

WorkSafe
Victoria

Psycho-social injuries – Has your organisation got controls in place on paper and in practice?



Victoria

WorkSafe

What is work-related stress?

- “The reaction people may have when presented with work demands and pressures that are not matched to their knowledge and abilities and which challenge their ability to cope.”
- “Stress occurs in a wide range of work circumstances but is often made worse when employees feel that they have little support from supervisors and colleagues and where they have little control over work or how they can cope with its demands and pressures.”

World Health Organisation

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Is work-related stress such a big issue?

- 58% of employees reported regular exposure to stress
 - > Lack of consultation in decision making
 - > Time pressures
 - > Unsupportive supervision, and
 - > Conflicting home and work demands
- Contributing factors in Community Services
 - > Lack of resources
 - > Competing demands for service quality, client focus and funding requirements in complex environments
 - > Expectations from service users and the community

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Work-related Stress Prevention – Use a Risk Prevention approach



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Work-related Stress Prevention strategies

- Important that integrated into business as usual
 - > Commitment by senior management
 - > Communication
 - > Integration into OHS representation, consultation and issue resolution processes
 - > Systematic approach
 - > Support for prevention strategies
 - > Resource allocation and support

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Work-related Stress - New guidance



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What is Occupational violence?

- Occupational violence defined as any incident where an employee is physically attacked or threatened in the workplace
 - Client initiated occupational violence (source: client, client's family member/friends, or others associated with the client)
 - Intrusive occupational violence (source: member of the public)
- Occupational violence is under-reported

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Client-initiated occupational violence: risk factors

- Key job/task related risks:
 - providing care to people who are in distress, afraid, ill or incarcerated
 - Relating to people who have anger, resentment, feelings of failure or unreasonable expectations
 - Carrying or having access to drugs, cash or valuables
 - Working alone
- Compounding factors:
 - Client being intoxicated or under influence of drugs
 - Certain behavioural and/or psychiatric conditions
 - Difficulties with communicating

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Occupational violence – working alone & working off site

- 'Working alone' is working anywhere a person is unable to get immediate assistance from colleagues or other people
- Solutions
 - Visit preparation
 - Buddy systems
 - Environmental design
 - Communication or location systems
 - Alarms
 - Movement records
 - Training / knowledge sharing and Reporting systems



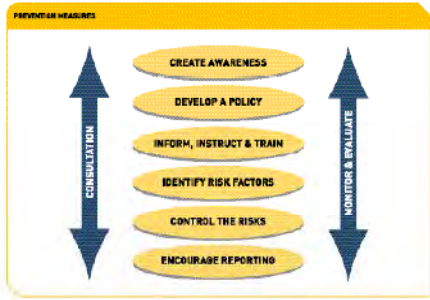
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What is Bullying?

- Workplace bullying is repeated, unreasonable behaviour directed toward an employee, or group of employees, that creates a risk to health and safety
 - Unreasonable behaviour means behaviour that a reasonable person would expect to victimise, humiliate, undermine or threaten
 - Behaviour includes actions of individuals or a group, and may involve using a system of work as a means of victimising, humiliating, undermining or threatening
 - Risk to health and safety includes risk to the mental or physical health of the employee

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Bullying prevention



The flowchart shows a cycle of activities for bullying prevention. On the left, a vertical double-headed arrow is labeled 'CONSULTATION'. On the right, a vertical double-headed arrow is labeled 'MONITOR & EVALUATE'. The central activities, from top to bottom, are: CREATE AWARENESS, DEVELOP A POLICY, INFORM, INSTRUCT & TRAIN, IDENTIFY RISK FACTORS, CONTROL THE RISKS, and ENCOURAGE REPORTING.



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WorkSafe's Bullying prevention activities

- Update of guidance material
 - Preventing and responding to bullying at work
 - Preventing violence at work
- Operational pilot
 - trial of bullying specific operational team
- Interventions solution workshops
 - to provide more certainty about what WorkSafe expects
 - will highlight importance of early intervention
- Website update
 - will coincide with launch of updated guide

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What is Fatigue?

