

# Risk Management for Specific Workplace Stressors<sup>1</sup>

1. <u>Demands</u>	DO	DON'T
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hold regular team meetings to:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ discuss projected workload for the following week</li> <li>○ address anticipated absences.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Meet with individuals to:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ discuss workload and related challenges encountered or anticipated</li> <li>○ take note of issues raised such as professional isolation, emotional labour, traumatic work experience, lack of understanding by others</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Develop personal work plans to ensure staff are aware of their job responsibilities.</li> <li>• Identify peaks and troughs for workload, incorporate into staffing rosters.</li> <li>• Allocate resources such as time and equipment to ensure staff can undertake their jobs properly.</li> <li>• Ensure utilisation of skills within everyday work.</li> <li>• Ensure staff have adequate time management skills, provide training.</li> <li>• Give realistic deadlines.</li> <li>• Minimise environmental distractions e.g. noise, glare</li> <li>• Ensure staff have guidelines to:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ manage client expectations</li> <li>○ prevent and respond to traumatic work experience, including violence from clients</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ask people to undertake tasks they are not trained or skilled to do.</li> <li>• Expect people to work longer hours than rostered to complete tasks.</li> <li>• Increase an individual's workload without appropriate resources for the task.</li> <li>• Under-utilise skills.</li> <li>• Limit employees to repetitive and monotonous tasks.</li> <li>• Ignore comments from staff about feeling overloaded or overwhelmed.</li> </ul>

2. <u>Control</u>	DO	DON'T
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engage workers in making decisions about the way they do their work</li> <li>• Allow workers to participate in the decision making processes about issues that effect their work</li> <li>• Ensure performance review processes are an opportunity for staff to have input into the way they do their work</li> <li>• Provide opportunities for skill development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expect staff to stay after hours without prior consultation</li> </ul>

3. <u>Support</u>	DO	DON'T
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide a workplace culture that supports open communication so staff feel comfortable in discussing issues.</li> <li>• Provide training , skill development and employee assistance services to staff.</li> <li>• Promote work/life balance by allowing for flexibility with work.</li> <li>• Utilise annual performance reviews as a time to provide support and constructive advice for future performance.</li> <li>• Encourage team skills – promote cohesiveness, communication, job satisfaction.</li> <li>• Provide opportunities for career development such as acting in managerial roles during the manager's absence.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use annual performance tools as a disciplinary measure.</li> <li>• Discriminate against people.</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup> Workplace Health and Safety Queensland (2010). Psychological health for small business.

4. <u>Role</u> DO	DON'T
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide up-to-date position descriptions.</li> <li>• Provide an organisational chart – enables clear view of structure and communication channels.</li> <li>• Provide an induction to all new staff.</li> <li>• Develop personal workplans.</li> <li>• Discuss roles and workplans at team meetings, clarify role conflict.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Change job functions or position descriptions without consultation and discussion.</li> </ul>

5. <u>Relationships</u> DO	DON'T
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide education on workplace harassment and conflict resolution.</li> <li>• Define acceptable behaviour within the workplace, eg Code of Conduct.</li> <li>• Promote communication.</li> <li>• Provide information on services available and how to access them (eg EAP)</li> <li>• Put processes in place which address action to be taken in the event behaviour is unacceptable – eg complaints handling, investigations, potential disciplinary actions.</li> <li>• Promote positive co-worker interactions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allow unacceptable behaviour to continue</li> </ul>

6. <u>Change</u> DO	DON'T
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Involve employees in change processes via communication, consultation.</li> <li>• Identify key issues of the change and provide information to employees.</li> <li>• Ensure staff are informed of the implications of the change on their respective positions and roles.</li> <li>• Identify methods of communication to meet the needs of staff in advising of the change process – eg meetings, emails</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Disregard the impact it may have on individuals or teams, as even minor changes can effect individuals.</li> <li>• Keep workers in the dark</li> </ul>

7. <u>Fairness</u> DO	DON'T
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that workplace rules are applied fairly, consistently and in an unbiased manner.</li> <li>• Ensure there is a transparent grievance / appeal process.</li> <li>• Promote and encourage a positive and fair work environment.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ignore unfair work practices. The experience of perceived injustice at work can be harmful to both the individual and the organisation.</li> </ul>

8. <u>Recognition and reward</u> DO	DON'T
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recognise individual and team contributions and achievements within the organisation.</li> <li>• Ensure recognition and rewards are appropriate and relevant for the employee or team</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Show overt favouritism to a worker or group of workers.</li> </ul>

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## Sample assessment for workplace stressors

This assessment should be completed by a manager, who will ensure that staff provide their perspective on each question using Part A: Worker Section.

**Section A: - Worker Section.** Please state the degree to which you agree with the following statements:

**1 = DISAGREE    3 = NEITHER AGREE nor DISAGREE    5 = FULLY AGREE**

<b>Demands</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>Comment</b>
<b>Demand – Work Demand</b>						
Employees have adequate and achievable demands in relation to the agreed hours of work						
Employees skills and abilities are matched to the job demands						
Jobs are designed to be within the capabilities of employees						
Employees' concerns about their work environment are addressed						
<b>Demand – Emotional Demand</b>						
Issues such as professional isolation, emotional labour, traumatic work experience, and lack of understanding by others are taken seriously and addressed						
Staff have guidelines to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• manage client expectations</li> <li>• prevent and respond to traumatic work experience, including violence from clients</li> </ul>						

**1 = DISAGREE    3 = NEITHER AGREE nor DISAGREE    5 = FULLY AGREE**

<b>Control</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Where possible, employees have control over their pace of work						
Employees are encouraged to use their skills and initiative to do their work						
Where possible, employees are encouraged to develop new skills to help them undertake new and challenging pieces of work;						
Employees are encouraged to develop skills						
Employees have a say on when breaks can be taken						
Employees are consulted over work patterns.						

