



**Corporate Mental Health
Alliance** AUSTRALIA



Managing Psychosocial Risk in the Workplace:

Introduction to resources

This series of resources considers why assessing psychosocial risks is important, planning the assessment, the tools that are available, and how to implement change.

The main resources are four documents that take you through the psychosocial risk assessment process illustrated in the diagram below.

Document 1

‘Why recognising psychosocial risk is important’ provides an overview of how to consider your organisational context and identify psychosocial hazards as a way of determining whether a psychosocial risk assessment should be conducted.

Document 2

‘Planning your assessment’ outlines what steps to consider at the various planning stages of the psychosocial risk assessment process:

- preparation (early considerations for planning your approach to psychosocial risk assessment),
- pre-assessment (planning how and when to implement the assessment) and
- post-assessment (designing and planning the implementation and evaluation of an action plan based on assessment findings).

Document 3

‘Evaluating options for psychosocial risk assessment’ presents various tools and approaches to consider when determining if the use of a psychosocial risk assessment tool is the right option for your situation (and if not, what is the right approach).

Document 4

‘Taking action on psychosocial risk’ explores what needs to be considered in order to make the best use of the data collected in your psychosocial risk assessment process. This includes how to apply good work design principles when designing your action plan, and considering how best to implement, communicate and evaluate your plan for positive change.

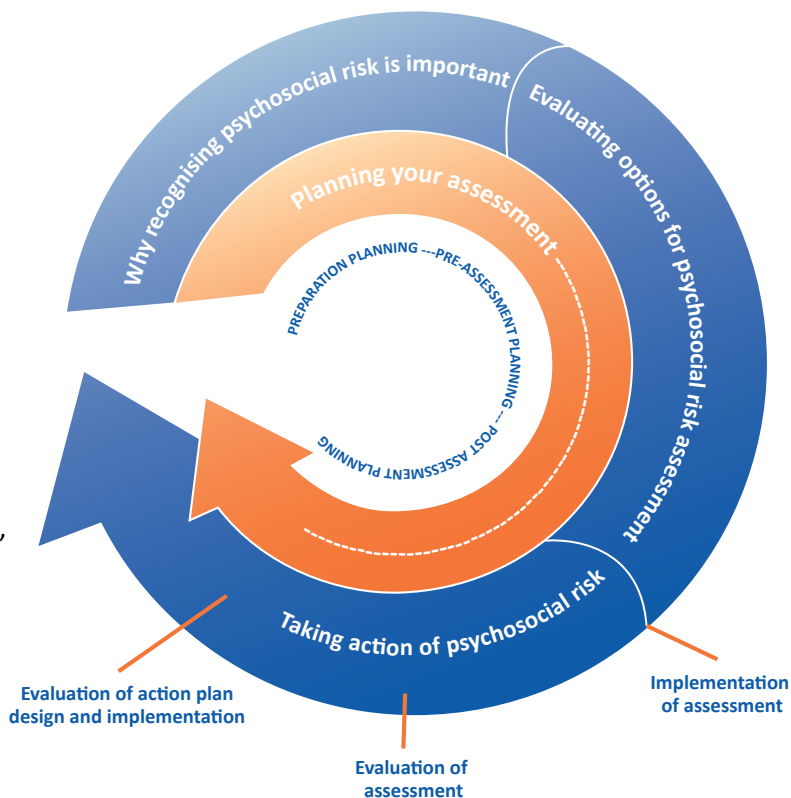
The resources have been designed to be used in a way that fits your organisation, circumstance and previous experience with assessing psychosocial risk. You may wish to navigate through them on your own or perhaps you may use them as a driver for collaboration and consultation with your team when approaching psychosocial risk assessment in your department or organisation. You may also offer the resources as a supplementary resource to staff onboarding, a professional development exercise,

or a staff WHS refresher. However, in all situations described above where other parties are involved, we encourage conversation to complement the material, ensuring consistency of understanding, goal setting and approach to assessing and managing psychosocial risk in your organisation.

In addition to the documents, a series of additional information is available, including

- a Glossary,
- a description of examples of psychosocial risks
- appendices on psychosocial risk assessment tools, a planning tool, and information on consultation
- a series of links and resources.

Requirements for identifying and managing psychosocial risk may change in different jurisdictions, or with contractual arrangements, so you should check the guidance and requirements that are relevant to your business. This includes Legislation and regulation (e.g., WHS legislation), Codes of Practice, Standards (e.g., ISO45001/ ISO45003) and guidance material.



Glossary of terms

Mental health	A state of well-being in which every individual realises [their] own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to his or her own community (World Health Organisation, 2004).
Mentally healthy workplace	A workplace where work is designed to be safe, and a positive workplace culture exists where workers feel valued and engaged (NSW Mentally Healthy Workplaces Strategy to 2022).
Mental illness	A clinically diagnosable disorder that significantly interferes with an individual's cognitive, emotional, or social abilities (Australian Health Ministers, 2003).
Psychosocial hazards	Aspects of work design and the organisation and management of work, and their social and environmental contexts, which have the potential for causing psychological, social or physical harm (Cox et al., 2000).
Psychosocial health	A complex interaction of the mental, emotional, social, and spiritual dimensions of health.
Psychological injury	A disorder diagnosed by a medical practitioner which includes a range of recognised cognitive, emotional, physical and behavioural symptoms. These may be short term or occur over many months or years, and can significantly affect how a person feels, thinks, behaves and interacts with others (SWA, 2019).
Psychosocial risk	A combination of the likelihood of occurrence of exposure to work-related hazard(s) of a psychosocial nature and the severity of injury and ill-health that can be caused by these hazards (ISO45003).
Risk	Risk is the possibility that a person will be harmed if exposed to a hazard.
Stress	A particular relationship between the person and the environment that is appraised by the person as taxing or exceeding his or her resources and endangering his or her well-being (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). It is important to note that stress is not a mental illness; however, excessive or long-term stress may lead to a physical or mental illness.
Well-being	Fulfilment of the physical, mental, social and cognitive needs and expectations of a worker related to their work (ISO 45003)
Wellness at work	Overall quality of an employee's experience of work and performance (Warr, 1987).
Work re-design	A process to alter elements of work, including consideration of what is being done (tasks), the people doing the work, the processes and systems that influence the work, the equipment and resources relevant to the work, and the physical environment in which work is performed.
Work-related stress	The physical and psychological response of a worker who perceives that the demand of their work or workplace environment exceed their ability or resources to cope. Work-related stress does not itself constitute physical or psychological harm or injury, but can result in an injury if stress is prolonged and or severe (SWA, 2019).