- An acute or ongoing state of tiredness that leads to mental or physical exhaustion and prevents people from functioning within normal boundaries.
- Caused by work-related factors and factors outside work
- Fatigue can:
 - > increase error rates, slow reaction times, & increase the likelihood of accidents/injuries
- Prevention of fatigue
 - > Use a risk management approach

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Fatigue - controls



- Mental & physical demands
 - > Use equipment to reduce physical demands ; Re-design the job to include both mental & physical work ; use rest periods
- Work scheduling & planning
 - > Schedule critical work outside low body clock periods ; avoid working arrangements that provide incentives to work excessive hours ; adequate breaks between shifts ; sufficient staff
- Working time
 - > Develop working hours policy ; design working hours to allow for good quality sleep / recovery time between shifts

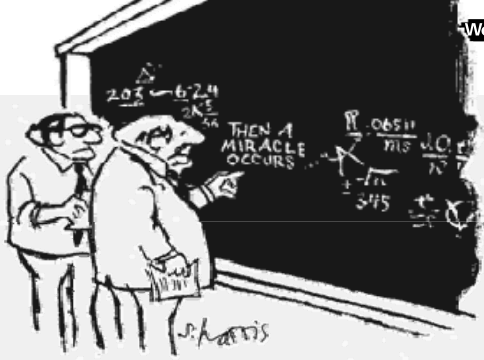

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Fatigue - controls





- Shift work
 - > Avoid quick shift changeovers ; control overtime, shift swapping & on-call duties ; limit shifts to 12 hours including overtime ; allow time for communication at shift handovers ; set shift rosters ahead of time
 - > Working at Night: Keep sequential night shifts to a minimum ; arrange shifts so that day sleep is not restricted
- Environmental conditions
 - > Provide thermal comfort ; provide adequate facilities for reset, sleep, meal breaks, onsite accommodation (if appropriate)
- Training, information, induction, supervision
- Monitoring and review

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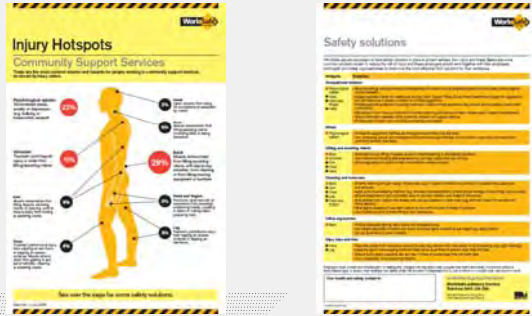
WorkSafe Resources


www.worksafe.vic.gov.au/communityservices

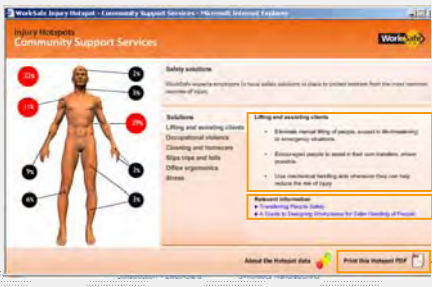
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Injury Hotspots for Community Support Services Workers

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worksafe.vic.gov.au/hotspots 




Safety Solutions

Links to guidance

Downloadable fact sheets

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Support & Assistance 

Interlinked 3 year Prevention Fund grant

National Disability Services (NDS)
 Catherine Doherty
 Ph: 03 8341 4304
 catherine.doherty@nds.org.au

OHS Champion

Disability, Children's Services, Child & Family Support

Eg. Forums, guidance, training, knowledge sharing networks

OHS Equipment Grant
 VCOSS – all community services

Small Business Assistance Service
 Mental Health, Neighbourhood houses

VCOSS 6 HOUR FREE OHS/RTW Consultant visit
 Medium sized Community Services

WORKSAFE 3 HOUR FREE OHS Consultant visit
 Small sized organisations

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Questions? 



THE MOST IMPORTANT REASON FOR MAKING YOUR WORKPLACE SAFE, IS NOT AT WORK AT ALL.

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