Identifying and Managing Psychosocial Hazards in the Workplace

Contents

1. Introduction:

Psychosocial hazards are aspects of work which have the potential to cause psychological and may, in some instances, also cause physical harm. Managing the risks associated with psychosocial hazards not only protects staff members, but it also decreases the disruption associated with staff turnover and absenteeism and may improve broader organisational performance and productivity. It is the responsibility of the University to eliminate or minimise these risks so far as is reasonably practicable and provide a safe environment for work and study.

This document offers University staff guidance on recognizing psychosocial hazards that may be present in the workplace or from work-related activities and provides information on the available controls to manage these risks.

2. Legal Overlay:

The Work, Health and Safety Act describes 'health' as including both physical and psychological health. Under the WHS Act, the University, has a requirement to eliminate or minimise risk so far as reasonably practicable. In addition, the Work Health and Safety Amendment Regulation describes provisions and obligations for the management of psychosocial risks in the workplace.

The SafeWork Australia Model Code of Practice: Managing Psychosocial Hazards at Work provides advice in respect to managing psychosocial hazards at work with the aim to assist organisations to achieve compliance with health and safety duties.

Psychosocial hazards in the workplace are complicated and multifactorial. Its management is integrated across many areas of the University and there are several pieces of legislation that impact on this:

- Work Health and Safety (Psychosocial Risks) Amendment Regulations
- Fair Work Act
- Privacy Law
- Criminal law
- Anti-Discrimination Law
- Return to Work Legislation

Each psychosocial hazard will need to be judged on a case-by-case basis as to which legislative framework applies, in some cases they may overlap.

3. Why Do We Need to Manage Psychosocial Hazards

In the SafeWork SA Code of Practice it states that Psychosocial hazards can create stress. Stress can create a physiological and psychological response in the body. Stress itself is not an injury but if it becomes **frequent, prolonged or severe** it can cause psychological and physical harm. Hazards may also combine or interact with each other changing the risk.

Psychological harm or injuries from psychosocial hazards include conditions such as anxiety, depression, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and sleep disorders.

Physical injuries from psychosocial hazards include musculoskeletal injury, chronic disease, and injury as a result of fatigue-related workplace incidents.

4. How To Manage Psychosocial Risks

The framework for managing psychosocial risks in the workplace can be summarised in the following steps: -

- **Prevent** work related harm from exposure to psychosocial hazards
- **Respond** to psychosocial hazards when reported
- **Support** for individuals to minimise the impact
- **Promote** and raise awareness for mentally health workplace.

Figure 1- framework for the manage psychosocial hazards

This is a continuous process and an ongoing cycle of activity. Often activities will overlap or occur concurrently.

5. PREVENT WORK RELATED HARM

Preventing work-related harm from psychosocial hazards may involve various strategies. Since each workplace and situation is unique, what is effective in one setting may not be suitable for another. The first step to preventing harm is being able to identify those things in the workplace that may pose a psychosocial hazard, assessing the risk, eliminating the risk or implementing controls where reasonably practicable to do so and reviewing. This is known as the risk management process.

V 1.0 2025

5.1 Risk Management

For effective risk management, managers and supervisors must assess both physical and, when applicable, psychosocial hazards as part of evaluating the work they are responsible for. Managers / Supervisors as part of the risk management process should consult with those staff that undertake the work.

The central core of the risk management process is management commitment. Managers / Supervisors need to lead and support the risk management process by understanding the hazards and providing adequate resources for the implementation of control measures within their area of responsibility.

From SafeWork Australia – risk management process

Further information on the University WHS Risk Management process can be found at -WHS Risk Management Procedure

5.2 Identifying Psychosocial Hazards at Work

Psychosocial hazards within workplaces can arise from:

- workplace interactions and behaviours
- the design or management of work
- the working environment
- plant at the workplace.

It should be noted that all workplaces are different. Some workplaces will have many of the hazards present, others only a few. Some psychosocial hazards will be present all the time, like personal interactions and others only very occasionally, such as violence.

Below are examples of common psychosocial hazards in the workplace.