**1 = DISAGREE    3 = NEITHER AGREE nor DISAGREE    5 = FULLY AGREE**

<b>Support</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Policies & procedures to adequately support employees						
Managers are encouraged to support their staff						
Employees are encouraged to support their colleagues						
Employees know what support is available and how and when to access it						
Employees know how to access the required resources to do their job						
Employees receive regular, constructive feedback.						

1 = DISAGREE    3 = NEITHER AGREE nor DISAGREE    5 = FULLY AGREE

Relationships	1	2	3	4	5	Comment
Positive behaviour at work is encouraged to avoid conflict and ensure fairness						
Employees share information relevant to their work						
Employees are aware of policies and procedures to prevent or resolve unacceptable behaviour						
Managers are aware of how to deal with unacceptable behaviour						
Employees are aware of how to report unacceptable behaviour						

1 = DISAGREE    3 = NEITHER AGREE nor DISAGREE    5 = FULLY AGREE

Role	1	2	3	4	5	Comment
Managers ensure the different requirements it places upon employees are compatible						
Information is provided to enable employees to understand their role and responsibilities						
Requirements placed upon employees are clear						
Employees are aware of how to raise concerns about any uncertainties or conflicts they have in their role and responsibilities						

1 = DISAGREE    3 = NEITHER AGREE nor DISAGREE    5 = FULLY AGREE

Change	1	2	3	4	5	Comment
Employees are provided with timely information to enable them to understand the reasons for proposed changes						
Employees are adequately consulted on changes and opportunities are provided for employees to influence proposals						
Employees are aware of the probable impact of any changes to their jobs. If necessary, employees are given training to support any changes in their jobs						
Employees are aware of timetables for changes						
Employees have access to relevant support during changes						

1 = DISAGREE    3 = NEITHER AGREE nor DISAGREE    5 = FULLY AGREE

Fairness	1	2	3	4	5	Comment
Workplace rules are applied fairly, consistently and in an unbiased manner.						
There is a transparent grievance / appeal process						
A positive and fair work environment is encouraged						

1 = DISAGREE    3 = NEITHER AGREE nor DISAGREE    5 = FULLY AGREE

Recognition and reward	1	2	3	4	5	Comment
Individual and team contributions and achievements are recognised						
Recognition and rewards are appropriate and relevant for the employee and/or team						

**Section B: - Manager Section:** Make sure you provide evidence to support your answers. Attach completed staff sections and additional supporting evidence.

Assessment for Workplace Stressors				
Risk Area	Compliant		Supporting evidence	Action to be taken if stressor identified
	YES	NO		
<b>Demands</b>				
Demand – Work Demand				
Employees have adequate and achievable demands in relation to the agreed hours of work				
Employees skills and abilities are matched to the job demands				
Jobs are designed to be within the capabilities of employees				
Employees’ concerns about their work environment are addressed				
Demand – Emotional Demand				
Issues such as professional isolation, emotional labour, traumatic work experience, and lack of understanding by others are taken seriously and addressed				
Staff have guidelines to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• manage client expectations</li> <li>• prevent and respond to traumatic work experience, including violence from clients</li> </ul>				
<b>Control</b>				
Where possible, employees have control over their pace of work				
Employees are encouraged to use their skills and initiative to do their work				
Where possible, employees are encouraged to develop new skills to help them undertake new and challenging pieces of work;				
Employees are encouraged to develop their skills				
Employees have a say over when breaks can be taken;				
Employees are consulted over their work patterns.				
<b>Support</b>				
There are policies and procedures to adequately support employees				
Managers are encouraged to support their staff				
Employees are encouraged to support their colleagues				
Employees know what support is available and how and when to access it				
Employees know how to access the required resources to do their job				

Employees receive regular and constructive feedback.				
<b>Relationships</b>				
Positive behaviour at work is encouraged to avoid conflict and ensure fairness				
Employees share information relevant to their work				
Employees are aware of policies and procedures to prevent or resolve unacceptable behaviour				
Managers are aware of how to deal with unacceptable behaviour				
Employees are aware of how to report unacceptable behaviour				
<b>Role</b>				
Managers ensure the different requirements it places upon employees are compatible				
Information is provided to enable employees to understand their role and responsibilities				
Requirements placed upon employees are clear				
Employees are aware of how to raise concerns about any uncertainties or conflicts they have in their role and responsibilities				
<b>Change</b>				
Employees are provided with timely information to enable them to understand the reasons for proposed changes				
Employees are adequately consulted on changes and opportunities are provided for employees to influence proposals				
Employees are aware of the probable impact of any changes to their jobs. If necessary, employees are given training to support any changes in their jobs				
Employees are aware of timetables for changes				
Employees have access to relevant support during changes				
<b>Fairness</b>				
Workplace rules are applied fairly, consistently and in an unbiased manner.				
There is a transparent grievance / appeal process				
Promote and encourage a positive and fair work environment.				
<b>Recognition and reward</b>				
Individual and team contributions and achievements are recognised				
Recognition and rewards are appropriate and relevant for the employee and/or team				

**Manager's Signature:**

**Date:**

In the event of a **No** answer being given, the manager will indicate the remedial action they intend to take.

In the event of a Management Referral to EAP the employee should be provided with a copy of this assessment.

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