

Psychological Health and Safety for JHSC Members

This resource outlines the role of the Joint Health and Safety Committee in supporting workplace psychological health and safety.

What is Workplace Psychological Health and Safety?

A psychologically healthy and safe workplace is one that actively works to prevent harm to worker psychological health, including in negligent, reckless, or intentional ways, and promotes psychological wellbeing (CSA Z1003-13).

'Psychological health and safety is embedded in the way people interact with one another on a daily basis and is part of the way working conditions and management practices are structured and the way decisions are made and communicated.' (CSA Z1003-13, 2018)

What is the Role of the Joint Health and Safety Committee (JHSC)?

The Joint Health and Safety Committee (JHSC) plays a crucial role in the Internal Responsibility System (IRS) by promoting a psychologically healthy and safe workplace. The JHSC's support is essential for identifying and managing psychosocial factors, including job-specific factors that may lead to psychological harm.

Psychological Harm: Adverse impact to a person's mental health and wellbeing

What contributes to work-related psychological harm?

Exposure to occupational stressors may result in an adverse impact to a worker's mental health and wellbeing (psychological harm). A single exposure to a traumatic event, or multiple exposures to lesser stressors may cause a decrease in mental health with movement along the mental health continuum from a place of mental health towards 'reacting', or 'injured'.

How can the Joint Health and Safety Committee prevent workplace psychological harm and support psychologically healthy and safe workplaces?

- Identify actual and potential hazards in the workplace
- Make written suggestions to the employer
- Obtain health and safety information from the employer
- Adopt a root-cause approach for investigations
- Support and promote the health and safety program

PSHSA offers a live instructor-led course titled *Psychological Health and Safety for the JHSC*. The key concepts and resources shared support JHSC members to promote the importance of a psychologically healthy and safe workplace and integrate actions into hazard management.

Mental health, like physical health, is a dynamic changing state that can deteriorate or improve given exposure to conditions within and external to the workplace. Mental health concerns, if recognized and treated early can be temporary and reversible. The mental health continuum model goes from healthy adaptive coping (Healthy), through mild and reversible distress or functional impairment (Reacting), to more severe, persistent injury or impairment (Injured) to clinical illnesses and disorders (Illness). Movement in both directions along the continuum is possible.

	Mental Fitness	Healthy	Reacting	Injured	Illness
Mood	Mood resilient to acute stressors Self aware and able to reflect	Normal mood fluctuations Calm & takes things in stride	Irritable/impatient Nervous Sadness/overwhelmed	Anger Anxiety Pervasively sad/hopeless	Angry outbursts/aggression Excessive anxiety/panic Depressed/suicidal
Attitude & Performance	Ready for and energized by challenges Leading others to achieve results Motivational drive high	Good sense of humour Performing well In control mentally	Displaced sarcasm Procrastination Forgetfulness	Negative attitude Poor performance/workaholic Poor concentration Poor decision making	Overt insubordination Can't perform duties, control behaviour or concentrate
Sleep	Consistent sleep patterns	Normal sleep patterns Few sleep difficulties	Trouble sleeping Intrusive thoughts Nightmares	Restless disturbed sleep	Can't fall asleep or stay asleep Sleeping too much/little



Safe Environments.
Healthy Workers.

Physical Health				Recurrent images	
				Recurrent nightmares	
Physical Health	Ready for and energized by challenges	Physically well	Muscle tension	Increased aches and pains	Physical illness
		Good energy levels	Headaches	Increased fatigue	Constant fatigue
Social Wellbeing	Superior emotional and social functioning	Physically and socially active	Low energy	Avoidance	Not going out or answering phone
			Decreased activity	Withdrawal	
Substance Use & Gaming	Strong impulse control	No or low risk use of alcohol/ cannabis/ gambling/ gaming	Reduced socializing		
			Alcohol/ cannabis/ gambling/ gaming increasingly used to relieve tension/cope with stress	Difficulties limiting use of alcohol/ cannabis / gambling/ gaming	Unable to control use of alcohol/ cannabis/ gambling/ gaming

Adapted from AFL and The Road to Mental Readiness



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