COMMON PSYCHOSOCIAL HAZARDS

Psychosocial hazards can be grouped or described in different ways. How they are categorised is less important than ensuring you and your workers have the same understanding of what is happening and how it may be causing harm.

Source: safeworkaustralia.gov.au/sites/default/files/2022-08/model_code_of_practice_-_managing_psychosocial_hazards_at_work_25082022_0.pdf

KEY

- ● Job characteristics, design and management
- ● Harmful behaviours

Psychosocial demands – Presence or too much of

High job demands / role overload

- Intense or sustained high mental, physical or emotional effort.
- Unreasonable or excessive time pressures or role overload.
- High individual reputational, legal, career, safety or financial risk if mistakes occur.
- High vigilance required, limited margin for error and inadequate systems to prevent individual error.
- Shifts/work hours that do not allow adequate time for sleep and recovery.

Very low job demands

- Low levels of physical, mental or emotional effort are required.
- Long idle periods while high workloads are present, e.g. where workers need to wait for equipment or other workers.

Remote or isolated work

- Working in locations with long travel times, or where access to help, resources or communications is difficult or limited.

Conflict or poor workplace relationships & interactions

- Violence, threats of violence or assaults from other workers (including workers of other businesses), customers, patients or clients (including assault).
- Aggressive behaviour such as yelling or physical intimidation.

Traumatic events or material

- Experiencing fear or extreme risks to the health or safety of themselves or others.
- Exposure to natural disasters, seriously injured or deceased persons.
- Reading, hearing or seeing accounts of traumatic events, abuse or neglect.
- Supporting victims or investigating traumatic events, abuse or neglect.

Emotional demands

- Ongoing emotional effort responding to disrespect or aggressive people.

Poor physical environment

- Exposure to unpleasant or hazardous working environments.

Role conflict or lack of role clarity

- Ongoing emotional effort responding to disrespect or aggressive people.

Psychosocial Demands – presence or too much of *continued*

Harassment including sexual and racial harassment

- Harassment due to personal characteristics such as age, disability, race, nationality, religion, political affiliation, sex, relationship status, family or carer responsibilities, sexual orientation, gender identity or intersex status.

Violence and aggression

- Violence, threats of violence or assaults from other workers (including workers of other businesses), customers, patients or clients (including assault).
- Aggressive behaviour such as yelling or physical intimidation.

Bullying

- Repeated unreasonable behaviour directed towards a worker or group of workers that creates a risk to health and safety.[1] This includes bullying by workers, clients, patients, visitors or others.

1. Bullying is defined in Safe Work Australia Guidance and the Fair Work Act 2009 (Commonwealth).

Psychosocial Resources – lack of or low

Job control

- Workers have little control over how or when the job is done.
- Workers have limited ability to adapt the way they work to changing or new situations or to adopt efficiencies in their work.
- Tightly scripted or machine/computer paced work.
- Levels of autonomy not matched to workers' abilities.

Job security

- Continued employment is uncertain.

Organisational justice

- Inconsistent, unfair, discriminatory or inequitable management decisions and application of policies.

Organisational change management

- Insufficient consultation, consideration of new hazards or performance impacts when planning and implementing change.
- Insufficient support, information or training during change.
- Not communicating key information during periods of change.

Meaning and purpose

- Tasks or jobs with no clear link to organisational goals and purpose or no alignment to a worker's values.
- A lack of meaning connected to the task or job.

Support – management

- Inadequate support for task or jobs, including practical assistance and emotional support from managers.

Support – coworker

- Inadequate emotional support and/or practical support from coworking.

Support – resources

- Inadequate training, tools and resources.

Reward and recognition

- Low positive feedback or imbalances between effort and recognition.
- High level of unconstructive negative feedback from managers or customers.
- Low skills development opportunity or underused skills.