Psychosocial hazards that may arise at work

- Job demands
- Low job control
- Poor support
- Lack of role clarity
- Poor organisational change management
- Inadequate reward and recognition
- Poor organisational justice
- Traumatic events or material
- Remote or isolated work
- Poor physical environment
- Violence and aggression
- Bullying
- Harassment including sexual harassment
- Conflict or poor workplace relationships and interactions

From the SafeWork Australia - Model Code of Practice, Managing Psychosocial Hazards

Examples where at the University there maybe increased risk from psychosocial hazards

- **Field work/ travel**- due to isolation, fatigue, environmental conditions, interactions with public or clients, exposure to verbal or physical assault.
- **Client aggression or high emotional demands** – e.g., staff exposed in areas such as Psychology, Nursing, Social Work
- **Traumatic events** – e.g. student suicide or dealing with individual who may have experienced violence – impact on Security, Flinders Living staff.

5.2.1 Sources of information that can help to identify Psychosocial Hazards:

- hazard and incident reports
- informal & formal complaints and investigations
- issues raised at health and safety committee meetings
- absenteeism and staff turnover
- employee surveys (e.g. Your Voice or equivalent)
- Employee Assistance Program (EAP) usage*
- workers compensation claims

* **Employee Assistance Program (EAP)** – as an indicator metric for psychosocial hazards

High usage of EAP attendance is often sighted as meaning there is psychosocial issues in the workplace. However, is not that simple.

Noting that EAP can be used for work and non-work-related issues. When there is high use for work related issues it may indicate there are psychosocial hazards in an area, however as a metric on its own it is only an indicator, as the University encourages the use of EAP as a protective, response & support measure for psychosocial issues.

V 1.0 2025

Other Ways to Identify Psychosocial Hazards

In addition to the above information sources to identify hazards, leaders may gather information from talking to staff, specifically about work activities at various times and in different circumstances, for example, at times of heavy workload, or in the absence of a full complement of staff.

When Managers and Supervisors are planning and risk assessing work they should be thinking about what may pose a psychosocial risk to their staff.

Some examples of questions managers may want to ask are below

- Are there enough physical and people resources to get the job done?
- Do staff understand their role and responsibilities?
- Are staff customer facing- is violence or aggression a potential issue?
- Do staff understand expectations around appropriate behaviour?
- Are staff supported- or are they working alone or in isolation?
- All workplaces experience change, but are staff consulted* regarding potential impacts to health & safety?
- Do staff have the training and skills they need to do their job properly.

* Under WHS legislation, the University must communicate and consult, as far as is reasonably practicable on work health & safety issues - see Work Health Safety Consultation & Communication Procedure for full details.

Consultation – does not mean agreement. It means giving staff an opportunity to raise issues or concerns and have them genuinely considered.

5.3 Risk Assessment

It is then important to assess if hazards identified actually create a risk. Just having the hazards present does not mean they will create a negative impact on someone's psychosocial health.

People may react in different ways, but the following factors can heighten the likelihood of psychosocial risk:

- The **frequency** or length of exposure
- The **severity** of the potential impact
- The **duration** of exposure, as the risk of psychosocial harm grows if not properly managed over time Hazards may also interact or combining with each other and can often be cumulative.

Conducting Risk Assessments

When conducting a risk assessment for the workplace, take into account both physical and psychosocial hazards.

A risk assessment needs to be undertaken when assessing work. It may also need to be undertaken when;

- it is unclear if the psychosocial hazards are present that may result in harm;
- it is unclear how psychosocial hazards may overlap or interact with each other to produce a more significant risk; or
- changes are planned to the workplace that may impact the effectiveness of controls in place to manage psychosocial hazards.

For more information on risk assessment -how to conduct one and the risk assessment tools available in the University please see Managing risk - Flinders University Staff

5.4 Implementing Controls

Psychosocial hazards that have been identified as potential sources of harm must be controlled. Where possible the hazards should be eliminated and where not possible, reduced or minimized, as far as reasonably practicable. Controls should be selected where possible in line with the hierarchy of controls – see Managing risk - Flinders University Staff & below from SafeWork SA has some generalised examples of controls in line with the hierarchy of control.

HIERARCHY OF PSYCHOSOCIAL HAZARD CONTROLS

PRIMARY MEASURES
Preventing or reducing the likelihood of exposure

TARGET THE SYSTEMS OF WORK

ELIMINATION
- Cyclic forecasting / planning to ensure resources (workers and plant) are suited to anticipated and unanticipated demands.
- Designing organisational structure, work tasks and performance standards to suit human capability and resources available.
- Setting achievable performance standards and workloads for the number of workers, work hours and worker skills, knowledge and attributes.
- Excluding workers or other persons from a worksite or work activity who behave in ways that pose a risk to others (aggression, violence or other harmful behaviours).

