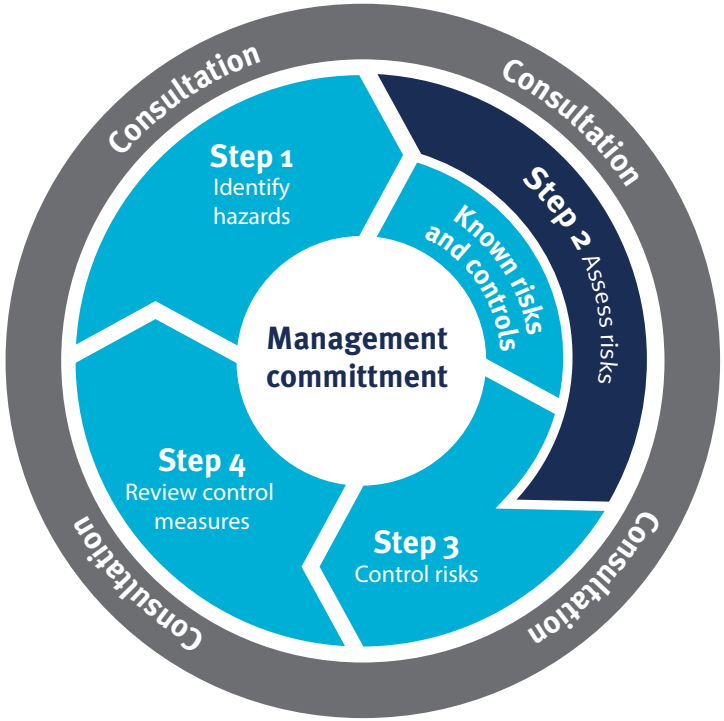
Mentally healthy workplaces

Psychosocial risk assessment tool

The risk management process is set out in the *Managing the risk of psychosocial hazards at work Code of Practice 2022* (the Code) and involves:

- identifying psychosocial hazards – find out what could cause harm
- assessing risks – understand the nature of the harm that could be caused by hazards, how serious the harm could be and the likelihood of harm occurring
- controlling risks – implement the most effective control measures that are reasonably practicable in the circumstance, and
- reviewing control measures to ensure they remain effective.

All of these steps **must** be supported by consultation (see Section 2 of the Code).



Completed by: Position: Date of risk assessment: Review date:

Step 1. Identify the hazards

Workplace data	Yes	No	Comments (reasons for your assessment)
Are there any indications when looking at employee sick leave, with or without certificates, which show relevant trends (e.g. headaches, recurrent colds or flu and musculoskeletal disorders)?	☐	☐	
Are there any departments, units, roles or positions that are showing higher levels of sick leave compared with others?	☐	☐	
Are there any cases of annual or long service leave (or non-usage) as a result of psychological risk factors or work-related stress (e.g. using annual leave when sick leave is depleted or not using annual leave due to work pressure)?	☐	☐	
Are there cases of workers' compensation for psychological injuries (e.g. post-traumatic stress disorder, anxiety and/or depression)?	☐	☐	

Workplace data	Yes	No	Comments (reasons for your assessment)
Are there trends or common themes in complaints or workplace grievances?	☐	☐	
Are there trends in the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) usage and types of issues managed (e.g. look at available trend data provided in de-identified EAP usage reports)?	☐	☐	
Are there incident reports/complaints indicating trends of particular psychosocial hazards or psychological injuries (what are these?)	☐	☐	
Are there industrial relations records or disputes that link to psychosocial hazards in the workplace?	☐	☐	

Workplace data	Yes	No	Comments (reasons for your assessment)
If psychosocial hazards are raised during consultation with workers (e.g. discussed at meetings), are they recorded (e.g. included in meeting minutes)?	☐	☐	
Are these records actioned in a timely manner as part of existing risk management processes?	☐	☐	
Do meeting minutes show trends of psychosocial hazards or unresolved issues (e.g. workload or change in work roles)?	☐	☐	
Are worker surveys or assessments conducted that indicate any trends of psychosocial hazards within the workplace?	☐	☐	

Workplace data	Yes	No	Comments (reasons for your assessment)
Are there previous safety audits, reviews or assessments with outstanding actions that relate to psychosocial hazards and/or risk of harm to workers?	☐	☐	
Is there high turnover of staff? Are exit interviews or surveys completed (these can show trends that indicate prevalent psychosocial hazards within the workplace)?	☐	☐	
Are there work schedule records that reflect on work, overtime usage or other relevant information?	☐	☐	
Has consultation about psychosocial hazards occurred with relevant workers?	☐	☐	

