

---

# **EMPOWER: Saint Mary's University and partners are creating healthy workplaces**

## **EMPOWER: Enabling & Motivating Productive Organizations, Wellness, Engagement, & Resilience**

A partnership project led by Dr. Arla Day from Saint Mary's University in Halifax to foster healthy workers and workplaces is one of 20 national projects awarded funding for the Healthy & Productive Workplace Partnership initiative through SSHRC and CIHR.

Dr. Day's partnership, which includes universities, research centres, health institutions and employers from across Canada, are designing and testing programs to improve workers' well-being and work experiences, with a focus on supporting workers who are dealing with chronic physical and psychological demands.

"Many workers face challenges remaining healthy and productively engaged given personal and work demands. For individuals with chronic conditions, these challenges are even more daunting," said Dr. Day. "What is unique about our partnership is that we take a holistic approach to not only support individual employees, but also to develop healthy work groups, effective leaders and healthy workplaces to support and sustain these initiatives."

Along with experts in work, health, and wellness, Dr. Day is partnering with a number of employers and stakeholders, including Sun Life Financial, the Department of National Defence, WCB Nova Scotia and the Nova Scotia Health Authority.

"Sun Life is honoured to work with Dr. Day in helping organizations foster mental, physical and financial health for employees," said Dr. Marie-Hélène Pelletier, Assistant Vice-President, Workplace Mental Health, Integrated Health Solutions, Sun Life Financial Canada. "Taking this academic approach will provide research-driven solutions that employers have been looking for and will help build a strategic and comprehensive foundation to support employee health."

The initial funding from SSHRC and CIHR will support the project for the first two years of research to develop an interdisciplinary research board, conduct an environmental scan of the physical and psychological health issues facing Canadian workers, identify healthy workplace best practices, and implement healthy workplace programs.

“Shining the spotlight on workplace health and safety increases awareness and will help us achieve the bold vision of the Workplace Safety Strategy – to make Nova Scotia the safest place to work in Canada,” said WCB Nova Scotia CEO Stuart MacLean. “We’re pleased to support and partner with Dr. Day in this important initiative that will help Nova Scotians stay both physically and mentally healthy, working, and on the job.”

“This grant provides an exciting opportunity for us to work with organizations to foster healthy and productive workers and workplaces,” said Dr. Day.

More information is available at [www.arladay.ca/EMPOWER](http://www.arladay.ca/EMPOWER).

---

- 2 -

For more information, please contact:

**Dr. Arla Day**

Saint Mary's University

T 902.222.4159

[arla.day@smu.ca](mailto:arla.day@smu.ca)

[www.arladay.com/EMPOWER](http://www.arladay.com/EMPOWER)