

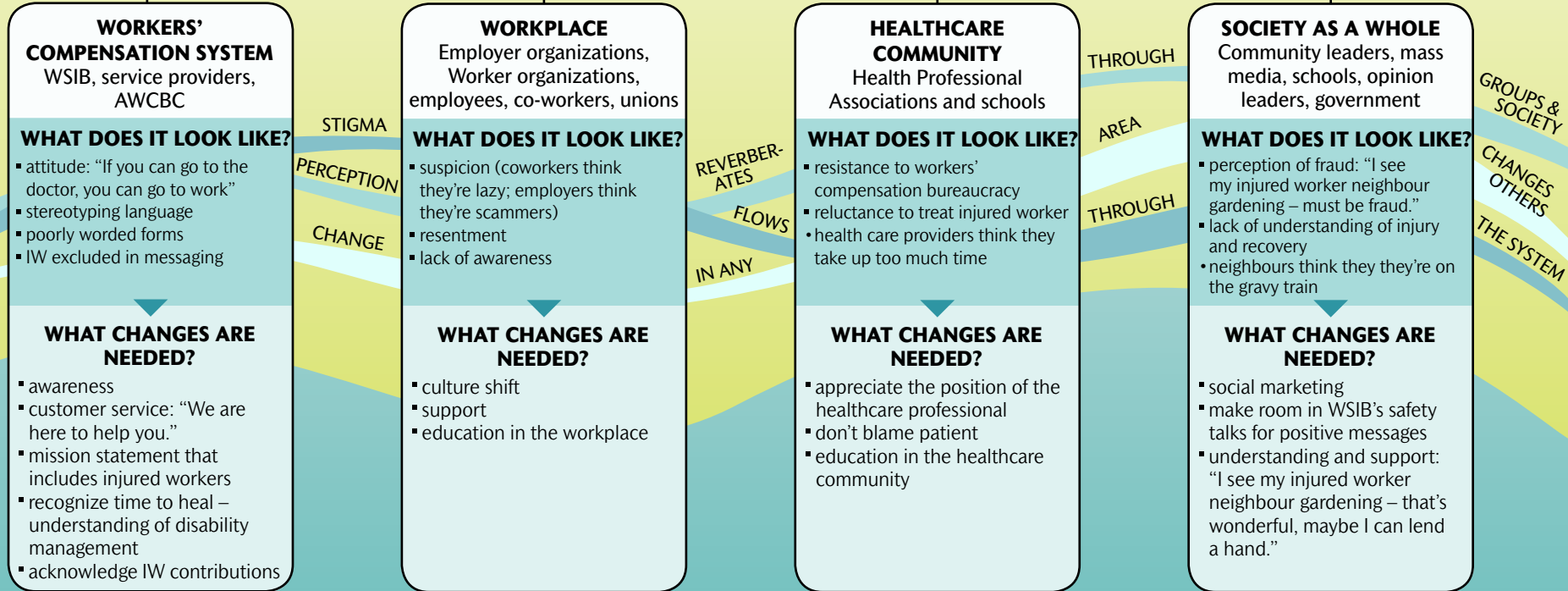
INJURED WORKER STIGMA FRAMEWORK

WHAT IS STIGMA? Stigma is a mark of disgrace that negatively sets a person apart from others. It is based on myths, misunderstandings and stereotypes that lead to stigmatization and discrimination. It affects our actions because it involves creating a negative image, looking for it and then discounting people that fall short of our expectations.

WHY IS STIGMA HARMFUL? Stigma causes us to devalue workers. It creates feelings of shame, blame, hopelessness, depression, distress, secrecy, loneliness, isolation and social exclusion and can delay recovery and return to work. It can affect the service workers get from WSIB and the health care community as well as affect their employment prospects.

WHAT DO WE WANT? Understanding of the consequences of injury and the impact of stigma on the injured worker (IW). IW treated promptly, fairly, with dignity.

WHERE DO WE FIND IT?



WHAT'S NEXT? ACTION

- Organize a voice for change; recognize the voice of the injured workers
- Continue to look for opportunities to challenge the groups above to treat workers with dignity and respect

GETTING INJURED ON THE JOB IS NOTHING TO BE ASHAMED OF; STIGMATIZING INJURED WORKERS IS.

WSIB ACTIONS

The Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB) has partnered with the Research Action Alliance on the Consequences of Work Injury (RAACWI) to help eliminate prejudice and discrimination against injured workers. Initiatives to address this problem include:

- Raising awareness about stigma and its effects with all WSIB employees – especially those who deal directly with injured workers.
- Working collaboratively with human resources to develop tools to use when recruiting new employees
- Developing customized learning solutions for WSIB staff and management to enhance understanding and skills
- Examining our systems and procedures to address those that reinforce stigma. For example, we've created a worker sensitivity check tool to be used during the development or updating of new or existing written communication to help identify if the communication might promote or reinforce social stigma.
- Identifying and removing stigmatizing language from WSIB publications and websites
- Examining the values and behaviours we expect from WSIB employees
- Bringing the issue of injured worker stigma to the forefront of our outreach initiatives
- Making sure that our contracted service providers understand and share our responsibility to treat injured and ill workers with dignity and respect.

More information about Injured Worker Stigma can be found in the WSIB/RAACWI brochure titled “SHAME ON YOU: THE FACTS ABOUT INJURED WORKER STIGMA”