

Psychologically Safe & Healthy Workplace

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1. Purpose

This policy provides a clear statement of our commitment to maintain a psychologically healthy and safe workplace that promotes employees' psychological well-being and proactively endeavours to prevent harm to employee psychological health.

This policy is the overarching framework that guides our broader psychological health and well-being program initiatives.

2. Framework for a mentally healthy workplace

A Psychologically Healthy Workplace (PSH&W) is one that promotes employee's psychological wellbeing and proactively endeavours to prevent harm to employee psychological health.

We will give effect to this commitment to:

- build and maintain a positive and supportive workplace environment and culture that supports psychological health and wellbeing and prevents discrimination (including bullying and harassment).
- increase employee knowledge and awareness of psychological health and wellbeing issues and behaviours.
- reduce stigma around all mental illnesses in the workplace.
- facilitate workers active participation in a range of initiatives that support psychological health and wellbeing.
- Identify and assess work related hazards and risks that have the potential to cause distress, psychological injury or harm people
- Make training, information and other resources on mental health and wellbeing available and accessible to protect managers, supervisors and workers from risks to their psychological health and safety while at work promptly investigating complaints including reviewing and revising risk controls.

3. Related Documents

- Code of Practice: Managing psychosocial hazards at work
- SafeWork Australia Work-related psychological health and safety
- Disability Discrimination Act (1992)
- Work Health Safety Act 2011
- Work Health and Safety Regulation 2017
- Domestic and Family Violence Support Policy
- Alcohol and Other Drugs Policy
- Flexible Working Arrangements Policy

4. Responsibilities

Managers and Supervisors play a critical role in identifying when a worker may be struggling at work. This can include looking for early signs of distress or mental ill health. Signs of distress in a worker may be a change in their resilience, performance, absence or other behaviours. As a Manager or Supervisor you are best placed to implement more effective control measures before risks result in psychological injury.

Managers and Supervisors have a responsibility to:

- Identify foreseeable hazards, assess the risk, establish and review control measures. This process is done in consultation with workers. Consulting effectively with workers is an important part of risk assessment when identifying risks consider:
 - Work design, such as workload, variety of tasks and work-life balance.
 - Management of workplace hazards and risks, including customer aggression
 - Workplace relationships, consultation and communication, including change management, bullying, harassment, sexual harassment and discrimination
- ensure that all employees are made aware of this policy
- actively support and contribute to the implementation of this policy
- take reasonable care that their actions do not affect the health and safety of other people in the workplace.

As a Manager or Supervisor, if you identify someone struggling you can:

- Talk to the worker and ask if they need help
- Consider reasonable adjustment, or early intervention

All workers have a responsibility to:

- Report foreseeable hazards and contribute to the risk assessment process.
- take reasonable care of their own psychological and physical health
- take reasonable care that their actions do not affect the health and safety of other people in the workplace.

All workers are encouraged to:

- Report psychological hazards.
- support fellow workers in their awareness of this policy.
- support and contribute to Council's aim of providing a psychologically healthy and supportive environment for all employees.

5. Hazard Identification And Risk Controls

Psychosocial hazards at work are aspects of work situations that can cause a stress response, which may lead to psychological or physical harm.

Factors can include job design, poor workplace culture or environmental or individual factors.

These hazards can be identified by consulting with workers

Psychosocial hazards or factors are anything in the design or management or work that increases the risk of work related stress. A stress response is the physical, mental and emotional reactions that occur when a worker perceives the demands of their work exceed their ability or resources to cope. Work related stress if prolonged and/or severe can cause both psychological and physical injury.

6. How To Identify Psychosocial Hazards

The first step in the risk management process is to identify all work related psychosocial hazards. This involves finding things and situations that could potentially harm people.

Psychosocial hazards may be identified by:

- having conversations with workers, supervisors and managers
- inspecting the workplace to see how work is carried out, noting any rushing,
- workload and resourcing, delays or work backlog
- noticing how people interact with each other during work activities
- reviewing relevant information and records such as incident reports, workers
- compensation claims, staff surveys, absenteeism and staff turnover data, and
- using surveys to gather information from workers, supervisors and managers.

There are three types of interventions for controlling psychological risk factors: Prevent Harm, Intervene Early and Support Recovery



6.1. Primary intervention – Prevent Harm

This element focuses on duty under WHS laws. To do this Council must systematically and comprehensively:

- Identify and assess work related hazards and risks that have the potential to cause distress, psychological injury or harm people
- Implement effective control measures to eliminate hazards or minimise risk. The main focus on the good design and effective management of work, creating safe systems of work and ensuring appropriate communication and behaviour, and

- Consult effectively, early and often with our workers, supervisors, managers and representatives and others where required
- Promote health and well being
- Make training and other resources on mental health and wellbeing available and accessible

Primary interventions are aimed at:

- Modifying or eliminating the psychological risk factors that may give rise to a harm to health and
- Developing employees' ability to cope with the psychological risk factors.

6.2. Secondary intervention – Intervene Early

Secondary interventions are implemented after health factors or injuries are present, but before harm to health develops. Secondary interventions focus mainly on employees (e.g. employee assistance programs, medical treatment, counselling). Early identification and management of any risks can help minimise the potential severity of injuries and time lost from work. These aspects include Council

- Review control measures and, where they are not effective take action . The review might be prompted by routine monitoring or by your workers raising concerns about their psychological health and safety
- Should
 - Encourage workers to report injuries or illnesses as soon as practical
 - Support workers, supervisors and managers showing early signs of work-related stress and modify their work duties to suit their circumstances, and
 - Provide early assistance for individuals who have an increased risk of injury. This could include facilitating access to appropriate mental health services

The earlier you identify a worker, supervisor or manager is experiencing work-related stress the sooner steps can be taken to prevent a psychological injury.

