

# Advance your approach to *psychosocial* health

A toolkit for building better workplaces

FIG 1. ADDRESSING PSYCHOSOCIAL RISK

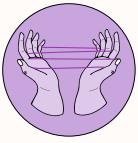




**In the fast-paced world of work, setting sail without a compass is likely a recipe for disaster. That's why it's essential for any organisation looking to chart a course to a safer and more supportive culture to proactively identify and assess psychosocial hazards and risks – while also boosting employee wellbeing and keeping up with evolving regulatory requirements.**

This toolkit will help you understand:

- What psychosocial hazards and risks are
- Why addressing psychosocial risk is important to building better workplaces
- Key considerations for identifying psychosocial hazards
- How to take action after collecting data related to psychosocial hazards



# What are psychosocial hazards?

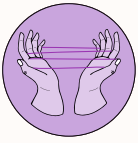
**Psychosocial hazards** refer to the factors in the workplace that have the potential to affect employees' mental, emotional and physical wellbeing. These hazards arise from the interaction between work conditions, organisational factors, and the individual. They can impact an employee's psychological health, physical health, social relationships, and overall quality of life.

**Language matters.** Psychosocial hazards relate to the factors in the workplace that may cause harm, while **psychosocial risk** refers to the likelihood of harm based on exposure to the hazard(s).

It is important to note that psychosocial hazards do not often occur in isolation, and the combination of various psychosocial hazards can increase the risk of potential harm.

FIG 2. UNDERSTAND PSYCHOSOCIAL HAZARDS





Psychosocial hazards can manifest in various forms. Here are some common examples:

- Working too much or too little, or not having the right skills and training to complete allocated tasks
- Feeling little control over how or when tasks are completed
- Feeling a lack of support from colleagues, supervisors, or the organisation
- Lacking the clarity to understand the requirements and responsibilities of the role
- Being exposed to inappropriate behaviours that may increase the risk of stress and psychological distress in the workplace, including bullying, harassment, or workplace violence or aggression

For a more detailed overview of common psychosocial hazards, check out the [official guidelines outlined by Safe Work Australia](#).

It's important to highlight that psychosocial hazards can vary across industries, job roles, and individual circumstances. What may be a hazard for one person might not be the same for another. Therefore, organisations need to conduct thorough assessments, engage in open communication with employees, and address these hazards through appropriate policies, procedures, and support mechanisms.



# The importance of addressing psychosocial hazards in the workplace

By proactively managing psychosocial hazards, organisations can create a healthier, more supportive work environment that promotes employee wellbeing, job satisfaction, and productivity.

## WHY PSYCHOSOCIAL HEALTH MATTERS IN THE WORKPLACE

<i>1 in 5</i> Australian workers report taking time off work due to feeling mentally unwell ( <u>Beyond Blue</u> )	<i>1 in 3</i> people have experienced sexual harassment at work ( <u>Safe Work Australia</u> )	Claims related to work demands have increased by <i>18%</i> over the last 3 years ( <u>Comcare</u> )	Organisations that prioritise wellbeing have <i>8x</i> higher engagement ( <u>World Economic Forum</u> )
The median time lost for mental health conditions was <i>5x</i> higher compared to physical injuries and diseases (30.7 vs. 6.2 working weeks) ( <u>Safe Work Australia</u> )	The median compensation paid for mental health related injuries was <i>\$55,270</i> , compared to \$13,883 for physical injuries and diseases ( <u>Safe Work Australia</u> )	The <u>Productivity Commission</u> estimates that mental health costs the Australian economy between <i>\$10 - \$18 billion</i> in lost productivity and reduced participation	Organisations that prioritise wellbeing are <i>220%</i> more likely to be meeting their financial targets ( <u>Josh Bersin</u> )
<i>1 in 2</i> Australian employees surveyed reporting leaving a workplace because of a poor mental health environment ( <u>Beyond Blue</u> )	Psychologically healthy workers have <i>6x</i> less sickness absence ( <u>Safe Work Australia</u> )	Organisations that prioritise wellbeing are <i>2x</i> as likely to be "great places to work" ( <u>Josh Bersin</u> )	PwC says <i>\$2.30 ROI</i> for wellbeing initiatives ( <u>PwC</u> )



As the statistics and studies above show, prioritising psychosocial health brings tremendous benefits to both organisations and the individuals that work there.

**Stay up to date with your local rules and regulations.** Some countries have amended their Work Health and Safety (WHS) laws to ensure employers do everything they can to reduce risks to an employee's mental and physical health. Check with your local regulator to see if your legal obligations include managing psychosocial risks.

FIG 2. BUILD SAFER WORKPLACES





# How to identify psychosocial hazards

Identifying psychosocial hazards and risks in the workplace is an important step in managing and addressing them effectively. Here are five actions you can take to ensure you are identifying psychosocial hazards and risks in your workplace.

