


Psychosocial Risk Management

for NZ electricity supply providers

Dr. Georgi Toma



Dr. Georgi Toma

- Areas of expertise: **stress, burnout, employee psychological health, psychosocial hazards**
- Supported organisations such as **RMIT University, Hitachi Energy, Environment Canterbury** or **Christchurch City Council** to create mentally healthy workplaces, train leaders and empower employees

Connect with Georgi:

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- **Founder and Lead Consultant** Heart and Brain Works
- **Honorary Research Fellow** University of Auckland

What we do

Psychosocial Hazards Audits

- Discover your **areas of risk** & protective factors
- Identify the **risk of psychological health impairment**
- Get **recommendations** for **controls**

Mental Health Training

- The **Wellbeing Protocol** - scientifically-validated to:
 - ✓ **Reduce stress** by up to **58%**
 - ✓ **Reduce burnout** by up to **60%**
 - ✓ **Improve mental wellbeing** by up to **103%**

Bespoke Solutions & Training

- Create your in house **peer support program**
- **Train your managers** in all things related to psychosocial risk management
- Get support with your **wellbeing strategy**



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What we'll talk about

- Understanding the obligations of organisations around psychological health and safety
- Why psychosocial risk matters
- Main psychosocial hazards in the energy sector
- Case study analysis



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Psychological health and safety

Psychological health and safety

- Also termed psychosocial safety
- Active organisational endeavours to prevent harm to the psychological health of workers in negligent, reckless or intentional ways, and to promote psychological wellbeing.

Psychological safety

- A shared belief held by members of a team that it's OK to take risks, to express their ideas and concerns, to speak up with questions, and to admit mistakes — all without fear of negative consequences

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The regulatory context

Legislation in New Zealand

- Health and Safety at Work Act 2015
- Mentally Healthy Work Guidelines – in consultation

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The regulatory context

Recent cases

TRANSPORT


WorkSafe

compa

WorkSafe has issued a hearing about on-tr

Publications | 14 December 2023

by Emma Hatto




Former Noel Leeming employee to be paid \$50,000 after suffering burnout

Susan Edmunds

January 09, 2024, · 05:00am

Share



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Psychological health and safety

A psychosocial hazard =

a hazard that arises from or relates to:

- the design or management of work
- a work environment
- plant at a workplace (e.g. machinery, equipment)
- workplace interactions and behaviours

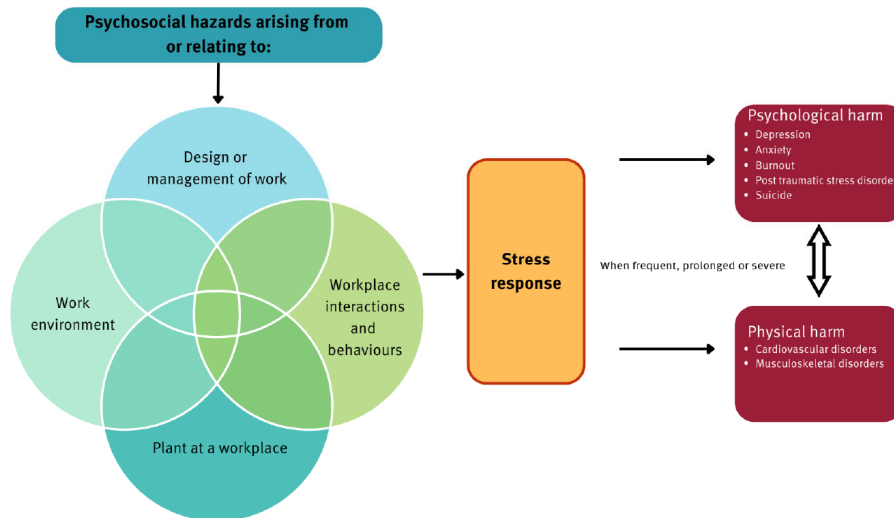
and may cause **psychological harm**, whether or not the hazards may also cause physical harm.

Source: Workplace Health and Safety Queensland (2022). Managing the risk of psychosocial hazards at work – Code of Practice

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Psychological health and safety



Source: Workplace Health and Safety Queensland (2022). Managing the risk of psychosocial hazards at work – Code of Practice

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Psychological health and safety

A psychosocial risk =

the likelihood that a psychosocial hazard will have a negative impact on employee psychological and/or physical health and safety.

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Psychological health and safety

Protective factors

such as:

- Positive work relationships
- Org culture
- Autonomy
- Opportunities for development
- Org trust

Job resources

Cognitive
Psychological
Social
Physical

**Staff
Health,
Safety &
Wellbeing**

Job demands

Cognitive
Psychological
Social
Physical

Psychosocial hazards

- such as:
- High work pace
 - Heavy workload
 - Role ambiguity
 - Poor work relationships
 - High cognitive load

Adapted from: Bakker, A. B., & Demerouti, E. (2007). The Job Demands-Resources model: State of the art. *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, 22(3), 309–328.

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Why Psychosocial Risk Matters

Psychosocial hazards =

One of the major contemporary challenges for workplace health and safety

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Why Psychosocial Risk Matters

The Cost of Unaddressed Psychosocial Hazards

1. Productivity:

- **High rates of psychosocial hazards** have been linked to **decreases** in **productivity** (Alarcon, 2011), which can impact the delivery of targets.
- **Psychosocial hazards** may lead to **poor wellbeing**, which is estimated to **negatively** affect a person's **decision-making** and **productivity** for an average of **13 weeks a year** (NZIER, 2020)

2. Safety:

- **High rates of psychosocial hazards** have been linked to increases in **mistakes** (Tawfik et al, 2018). These can be a **safety hazard** in certain areas of the organisation.



