

Psychosocial Hazards Self-Assessment

What are Psychosocial Factors?

There are 13 factors related to the design and management of work, and its social and organizational contexts that impact the experience of work.

Psychological and Social Support Civility
and Respect Organizational Culture
Clear Leadership and Expectations
Psychological Demands
Growth and Development
Recognition and Reward

Involvement and Influence
Workload Management
Engagement
Balance
Psychological Protection
Protection of Physical Safety

What are Psychosocial Hazards?

A psychosocial hazard exists when the conditions related to the design, organization, management, or social context of work, are likely to become detrimental to the employee's mental, emotional, or physical well-being.

Risk is the likelihood that a hazard will cause harm. We can lower the risk of harm by decreasing the frequency or the impact of the exposure to a hazard. Uncontrolled exposure to psychosocial hazards can cause psychological and physical harm.

Psychosocial risks at work

Psychosocial risks and the appropriate control measures may vary between workplaces and between groups of workers, depending on the work environment, organizational context, and the nature of work. Individual skills, training and experience can also impact the risk for specific workers.

When you are evaluating the potential of a psychosocial hazard causing harm, think about how often your team is exposed to the hazard and the degree of impact team members are reporting.

On average, work-related psychological injuries have longer recovery times, higher costs, and require more time away from work. Managing the risks associated with psychosocial hazards not only protects workers, but it also decreases the disruption associated with staff turnover and absenteeism and may improve broader organizational performance and productivity.

Psychosocial Hazards

Self-Assessment

This tool is meant to help you to begin the process of identifying psychosocial risks. The following is a sample. Be sure to customize it for your workplace.

Instructions – Step 1: Fill out the table below by answering the question “Do these hazards exist in your workplace?”. You might identify with some, or even all, aspects in the given examples.

Area of concern	Examples	Do any of these hazards exist in your workplace?	
		Yes	No
Workload and work pace	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Work overload or underload - High levels of time pressure - Continually subject to deadlines - High level of repetitive work 		
Working hours and schedule	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lack of variety of work - Shift work - Inflexible work schedules - Unpredictable hours - Long or unsociable hours - Continual requirements to complete work at short notice 		
Work/life balance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Work tasks, roles, schedules or expectations that cause workers to continue working on their own time - Conflicting demands of work and home - Work that impacts the workers’ ability to recover 		
Work environment, equipment and hazardous tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Poor workplace conditions such as lack of space, poor lighting and excessive noise - Lack of the necessary tools, equipment or other resources to complete work tasks safely - Working in extreme conditions or situations, such as very high or low temperatures, or at height or depth 		

Area of concern	Examples	Yes	No
Violence and aggression	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Workplace incidents that involve exposure to abuse, the threat of, or actual harm that causes fear and distress and can lead to stress and/ or physical injury 		
Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lack of support from supervisors and co-workers. - Lack of access to support service - Lack of information/training to support work performance 		
Supervision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lack of communication, encouragement/acknowledgment, and support/resources to facilitate improvements in performance - Misuse of digital surveillance 		
Roles and expectations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Role ambiguity - Role conflict - Uncertainty about, or frequent changes to, and tasks 		
Remote and isolated work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Working in locations that are far from home, family, friends and usual support networks (e.g., isolated working arrangements) - Working alone in non-remote locations without social/human interaction at work (e.g., working at home) - Working in private homes (e.g., providing care or domestic roles in other people's homes) 		
Recognition and reward	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lack of appropriate acknowledgment and appreciation of workers' efforts in a fair and timely manner 		
Organizational/workgroup culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Poor communication - Low levels of support for problem-solving - Lack of definition of, or agreement on, organizational objectives - Inconsistent and untimely application of policies and procedures, unfair decision-making 		
Organizational change management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lack of practical support provided to assist workers during transition periods - Prolonged or recurring restructuring - Lack of consultation and communication about workplace changes 		
Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lack of clear vision and objectives - Management style unsuited to the nature of the work and its demand - Failing to listen or only casually listening to complaints and suggestions - Withholding information - Inconsistent and poor decision-making practices 		

Area of concern	Examples	Yes	No
Job security and precarious work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Uncertainty regarding work availability, including work without set hours - Possibility of redundancy or temporary loss of work with reduced pay 		
Job demands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Work exposure to interaction with people (e.g., the public, customers, students, patients) - Having too much to do within a certain time or with a set number of workers - Conflicting demands and deadlines - Requirements for excessive periods of alertness and concentration - Working with aggressive or distressed people - Exposure to events or situations that can cause trauma 		
Job control or autonomy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Limited opportunity to participate in decision-making - Lack of control over workload - Low levels of influence and independence (e.g., not being able to influence the speed, order or schedule of work tasks and workload) 		
Interpersonal relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Poor communication, including poor information sharing - Poor relationships between managers, supervisors, co-workers, and clients or others that workers interact with interpersonal conflict 		
Harm: exposure to traumatic events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Events that may be perceived as traumatic or distressing; this may include witnessing, investigating or being exposed to traumatic events 		
Civility and respect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lack of trust, honesty, respect, civility and fairness - Lack of respect and consideration in interactions among workers, as well as with customers, clients and the public 		
Career development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Career stagnation and uncertainty, under-promotion or over-promotion, lack of opportunity for learning and skill development 		
Bullying and harassment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Exposure to unwanted, offensive, intimidating behaviours which relate to one or more specific characteristics of the targeted individual - Unreasonable behaviour directed towards a worker or group of workers, that creates a risk to health and safety 		

Instructions – Step 2: Choose the hazards that you answered “**Yes**” to from the table above. Fill out the rest of the table. Prioritize hazards that your workforce is exposed to frequently, where the reported impact is highest. When you are evaluating the potential of a psychosocial hazard causing harm, think about how often your team is exposed to the hazard and the average degree of impact team members are reporting.

Area of concern	Frequency (Constant, Often, Occasional, or Never)	Impact (Severe, Moderate, Mild, or Nil)	Risk (High, Medium, Low)

Assessing your results: If you choose a frequency above **Never** or an impact severity above **Nil**, this means you will have to monitor the hazard and how it could impact your workplace. If the presenting area of concern is exposure to violence or vicarious trauma, consult with your ministry or Public Service Agency safety specialist.

Planning your next steps: Use this information in your baseline for the Workplace mental health toolkit. Your highest risk should be your priority in your psychological health and safety planning.

Sources:

[Mental Health - Psychosocial Risk Factors in the Workplace.](#) (2023). Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety.

[Psychosocial hazards.](#) (2023). Workplace Strategies for Mental Health.