Where Council have identified a worker, supervisor or manager who may be at risk because of a non-work related mental health condition Council have a duty to ensure, so far as reasonably practicable, the health and safety of that worker, supervisor or manager whilst at work. Our risk management process shall include identifying any additional controls which may be required for workers, supervisors or managers with existing injuries or illnesses.

6.3. Tertiary intervention – Support Recovery

Tertiary interventions are implemented after it has been medically established that an injury has developed. Tertiary interventions are employee focused. These interventions concern the treatment of the diagnosed psychological injury. The aim is to restore the employee's psychological health, or improve employee psychological health to the point where the employee is able to return to work and a healthy state of functioning.

Council recognises the importance of work in restoring mental health and aim to provide a supportive environment for this to occur.

Council will ensure that during recovery the injured worker, supervisor or manager is supported to perform duties within their capacity. Where it is safe, and giving

Careful consideration to each workers, supervisor or manager medical needs, continuing to stay at work and understanding alternative or modified duties is recognised as best practice.

Council is committed to supporting recovery at work and return to work after a psychological injury by:

- Identifying any hazard thought to have led to the original injury, or which may be present in new duties and taking all reasonable steps to eliminate or minimise these
- Making reasonable workplace adjustments as required
- Maintaining regular contact with the injured worker, supervisor or manager, particularly if they are away from the workplace, this is essential for ensuring effective communication and support.
- Effectively consulting with those involved in the return to work process including the injured worker, managers/supervisors, Return to Work Officer and treating practitioners
- Clearly establishing the injured workers, supervisors or managers capacity to work: what they are able to safely do and when they are likely to return to pre-injury work duties.
- Clearly identifying what support is required and who is responsible for each action
- Maintaining appropriate confidentiality, and
- Considering any other factors that may impact on your workers capacity to work for example, medication, travel, and any support services

6.4. Examples of primary, secondary and tertiary interventions provided by Council.

Primary	Secondary	Tertiary
Policies and procedures (e.g. early intervention)	Employee Assistance Program	Return to work programs
Reasonable Adjustments	Individual coaching	Referral support for a medical professional
Recruitment and selection processes	Individual time management training	Employee assistance program
Supportive leadership	Workload adjustments	Workload adjustments
Awareness training	Time management training	Individual coaching

7. Reasonable Modification or Support

Employees experiencing symptoms related to psychological health are able to receive immediate support from their supervisor or manager, EAP, their GP or local mental health services.

After a psychological injury workers, supervisor or manager may require reasonable modifications, reasonable workplace adjustments or support to safely return to work Council can support workers by:

- Flexible working arrangements
- Modifying some aspects of the job such as:
 - Reducing exposure to high stress situations

- Simplifying tasks
- Providing greater support
- Modifying the work area, for example making it quieter
- Allowing different reporting arrangements, or
- Changing the work location if suggested by the treating doctor
- Make training and other resources on mental health and wellbeing available and accessible
- Ensuring the employee has a manageable workload and is not required to work overtime to complete tasks

When modifying duties or locations it is important to ensure the worker, supervisor or manager does not feel stigmatised or isolated

Council encourages all employees, supervisors and managers to seek assistance and professional help, whether for themselves, a peer, colleague, friend or family member.

7.1. Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

Employees and their family members are eligible to access the EAP. Normally, employees can access a set number of one-hour sessions related to their need, paid for by Council. Should additional sessions be required, the provider may refer the employee to an appropriate external agency or arrange for the employee to continue with the provider in a private capacity at the employee's expense.

In exceptional circumstances, with the recommendation of the counsellor, the Manager, People and Culture or their delegate may approve additional visits which will be funded from current EAP contract hours.

7.1.1. Attendance at Sessions

The arrangements for taking time off during business hours will be the same as exists between supervisors and employees for any form of absence from the workplace.

7.1.2. Confidentiality and disclosure of personal information

An employee who wants to access the EAP service is not required to inform anyone of this or the reason for accessing EAP. Should an employee wish to advise their supervisor that they are attending EAP, the supervisor is required to observe strictest confidentiality and to support the employee in accessing the EAP.

Conversations and any information the employee shares with a counsellor will be in strictest confidence and will not be communicated further unless written authorisation is given by the employee. Council, will not receive information from the counsellor concerning the employee's situation.

7.1.3. Self-referral

The EAP is designed to encourage self-referrals where the employee has personal problems which they want to discuss in a private and confidential setting without anyone in the organisation being involved in any way.

7.1.4. Suggested referral

A colleague, supervisor/manager, HR Business Partner, Safety Officer, family member, doctor or someone else may recognise that an employee is distressed or going through a difficult time and suggest using the EAP.

7.1.5. Management referral - informal

Although EAP is designed to encourage self-referral, there may be occasions when supervisors/managers or the HR Manager /Chief Safety Officer may suggest that a worker seek counselling to assist with personal issues.

7.2. Trauma Support

A critical incident can be overwhelming and cause distress likely to result in stress related claims and a decline in morale and performance.

Council has a Trauma Support agreement in place with the EAP Provider.

- Immediate access to psychologists to assess the situation
- On-site response if indicated
- Group/individual debriefing and on-going psychological counselling to facilitate recovery
- Assessment and feedback to management
- Follow-up counselling with client and employee Reports and case closure

8. Implementation

This policy will be implemented by way of communication to employees through team briefs, safety committees and publication on the intranet.

9. Grievance

All grievances associated with this policy will be dealt with in accordance with the Grievance and Dispute Procedures as detailed in the Award.

10. Review

Council reserves the right to vary/revoke this policy in consultation with Managers and Employees.