Workplace data	Yes	No	Comments (reasons for your assessment)
Has consultation with workers identified the presence of psychosocial hazards at work? Has consultation highlighted concerns regarding effects of the workplace environment on their health and safety?	☐	☐	
Does the organisation have policies and procedures relating to psychological health and safety at work?	☐	☐	
Are workers aware of the organisation's psychological health and safety policies and procedures?	☐	☐	
Have workers been provided with instruction and training in these?	☐	☐	

Workplace data	Yes	No	Comments (reasons for your assessment)
Is there evidence of training currency and adherence to the organisation's psychological health and safety polices and procedures?	☐	☐	
Additional comments?			

Direct observation	Yes	No	Comments (reasons for your assessment)
Are there adequate staff to complete tasks? Are positions backfilled when employees leave or are on leave for an extended period of time? Is this done in a timely manner?	☐	☐	
Is there an adequate skill mix of staff to perform required tasks?	☐	☐	

Direct observation	Yes	No	Comments (reasons for your assessment)
Are any workers showing signs of distress (e.g. verbal abuse, openly criticising others or the organisation, general frustration with work environment, incivility, increased sick leave, low morale, lack of engagement or appearing socially withdrawn, working longer hours, changes in mood/appearance)?	☐	☐	
Do workers communicate respectfully and is conflict managed appropriately?	☐	☐	
Do workers attend work showing signs of physical illness (i.e. colds and flus)?	☐	☐	
Additional comments?			

Workplace Systems	Yes	No	Comments (reasons for your assessment)
Is there a system to report inappropriate behaviors within the workplace (sexual harassment, bullying, violence and aggression)?	☐	☐	
Is there a system to manage worker's complaints and reported incidents that relate to psychosocial hazards?	☐	☐	
Have responsible managers/workers received appropriate training regarding responding and managing these complaints or incidents?	☐	☐	
Is appropriate training available and provided to support Managers perform their role?	☐	☐	

Workplace Systems	Yes	No	Comments (reasons for your assessment)
Do workers have clear and up-to-date role descriptions that reflect their role and responsibilities and reporting structures?	☐	☐	
Are there procedures relevant to performing duties and reporting?	☐	☐	
Is appropriate training available and provided to support workers perform their role?	☐	☐	
Are affected workers consulted regarding their work tasks, safety assessments and review/implementation of procedures?	☐	☐	

Workplace Systems	Yes	No	Comments (reasons for your assessment)
Is training provided to support workers/ managers to identify and respond to early warning signs of distress?	☐	☐	
Is there a system to address any early signs of distress that are identified (e.g. verbal abuse, openly criticising others or the organisation, general frustration with work environment, incivility, increased sick leave, low morale, lack of engagement, change in mood/appearance)?	☐	☐	
Are systems in place to report psychosocial hazards and psychological injuries?	☐	☐	
If so, are psychological injuries and hazards being reported and action taken in response to these reports?	☐	☐	

Workplace Systems	Yes	No	Comments (reasons for your assessment)
Is there evidence of underreporting (e.g. workcover claims data or other data records within the workplace)- and what does this show?	☐	☐	
Additional comments?			

Step 2. Assess and prioritise risk

Psychosocial hazards and factors	Duties/task elements	Consequences (possible injury outcomes)	Injury risk potential (likelihood vs consequences)	Action required	
				Yes	No
High and/or low job demands This factor relates to the various demands placed on workers in their roles. High or low job demands can include the below **High levels of time pressure and role overload can include:** • allocating tasks to workers that are beyond their level of competence or capacity. • placing excessive expectations on new or existing workers to learn new tasks quickly. • giving unreasonable deadlines for work tasks or being pressured to complete work tasks outside of work hours or while on leave. • lack of resources required to complete tasks and projects, be it people, financial or physical resources. • absence of team members through illness or leave. • needing to quickly evaluate complex situations and make effective decisions under pressure, such as in medical or policing work.				☐	☐

