-ai.html>

OECD - Governing with Artificial Intelligence

https://www.oecd.org/en/publications/governing-with-artificial-intelligence_795de142-en.html

FNIGC - The First Nations Principles of OCAP

<https://fnigc.ca/ocap-training/>

Health Canada - Pan-Canadian AI for Health Guiding Principles

<https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/corporate/transparency/health-agreements/pan-canadian-ai-guiding-principles.html>

Health Canada - Reduced administrative burden: Nursing retention toolkit

<https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/health-care-system/health-human-resources/nursing-retention-toolkit-improving-working-lives-nurses/reduced-administrative-burden.html>

Imagine Canada - People First: A Portrait of Canada's Nonprofit Workforce

<https://imaginecanada.ca/en/research/people-first-canada-nonprofit-workforce>

Important Use Note

This resource is for learning, planning, governance, and implementation support. It is not legal advice, privacy advice, procurement advice, clinical advice, or a substitute for organization-specific professional review. Organizations should adapt all tools to their legal, regulatory, contractual, cultural, community, and operational context.