SUBSTITUTION
- Redesign work processes and systems to minimise exposure to unnecessary and harmful job demands.
- Implement technologies to automate tasks which are monotonous or require high attention / cognitive demand.
- Increase worker autonomy in managing work pace and load.
- Pre-employment screening to reduce risks of poor job-person fit and engaging workers of poor character.
- Redeploy workers to other roles where poor job-person fit is identified.

ISOLATION AND ENGINEERING
- Design physical safe spaces or barriers between workers or others who pose as threats to physical safety.
- Rotate workers through activities which expose them to potentially traumatic events or material.
- Allowance of sufficient time for complex / difficult tasks and taking into consideration worker skill levels.
- Improve poor working environments including unpleasant / hazardous noise and unhygienic conditions.
- Provide (and ensure sufficient) mechanical aides / technology to reduce physical work demands.

SECONDARY MEASURES
Reduce the risk of harm

TARGET THE WORKER

ADMINISTRATIVE
- Policies and procedures for preventing and responding to harmful workplace behaviours, including procedures for conflict resolution and support for complainants and complaint respondents.
- Formal processes for consultation with workers during periods of change, including information on worker rights and obligations.
- Policies and procedures for performance agreements, appraisal and management.
- Provision of an early intervention and rehabilitation program for ill and injured workers.
- Critical incident response procedures that includes protocols for operational debriefing and mental health screening and support.
- Education and training to develop managerial and leadership skills, including in relation to performance management.
- Systems for monitoring and moderating work hours and work demands.
- Induction and on-going education on psychosocial hazards and controls.
- Induction and on-going education on behavioural expectations in the workplace.
- Training in and use of Psychological First Aid.

TERTIARY MEASURES
Individual level measures that treat or compensate for harm or last lines of defence against harm

PERSONAL PROTECTIVE RESOURCES
- Personal distress alarms, mobile phones or other communication devices.
- EAP counselling services.
- Use of early intervention and rehabilitation programs by injured and ill workers.
- Return to work programs.

SafeWork SA

5.4.1 Examples of University Controls

(note that the below examples are not exhaustive and additional/different controls may be required.)

Hazard	Examples of Controls
Violence or aggression – can include sexual assault (could be from staff, students, client, visitors & other)	• College Offices and other customer facing areas are designed or have retrofitted physical barriers at counters to isolate staff from physical violence • Locked areas - Authorised restricted to isolate areas • Safety on Campus • Critical Incident response procedure • Making it clear that violence and aggressive behaviour not tolerated • Duress alarms, security call points, CCTV • Physically safe spaces for after hours • Security on campus- patrols, lighting, reporting • Accommodation- (on-site/ field trips or placement) - secure, lockable doors & windows. Single rooms where possible. • Training in de-escalation, pairing of staff, processes to manage difficult behaviours • Sexual harassment & assault reporting and training
Traumatic Events	• Eliminate physical risks to health & safety in the workplace to prevent trauma • Eliminate or secure potentially lethal means of self-harm (e.g. deliberate fall from heights, hazardous chemicals) • Critical Incident response procedure • Notifiable Incident report to WHS • EAP & Health & Counselling • Emergency management • Safety on Campus • Mental Health First Aid Officers • Reporting- see 6.1
Bullying & Harassment (including sexual, racial, religion, gender, disability etc..) (could be from staff, students, client, visitors & other)	• Code of conduct - Values & Ethos • Complaints Management & Grievance Resolution framework • Bullying Prevention & Management Guidelines • Sexual harassment & assault reporting and training • Equal Opportunity and training, • Disability Policy • Specific Reporting – see section 6.1
Poor workplace relationships or interactions (staff, student or others)	• Code of conduct - Values & Ethos • Complaints Management & Grievance Resolution framework • Student Grievance/ complaints procedure • Leadership training • Manager Assist support • EAP & Health & Counselling • Supervisor Reference Manual • Performance Management