Psychosocial hazards and factors	Duties/task elements	Consequences (possible injury outcomes)	Injury risk potential (likelihood vs consequences)	Action required	
				Yes	No
High levels of emotional demands can include: • dealing with customer/client complaints or delivering bad news to customers, clients or co-workers. • engaging in performance conversations with underperforming workers or undertaking disciplinary processes. • providing support to customers, clients or co-workers that are emotionally distressed. • job requirements that specify workers can only express organisation approved emotions while at work (e.g. flight attendances being directed to always be smiling and happy whilst on duty).				☐	☐

Psychosocial hazards and factors	Duties/task elements	Consequences (possible injury outcomes)	Injury risk potential (likelihood vs consequences)	Action required	
				Yes	No
Low job control This factor is related to control over and involvement in decisions that could be reasonably expected in a job or role. **Situations that may lead to workers experiencing low levels of control include:** • workers not being involved in decisions that affect them or their clients. • work that is tightly managed and controlled (e.g. machine or computer paced, scripted call centres with set breaks and rostering, work that requires permission before progressing with routine tasks). • lack of formal and/or informal opportunities to learn and develop new skills. • where workers have little say in the way they do their work (e.g. when they can take a break from certain tasks or change tasks). • excessive monitoring and scrutiny of low level tasks. • insecure, precarious and contingent work arrangements (e.g. casual work, labour hire, fixed-term contracts, gig economy workers).				☐	☐

Psychosocial hazards and factors	Duties/task elements	Consequences (possible injury outcomes)	Injury risk potential (likelihood vs consequences)	Action required	
				Yes	No
Poor support This factor relates to the practical assistance and emotional support that team members or managers provide. **Situations that may lead to workers experiencing poor support:** • workers who are not provided instrumental support to carry out the job (access to tools, resources, information, or coaching needed). • workers who work in isolation or in geographically dispersed teams. • where managers are required to manage large numbers of workers and it is difficult to provide adequate support to individuals. • workers who do not have time or opportunity within work hours to speak with their colleagues or managers (e.g. highly regimented workplaces such as call centres, medical practices).				☐	☐

Psychosocial hazards and factors	Duties/task elements	Consequences (possible injury outcomes)	Injury risk potential (likelihood vs consequences)	Action required	
				Yes	No
Low role clarity This factor relates to the degree of certainty with regard to role requirements and responsibilities. **Situations that may lead to workers experiencing low role clarity or role conflict:** • where workers have multiple reporting lines and/or supervisors and competing demands associated with these • being asked to undertake a specific task with no instructions or detailed information about requirements • lack of clarity about what tasks need to be completed, their priority and deadlines. changing position descriptions and/or areas of responsibility without consultation or discussion • allocating the same task to two different workers, resulting in duplication of effort.				☐	☐

Psychosocial hazards and factors	Duties/task elements	Consequences (possible injury outcomes)	Injury risk potential (likelihood vs consequences)	Action required	
				Yes	No
Poor organisational change management This factor relates to how organisational change is managed. **Situations that may lead to poor organisational change management:** • failure to consider health and safety impacts during organisational changes such as downsizing or relocations. • disorganisation and lack of planning in organisational change • implementing changes without sufficient consultation and stakeholder engagement. • failure to communicate key messages, updates, or reasons for change • inadequate support provided to those affected during transition times.				☐	☐

Psychosocial hazards and factors	Duties/task elements	Consequences (possible injury outcomes)	Injury risk potential (likelihood vs consequences)	Action required	
				Yes	No
Low reward and recognition This factor relates to the acknowledgement provided to workers. **Situations that may lead to workers experiencing low recognition and reward include:** • the absence of positive feedback about work performance • the absence of appropriate mechanisms and practices for regular performance discussions, performance planning and goal setting • providing recognition or acknowledgement that is not meaningful, vague, or not attributed to specific situations.				☐	☐

Psychosocial hazards and factors	Duties/task elements	Consequences (possible injury outcomes)	Injury risk potential (likelihood vs consequences)	Action required	
				Yes	No
Poor organisational justice This factor relates to the perceptions of fairness at work. **Situations that may lead to workers experiencing poor organisational justice include:** • inequitable or inconsistent application of procedures across workers or over time (e.g. reward and recognition, promotion or job rotations, opportunities for training or job assignments) • unfair or inequitable distribution of resources (e.g. pay inequities, access to benefits) • bias, impartiality, favouritism and nepotism • workers or managers believing that rules do not apply to them and failing to follow agreed policies, guidelines and procedures.				☐	☐