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Why Psychosocial Risk Matters

The Cost of Unaddressed Psychosocial Hazards

3. Burnout:

- **Psychosocial hazards, especially factors related to high job demands and poor support from supervisor**, have been linked with the onset of **burnout** in staff (Alarcon, 2011).

4. Turnover/absences:

- **High prevalence of psychosocial hazards** has been linked with **a decrease** in **employee loyalty**, and **an increase** in **intention to leave** and in **attrition** rates (Van de Heijden et al, 2019; Rahim & Cosby, 2016) or result in **increases** in **absenteeism** or **presenteeism**



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Psychosocial Risk Identification

Hazard & Risk Identification Considerations:

1. Subjectivity
2. Complexity
3. Methodology
4. Executive Leadership Commitment



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Top Risk Factors from our Audits



What do you think the top risk factors might be?



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Top Risk Factors from our Audits

1. High Workload
2. Low Role Clarity
3. Incivility

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Psychosocial Risk Spotlight: High Workload



What do you think might be causing high workload?

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Psychosocial Risk Spotlight: High Workload

Most common factors contributing to perception of high workload from our audits

- Ineffective work systems
- Unclear processes
- Lack of role clarity
- Role conflict
- Incivility
- Ineffective communication ('always on' culture)
- Ineffective workforce planning
- Staff shortages
- Rapid growth
- High cognitive load



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Psychosocial Risk Spotlight: Low Role Clarity

Role clarity ≠ up-to-date job description

Role clarity =

- **Clarity** about **role description, objectives** and **responsibilities**
- Having **all** the necessary **information** to do your job well, or knowing where to find it
- **Explicit understanding** of what is **expected** of you both **formally** and **informally** (social environment)
- Understanding the **requirements** needed for you to **succeed** in the role
- Knowing **how** to **handle** emerging **role conflicts**
- Having the **knowledge, confidence & ability** to **prioritise** your **work**



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Psychosocial Risk Spotlight: Incivility

The Cost of Incivility

Source: Porath, C., & Pearson, C. (2013). The Price of Incivility. Harvard Business Review, 91(1/2), 114–121.

Among workers who've been on the receiving end of incivility:

- **48%** intentionally **decreased** their **work effort**.
- **47%** intentionally **decreased** the **time spent at work**.
- **38%** intentionally **decreased** the **quality** of their **work**.
- **80%** **lost work time worrying** about the incident.
- **63%** **lost work time avoiding the offender**.
- **66%** said that their **performance declined**.
- **78%** said that their **commitment to the organization declined**.
- **12%** said that they **left their job** because of the uncivil treatment.
- **25%** admitted to **taking their frustration out on customers**.



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Case study from our risk assessments

Case Study

Org profile:

- Approx 350 employees
- Different worker profiles

Business problem:

- Staff complaints about high workload
- High staff turnover in certain teams
- Just coming out of a significant organisational restructure
- History of siloes
- Anecdotal signs of burnout in staff
- Evidence of incivility
- Lack of data regarding psychosocial hazards or burnout rates



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Case study from our risk assessments

Highlight of HBW Psychosocial Hazards Audit & Risk Assessment results:

- High cognitive load, high workload, low role clarity and offensive behaviours including incivility and bullying were the main risks
- Some of the underlying causes were:
 - Lack of understanding of one's own team and other teams' responsibilities
 - Unclear and poorly defined processes
 - Certain teams had a high number of line managers that were not offering adequate support
 - Certain teams had a strong attachment to the former culture of siloes

Highlights of solutions implemented:

- Targeted interventions to clarify roles and processes – HBW provided templates; the organisation enacted this internally
- Targeted manager training in leadership skills in problem teams
- Org-wide manager training in psychosocial risk management provided by HBW



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Case study from our risk assessments

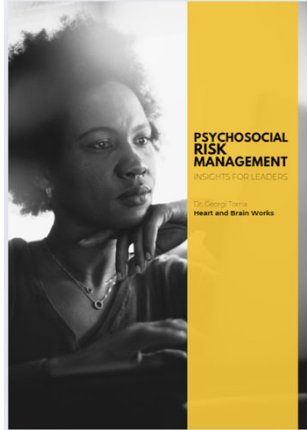
Highlight of Results:

- 12-month follow up audit revealed:
 - 19% reduction in low role clarity
 - 21% improvement in process clarity
 - 20% improvement in sense of community at work
 - Qualitative data – positive appraisal



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Get the slides
and our whitepaper
**Psychosocial Risk Management:
Insights for leaders**



Scan the QR code &
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Join our Free Monthly Professional Development Sessions

Past sessions include:

Psychosocial Hazards Focus:

- High workload
- Incivility, Bullying & Harassment
- Role Clarity

Burnout – what you need to know in 2024

You can watch the recordings here:

<https://www.heartbrainworks.org/resources>

Next session:

24 July 2024

Psychosocial Hazards Focus-
Leadership and Manager
Support

[Find out more and register](#)



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15-min Chat with Georgi

Let's explore if we can support you with:

- Psychosocial Hazards Audit & Risk Assessment
- Manager training on Psychosocial Risk Management
- Staff training on Psychosocial Risk Management
- The Wellbeing Protocol
- Bespoke solutions

Book your chat below or scan the QR code:

tiny.cc/strategy_georgi



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