High or low job demands	- Program and plan required human resources in line with Workload model & Enterprise Agreement - Eliminate unnecessary or duplication of work where possible - Allocate resources for peak times or reschedule work. - Give realistic deadlines - Monitor work hours via timesheets & flexitime - Allow for breaks and encourage them to be taken - Monitor excess leave and require it to be taken - Rotate staff where possible through high mental/ physical/ repetitive work - Consult and communicate about workload expectations and plan using the Performance Management process - Design field work and overseas travel activities with sufficient time built in to complete tasks to eliminate fatigue – including driving (see Driving & Vehicle Safety Procedure, Journey Management Plans, Field trip Safety manual -Part 9). - Provide mechanical aids to reduce physical demands
Lack of job control	- Consult with staff on tasks, workload, performance expectations including during Performance reviews - Provide opportunities for Consultation and communication on work practices - Provide staff with opportunities to increase skills and knowledge via Professional Development & training – see section 8
Poor role clarity	- Provide up to date Position Descriptions, - Undertake Performance reviews and team planning - Make sure staff are aware of reporting lines and responsibilities - Develop work instructions, guides & safe working procedures so staff know how to undertake tasks
Poor support (from managers / supervisors or coworkers).	- Provide staff with the right tools, equipment and information to perform their work in a correct and safe manner. - Develop work instructions, guides & safe working procedures so staff know how to undertake tasks - Promote Consultation and communication - Provide staff with opportunities to increase skills and knowledge via training – see section 8 - Have more than one staff member trained to undertake tasks, this allows for job rotation and people to back fill roles in times of absence - Support staff members with a Return to Work injury or Disability
Poor organisational change	- Change Management Framework - Consult and communicate with those who are likely to be affected by changes that may impact on work health & safety - Make sure risk assessments and safe work procedures are reviewed to manage any risk introduced by change and record any change practice that has occurred. - Make sure staff are adequately trained (see section 8) in any changes to work tasks.

Poor organisational justice	• Treat all team members fairly and consistently, see – Code of conduct - • Complaints Management & Grievance Resolution framework • Conflict of Interest Policy
Lack of reward or recognition	• Staff reward and recognition • Make sure all individuals efforts are recognised as appropriate • Undertake Performance reviews , provide staff opportunity where possible and recognise staff contributions • Renumeration Policy
Remote or isolated work	• Working from Home Agreement & communication arrangements should be in place to allow staff working from home to be in regular communication with managers & teammates. • Field Trips Procedure and Manual regarding how work is scoped out in field ensuring people have access to support and are not isolated for long periods. • Make sure staff & students have access to Communication systems & check-in devices (e.g. satellite phones/ SPOTs) when on field work or overseas travelling. • Ensure Working Afterhours or in Isolation Procedures are implemented including implementing Buddy systems in place where risk identified
Poor environmental conditions	• Conduct workplace inspections and implement controls to eliminate or minimise noise, heat, dust or chemicals that are identified as impacting on staff or students health. • Report physical hazards via FlinSafe or for infrastructure via ServiceOne • Design or set up workspace to allow for adequate amenities, including for hygiene purposes (i.e. clean spaces to eat, separate sinks for washing hands, clean places to store PPE from normal clothes). • Take weather conditions into account for Field Trips and other outdoor activities—refer to Working in Extreme Hot and Cold Procedure.

5.4.2 University Policy& Procedures

As can be seen from the above table the University has a number of Policy, Procedures and Systems that provide important information and help ensure everyone involved understands the University processes for managing psychosocial risks. Policies/ Procedures alone should not be relied on as the only control when thinking about how to manage psychosocial risks, but they do detail responsibilities, help set clear expectations and outline acceptable behaviours in the workplace.

All University Policy & Procedures & systems can be found in the University Policy Library and include:

• Code of Conduct

• Enterprise Agreement

• Recruitment Policy

• Performance Management

• Flexible work arrangements,

- Equal Opportunity Policy

- Disability Policy

- Complaint Management and Grievance Resolution framework

- Change Management Framework

- Bullying Prevention and Management Policy

- Sexual Harassment & Sexual Assault Prevention and response Policy

- Staff Recognition Policy

5.4.3 Reasonable Management Action

Reasonable management action, when carried out in a lawful and reasonable way, may be uncomfortable or distressing to some, but it is a legitimate way for leaders and supervisors to lead, direct and control work.