Psychosocial hazards and factors	Duties/task elements	Consequences (possible injury outcomes)	Injury risk potential (likelihood vs consequences)	Action required	
				Yes	No
Poor workplace relationships including interpersonal conflict This factor relates to the quality of relationships and/ or degree of conflict among workers or teams. **Situations that may lead to poor workplace relationships and interpersonal conflict include:** • incivility (abrupt rude behaviour) or other inappropriate behaviour is demonstrated and/ or tolerated by management and co-workers • frequent or heightened task conflict between workers, supervisors, co-workers and clients or others • discrimination or other unreasonable behaviours by co-workers, supervisors or clients • a lack of fairness and equity in dealing with workplace issues or where performance issues are poorly managed • unresolved issues or concerns regarding work tasks, processes, customers, interpersonal issues.				☐	☐

Psychosocial hazards and factors	Duties/task elements	Consequences (possible injury outcomes)	Injury risk potential (likelihood vs consequences)	Action required	
				Yes	No
Remote or isolated work This factor relates to work that is isolated from the assistance of others because of the location, time or nature of the work being done. Assistance from others includes rescue, medical assistance and emergency services. **Situations that may lead to increased risk in remote or isolated work can include:** • limited access to communication devices or no regular contact with other workers or supervisors • lengthy periods of isolation working away from social and family contacts, and support networks such as fly-in/fly-out or drive-in/drive-out arrangements • excessive monitoring of workers working from home • work in locations where there is difficulty in immediate rescue or attendance of emergency services • work where violence or aggression from customers or clients is possible.				☐	☐

Psychosocial hazards and factors	Duties/task elements	Consequences (possible injury outcomes)	Injury risk potential (likelihood vs consequences)	Action required	
				Yes	No
Poor environmental conditions This factor refers to work environments that may be noxious or hazardous, whereby exposure creates a stress response. **Situations that may lead to workers experiencing stress due to poor environmental conditions include:** • excessive or irritating noise or vibration • unmanaged biological or chemical hazards (e.g. health care workers with insufficient PPE) • low, very bright or flickering lighting • extremes of temperature or poor air quality.				☐	☐

Psychosocial hazards and factors	Duties/task elements	Consequences (possible injury outcomes)	Injury risk potential (likelihood vs consequences)	Action required	
				Yes	No
Violence and aggression This factor relates to 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. **Situations where a worker is subjected to violent or aggressive behaviour including:** • scratching or hitting • attacking with any type of weapon or substance (e.g. knives, guns, incidental weapons like keys, bats or rocks, or chemical agents such as hazardous chemicals or affects from use of drugs or alcohol) • pushing, shoving, tripping or grabbing • armed robbery • sexual violence • intentionally coughing or spitting on someone • verbal abuse and threats including intimidation, insults, shouting, or swearing. • banging, kicking, throwing, or hitting objects • online abuse or threats, including on social media • workers in occupations most at risk of work-related violence and aggression include those who regularly work with the public or provide services to clients.				☐	☐

Psychosocial hazards and factors	Duties/task elements	Consequences (possible injury outcomes)	Injury risk potential (likelihood vs consequences)	Action required	
				Yes	No
Exposure to traumatic events This factor refers to any workplace events that may be perceived as traumatic or distressing. This may including witnessing, investigating or being exposed to traumatic events. **Situations that may lead to exposure to traumatic events include:** • working in certain areas or occupations (e.g. health care, community work, counselling, defence, funeral services, child protective services, correction officers, legal services, high risk work where injuries may occur) • responding to emergencies (e.g. incidents requiring response by emergency service workers including police, emergency health workers, firefighters, ambulance officers and ooo call receivers). • providing care to those experiencing a traumatic event, listening to, viewing or reading detailed descriptions of traumatic events experienced by others (e.g. rape crisis or child safety officers, lawyers or immigration officers, workplace incident investigators).				☐	☐