## 1. Conduct a thorough workplace assessment

- Review existing policies, procedures, and documentation related to health and safety, including any previous risk assessments.
- Analyse work processes, tasks, and job demands to identify potential stressors or factors that may impact employees' psychological wellbeing.
- Consider organisational factors such as leadership styles, communication practices, workload distribution, and work environment design.

## 2. Engage with employees

- Involve employees in the process by using surveys, interviews, focus groups, or anonymous reporting mechanisms.
- Encourage open and honest communication to gather insights into employees' experiences, concerns, and perceptions of psychosocial hazards in the workplace.
- Pay attention to any signs or symptoms of stress, fatigue, [burnout](#), or interpersonal conflicts reported by employees.
- Check out [Culture Amp's Psychosocial Health survey template](#), which has been designed to help you identify psychosocial hazards in your organisation.





### 3. Review incident reports and data

- Examine incident reports, near misses, workers' compensation claims, and other relevant records to identify patterns or trends related to psychosocial hazards.
- Analyse absenteeism rates, turnover data, and exit interview feedback to understand if psychosocial factors contribute to these trends.
- Evaluate any documented incidents or accidents that may have been caused or exacerbated by psychosocial hazards.

### 4. Assess the psychosocial work environment

- Evaluate the psychosocial aspects of the work environment (e.g., level of job control and job clarity, support from supervisors and colleagues, opportunities for growth and development, etc.)
- Consider factors such as workload, deadlines, role clarity, workplace relationships, bullying, harassment, and discrimination.
- Observe interactions and behaviours in the workplace, including communication styles, conflicts, and the overall atmosphere.

### 5. Continuously monitor and review

- Regularly review and update your identification processes to ensure ongoing effectiveness.
- Stay informed about emerging psychosocial hazards and keep up to date with industry research, best practices, and legislative changes.
- Encourage a [culture of reporting](#) and open communication, where employees feel comfortable raising concerns about psychosocial hazards.

Identifying psychosocial hazards and risks requires a comprehensive and multidimensional approach. By combining employee input, data analysis, and workplace assessment, you can better understand the specific psychosocial hazards present in your workplace and take proactive measures to mitigate their impact on employee wellbeing.





# Tips for taking action after conducting a survey

Collecting the data is only the starting point. After collecting data from employees about psychosocial hazards in the workplace, organisations should take the following actions:

## 1. **Analyse and interpret the data**

Thoroughly analyse the collected data to gain a comprehensive understanding of the psychosocial hazards present in the workplace. This analysis should include identifying trends, patterns, and correlations to uncover the root causes and underlying factors contributing to these hazards. It is crucial to combine the data analysis with a robust risk assessment process to assess the severity and likelihood of harm related to exposure to the identified hazards.

## 2. **Communicate the findings**

Share the findings of the data analysis and risk assessment with key stakeholders, including management, supervisors, and employees. Effective communication is essential to raise awareness about the identified psychosocial hazards, their potential impact on employee wellbeing, and the importance of addressing them. Additionally, transparently sharing the findings will help foster a culture of safety and support, as well as encourage your people to collaborate in the development of mitigation strategies.



### 3. Consult with employees and stakeholders

Involve employees and relevant stakeholders in the development and implementation of an action plan. Engage them in discussions, seek their input, and encourage their participation. Their perspectives and experiences are invaluable for understanding the practical implications of the hazards and developing effective solutions. Additionally, consider involving health and safety committees or representative groups to ensure broad representation and support.

### 4. Develop an action plan

Develop a comprehensive action plan based on the data analysis, risk assessment, identified hazards and employee consultation.

The plan should outline specific strategies, initiatives, and interventions aimed at mitigating the psychosocial hazards. Prioritise actions based on the severity and likelihood of the hazards, available resources, and feasibility of implementation. Remember to clearly document your decision-making process and set clear goals, define responsibilities, and establish timelines to ensure accountability and progress tracking.

### 5. Monitor and evaluate progress

Continuously monitor and evaluate the progress of the implemented interventions. Track key indicators, such as changes in employee feedback, incident reports, absenteeism rates, or turnover data, to gauge the impact of the interventions. This ongoing evaluation, combined with periodic risk assessments, will help you identify emerging hazards and areas for improvement, as well as enable you to agilely adjust your strategies as needed to ensure that the workplace remains safe and supportive.

By taking these five key actions and integrating risk assessment into the process, organisations can effectively leverage the collected data to drive meaningful change, proactively manage psychosocial hazards, and promote a healthier and more productive work environment.



# Manage psychosocial hazards in your workplace today

Don't wait for issues to arise; identify and monitor the psychosocial hazards in your workplace by partnering with Culture Amp. By taking action now, you can ensure that you're set up to proactively address psychosocial hazards and risks in your workplace and create a safer and more supportive culture for your employees.

[Learn how Culture Amp can help](#)

Let's build a better workplace,  
together.

CONTACT US