The University does not tolerate any unwelcome or unfair treatment by any person or group of people whilst engaged in activity or business on behalf of or in association with the University which may create a psychosocial hazard for any person. See About reasonable management action for further information

5.5 Reviewing the Controls

To determine if controls have been and remain effective, it is important to review them. This can occur in a number of ways and may be different for each type of hazard and each work area. It is also necessary to conduct a review when new changes are introduced that could change the psychosocial hazards.

Common ways to review to controls include consulting with staff, looking at and monitoring the metrics identified in section 5.2, including the number of psychosocial reports, grievances, staff turnover, absenteeism, EAP data and staff feedback / surveys.

6.   RESPOND

Responding & intervening early when a staff member has identified they are experiencing psychosocial stress is likely to result in the best outcome.

Some of the responding actions will overlap with those identified under prevention and support.

To be able to respond Managers/ Supervisors need to be aware when staff are experiencing psychosocial stress that are likely to lead to a psychosocial injury. Remembering stress itself is not an issue but if it becomes **frequent, prolonged or severe** it can cause psychological and physical harm.

When staff are reporting they are experiencing psychosocial stress, then early intervention is important.

6.1 Reporting

There are many avenues and mechanisms for reporting psychosocial hazards in the University. Which option is used may depend on the nature of the hazard – i.e. sexual harassment, bullying have specific reporting systems. Below are some of the mechanisms for reporting within Flinders University.

6.1.1 Informal Reporting

Informal direct dialogue between managers/ supervisors and the staff member who may be experiencing psychosocial issues can allow for a quick resolution. Where feasible, this option should occur in the first instance.

Note – where possible Staff should try to be clear with supervisors what the actual issue is. Broad statements and generalisations are not often helpful.

For Supervisors this maybe an opportunity for making improvements to the work design/ role. Can you help staff re- prioritise workloads, offer additional resources to support peak periods, clarify process and look for "busy" or duplicated work & effort that could be removed?

Miscommunication is often at the centre of interpersonal relationship issues. Setting aside time to meet and discuss the issues can often help resolve matters quickly, preventing the situation from escalating. Given the sensitive nature of psychosocial hazards, direct communication between a manager and staff member may not always be feasible, especially if the staff member feels uncomfortable discussing the matter with their supervisor. In these cases, other reporting options as outlined below should be explored.

Informally staff could consider raising the issue with: -

- The Line Manager/ Head of Department/Area
- P&C Business Partners in your College/Portfolio.

6.1.2 Formal Reporting Options

Depending on the nature of the psychosocial hazard it may be more appropriate to report via a formal avenue. Where and how it is reported will depend on the nature of the issue. Below reporting options include: -

- Complaints Management & Grievance Resolution Framework
- Psychosocial hazards can be reported via Psychosocial Hazard reports
- Reporting Physical hazards or injuries – see the Accident, Incident and Hazard Reporting and Investigation Procedures
- No bullying at Flinders - Flinders University Staff
- Equal opportunity and diversity - Flinders University Staff
- Sexual assault/ harassment online reporting

6.1.3 Other Reporting & Consultation Options

HEALTH & SAFETY REPRESENTATIVES (HSRs)

Health & Safety issues can be raised with HSRs for an elected workgroup.

HSRs are able to represent staff either directly to supervisors or via College/ Portfolio Health & Safety Committees.

For further information on the powers and functions of HSRs, as well as information on the elected HSR for specific areas, please refer to the Elected health and safety representatives.

HEALTH & SAFETY COMMITTEES

Health & Safety Committees are forums for communication and consultation between staff and management on health and safety issues. Some psychosocial issues are not appropriate for resolution or discussion in this type of forum and confidentiality must always be considered for all the individuals involved. However, Health & Safety committees can be an important forum for consultation and communication and to discuss broad psychosocial hazards, procedures, controls, support and promotion activities.

6.2 Investigation and Resolution

Depending on the nature of the psychosocial hazard it will determine the University process.

Please see the University Complaints Management & Grievance Resolution Framework for details

 Psychosocial hazards reported via the WHS unit reporting tool will be triaged to the appropriate business partner (it could be People and Culture or Work Health and Safety).