Psychosocial hazards and factors	Duties/task elements	Consequences (possible injury outcomes)	Injury risk potential (likelihood vs consequences)	Action required	
				Yes	No
Bullying This factor relates to exposure to repeated and unreasonable behaviour directed towards a worker or group of workers, that creates a risk to health and safety. This includes bullying by workers, clients, patients, visitors, or others. This can involve a range of behaviours over time, that a reasonable person would consider as unreasonable including behaviour that is victimising, humiliating, intimidating or threatening. **Examples of behaviour, whether intentional or unintentional, that may be work-related bullying if it is repeated, unreasonable and creates a risk to health and safety includes but is not limited to:** • abusive, insulting or offensive language or comments • aggressive and intimidating conduct (verbal or physical) • belittling or humiliating comments • teasing or regularly making someone the brunt of practical jokes • the making of vexatious allegations against a worker • spreading rude, inaccurate, or malicious rumours about an individual • responding to a complaint, report, or incident in a grossly unfair manner • victimisation • unjustified criticism or complaints • unreasonably excluding someone from work-related activities				☐	☐

Psychosocial hazards and factors	Duties/task elements	Consequences (possible injury outcomes)	Injury risk potential (likelihood vs consequences)	Action required	
				Yes	No
• setting unreasonable timelines or constantly changing deadlines • setting tasks that are unreasonably below or beyond a person's skill level • using changes to work arrangements such as rosters and leave as a way to victimise • completely ignoring or isolating an individual.				☐	☐

Psychosocial hazards and factors	Duties/task elements	Consequences (possible injury outcomes)	Injury risk potential (likelihood vs consequences)	Action required	
				Yes	No
Harassment including sexual harassment This factor relates to workplace incidents that involve exposure to harmful behaviour that does not meet the definition of bullying (such as single instances) but creates a risk to health or safety. This may include harassment due to personal characteristics such as age, disability, race, sex, relationship status, family responsibilities, sexual orientation, gender identity or intersex status. Sexual harassment refers to any unwelcome sexual advance, unwelcome request for sexual favours or other unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature, where it would be anticipated the person harassed would be offended, humiliated or intimidated. **Factors that may increase the likelihood or risk of harassment include:** • particular cohorts of workers who are more vulnerable such as young workers, workers with a disability, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workers, workers in insecure or precarious forms of employment, and workers on working visas • low worker diversity (e.g. the workforce is dominated by one gender, age group, race or culture) • power imbalances (e.g. workplaces where one gender holds most of the management and decision-making positions) • workplaces organised according to a hierarchical structure (e.g. police and enforcement organisations, or medical or legal professions)				☐	☐

Psychosocial hazards and factors	Duties/task elements	Consequences (possible injury outcomes)	Injury risk potential (likelihood vs consequences)	Action required	
				Yes	No
• workplace culture that supports or tolerates sexual harassment, including where lower level (but still harmful) forms of harassment are accepted (e.g. small acts of disrespect and inequality are ignored and reports of sexual harassment or inappropriate behaviours are not taken seriously) - this conduct can escalate to other forms of harassment, work-related bullying/violence and aggression • use of alcohol in a work context, and attendance at conferences and social events as part of work duties (including overnight travel) • workers are isolated (e.g. due to location, hours of work), in restrictive places like cars, working at residential premises, living in employer provided accommodation, working from remote locations with limited supervision, or have restricted access to help and support • working from home which may provide an opportunity for covert sexual harassment to occur online or through phone communication • worker interactions with clients, customers or members of the public (either face to face or online) which may give rise to third party sexual harassment including work that involves a high level of contact or work in close proximity to customers or clients • poor understanding among workplace leaders of the nature, drivers and impacts of sexual harassment				☐	☐

Step 3: Control risks

Risk management plan

If you identified any risk that required follow up during step two, you should identify and implement risk controls. Adapt and use this risk management plan template and use the risk controls provided in the toolkit as a guide to help you.

Priority	Risk factors to be addressed	Cause	Existing control(s)	Additional controls to be implemented	Person responsible	Review date	Sign off on completion
1							
2							
3							
4							
5							
6							

Step 4: Review effectiveness of controls

Review the effectiveness of the control measures that have been implemented to ensure they are working as planned. For this step you may like to consider reviewing the workplace data sources from step one as a possible indication of how effective your control measures have been.

Review of control implementation plan

Are control measures in place? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Comment:

Are controls eliminating or minimising the risk to an acceptable residual risk level? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Comment:

(Attach copies of documentation to support this.)

Are there any new or remaining risks which need further attention? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Comment:

Who was involved/consulted in the review?

Name:		Name:		Name:	
Position:		Position:		Position:	
Signature:		Signature:		Signature:	
Date:		Date:		Date:	