 All information you provide is confidential. Confidential in this context means the information will be treated sensitively and within the University privacy policy obligations. Please note that evidence will be required to assist with the reported enquiry.

Note - it is not the role of the Work Health & Safety Unit to advocate for an individual, to become involved in the details of a workplace conflict, to provide legal advice, to mediate between persons involved, secure an apology or address a student, academic or conduct issue.

Formal Investigations are generally (but not always) limited to reports of a serious workplace psychosocial incidents.

How the report is triaged and who is involved in the investigation and resolution will depend on the nature of the individual case. The aim of investigations is to identify and implement controls, where reasonably practicable to do so.

6.2.1 Can I Report Anonymously?

We understand that reporting a psychosocial hazard may be a sensitive matter, anonymous reporting is possible via the Psychosocial Hazard report . However, the University will not be able to effectively make reasonable enquiries into the report if you remain anonymous.

7 SUPPORT

7.1 Employee Assistance Program (EAP) (staff only)

It's crucial to support staff who are dealing with psychosocial issues. When it's apparent that someone is facing challenges, it's important to ask if they would like assistance and to provide them with information about the Employee Assistance Program (EAP).The Employee assistance program is available to all staff and is voluntary. Staff may be made aware of or encouraged to use the program but can't be directed to participate.

Staff are able to access three (3 x) sessions for free via the University EAP program. There are a number of service providers and numerous locations – please see the WHS web pages for details EAP program.

7.2 Counselling / Psychosocial support (Students)

This Guide is aimed at supporting staff psychosocial safety; however, we note there is often cross over. The University has extensive policy, reporting & support mechanisms for students. See web pages Student support & services - Flinders University Students

- Students who need psychosocial support can access Health & Counselling Services.

Students should also see the following avenues for reporting;

- Sexual assault/ harassment procedure and reporting Safety on campus - Flinders University Students

V 1.0 2025

- Students compliant Policy
- Student EO Officers

7.3 Mental Health First Aiders & Equal Opportunity Officers

Mental Health First Aiders are able to recognise and respond to a person who is experiencing a mental health problem, until appropriate professional help is received or the crisis resolves. This function is not to provide counselling..

 Equal Opportunity Officers (EO) can help with information relating to discrimination, harassment, bullying and sexual harassment.

Note- regardless of staff or student - if someone presents and appears in immediate danger to themselves, or others please call emergency services - 000

7.4 Manage the Injury- Recovery and Return to Work (Staff Only)

University staff who require medical treatment and/or time off work due to a psychological injury may be entitled to workers compensation.

When a staff member reports an injury at work, they will be contacted by the WHS Unit Return to Work Coordinator (RTW Coordinator) to explain the parameters and process to lodge a claim. If the claim is accepted medical support and access to other treatment will be discussed. The purpose of Workers Compensation is to assist staff members suffering from work injuries and where prudent and practicable, to remain at or return to work as soon as possible after the occurrence of the injury.

For further information please Contact the University Return to Work Coordinator Karen.Hayden@flinders.edu.au

For further information Please see Injury Management- Workers' compensation for Flinders University Staff * the University Return To Work Policy

8 PROMOTE MENTALLY HEALTH WORKPLACES

8.1 Health & Wellbeing (staff only)

Flinders University is committed to building and maintaining a work environment that supports a holistic approach to safety, health & wellbeing is aimed at increasing staff knowledge and awareness of health and wellbeing issues and healthy lifestyle choices and behaviours.

The University runs a wide range of activities via its Health and Wellbeing program. The Work Health & Safety Unit produces a calendar of activities across the year ranging from mental health, nutrition to physical challenges.

The Health & Wellbeing Calendar can be found on the WHS Web pages and advertised in via Flinders in Touch and College Newsletters.

8.1.2. Thriving @ Flinders

Has a range of wellbeing initiatives for staff and students. There is a regular calendar of events- please see the web page for updated information Thriving @ Flinders - Flinders In Touch

8.2 Promote Good Work Design

Good work design is a holistic way at looking at work and activity. It can cover good leadership, supervision, training & skills, how work is managed, organised and supported, setting the workplace culture, clarity of roles and job descriptions, workload models and performance management.

These all can work together to provide environments where employees are treated fairly, respectfully and feel like their wellbeing matters. These elements together with operation issues such as job flexibility, job physical & mental demands, design of tasks, systems of work, safe physical work environment, all lead to good work design.

For more information on good work design principles see - - Good work design | Safe Work Australia

8.3 Leadership Support – Managers & Supervisors

 Having a healthy psychosocial culture in the workplace requires management commitment.

Leaders must model respectful behaviour and lead by example. They play a crucial role in setting the tone, shaping the strategy, and allocating resources—all of which are essential for success. Managers & Supervisors - things you can do in your team include:

- Monitor the workloads of your team members and help them to readjust or re-prioritise where necessary.
- Encourage them to take the required breaks, plan for them to take their leave.
- Try to make sure each staff member has a balanced workload, considering their skills and capacity.
- Understand where there may be sources of risk to your staff. Are people exposed to high emotional demands or physical abuse – e.g. customer facing roles.
- Are there better ways to design the job/ role.
- Are staff aware of their job responsibilities and expectations.
- Conduct regular performance reviews
- Performance reviews and team planning should be seen as opportunities to have discussions about role clarity, workload and behavioural expectations.

8.4 Training & Skills

People who lack the appropriate skills or training can find job task a lot harder than those who are experienced. This can cause stress for the person or may slow them down. It may make them feel like they are not capable or overwhelmed and this can, if ongoing, contribute to psychosocial risks.

Induction, training and development can play a role in supporting good work/ workplace design and the University has a range of topics and opportunities for staff to receive training and upskill in a range of areas – see Organisation Development and Training & WHS Induction and Training

Sometimes the person may not need formal training. It may be as simple as having someone demonstrate the task or allow more time for the task to be completed the first few times.

9.0 Responsibilities – Psychosocial Hazard Identification& Management

All Work Health & Safety Responsibilities Apply – See WHS Responsibilities

Specifically for psychosocial hazards; -

University as a PCBU	Under WHS legislation, the primary duty of the University (as a Person Conducting a Business or Undertaking [PCBU]) is to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that the health (physical & psychosocial) and safety of staff and others (e.g. students, visitors) is not put at risk by the work or activities carried out by the University.
College VPEDs / Portfolio Heads / Officers	• Show Leadership in setting a psychosocially safe culture • Allocate responsibility and resources to support psychosocial hazards • Implement risk management practices
Managers and Supervisors	• ensuring the health of staff is valued • actively engage in risk management activities for both physical & psychosocial safety • providing work environments and systems that prevent or psychosocial risks in the workplace
People and Culture	• ensure appropriate P&C policies and procedures are established and aligned with the Enterprise Agreement, Code of Conduct, Industrial Relations and Performance management. • Assist in the identification of psychosocial hazards at the workplace. • Provide advice and support in managing psychosocial hazards at work • Facilitate appropriate escalation of serious matters • Undertake workplace investigations where appropriate • Conduct surveys to identify psychosocial hazards • Analyse survey results
Work Health & Safet Unit	• Develop reporting mechanisms for psychosocial workplace incidents where able to do so investigate incidents or triage to appropriate unit to investigate • Provide mechanisms for audits to be conducted at the University. • Provide reporting and trend data to University management & WHS committees. • Provide advice on risk management practices in relation to physical environment that may impact on psychosocial safety and health.

	• Manage the EAP services
Return to Work Coordinator	• When a staff member suffers a psychosocial injury and there is an accepted workers compensation claim the RTW Coordinator will; • Support the staff member and their treating team to facilitate recovery • Liaise with any persons involved in the provision of medical and other relevant services • Develop and implement RTW plans • Monitor the staff member's progress • Assist managers and the University to support the staff member
Work Health and Safety Committee & Health & Safety Representatives	• encouraging long-term commitment to work health and wellbeing • evaluating the work health and health strategy in consultation with University staff and management.
Staff Members	• take care of their own health & safety • make sure their actions or omissions do not harm others • work within any University policies / procedures • report psychosocial safety issues • support colleagues where able to do so • provide genuine and constructive feedback on consultation • ensure they understand their role and job description • request training if needed • not taking part in toxic workplace interactions. • Comply with the University Code of Conduct

10. Other Support Resources

Lifeline or call 13 11 14

Beyond Blue

After Hours Crisis Support Line -1300 512 409

YARN – Mental health Services for First Nations People

For further information please see Health and Wellbeing resources