



HEALTHIER WORKPLACES | A HEALTHIER WORLD

# Psychosocial Hazard Talking Points for the OEHS Professional

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3.10.23

## What is it?

Psychosocial hazards arise from poor work design, organization, and management. They may result in negative psychological, physical, and social outcomes such as work-related stress, burnout, or depression. Some examples of working conditions contributing to psychosocial hazard are:

- Excessive workloads in a low-support environment
- Conflicting demands and lack of role clarity
- Lack of autonomy
- Ineffective communication, lack of support from supervisor or colleagues
- Poorly managed organizational change, job insecurity
- Psychological and sexual harassment, bullying, third-party violence

## Why should you care?

- Workers experience stress when the demands of their job are excessive and greater than their capacity to cope with them.
- This can lead to mental health problems and serious physical health problems such as cardiovascular disease or musculoskeletal problems. It can also alter responses to other stressors such as physical, chemical, or biological exposures.
- Organizationally, the negative effects include poor overall business performance, increased absenteeism and presenteeism, and increased accident and injury rates.
- A good psychosocial environment enhances good performance and personal development, as well as workers' mental and physical well-being.

## What can you do about it?

- Control physical, chemical, biological, and other hazards and exposures in the workplace. Pay particular attention to the noise and lighting environments, as these are also factors that contribute to chronic stress.



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- Work with human resources/benefits, health promotion, and other departments to assess what psychosocial hazards are present in your workplace and make a plan to address them.
- Focus on prevention by giving priority to actions that improve working conditions, then think about what can be done to improve workers' stress response.

## Want to know more?

[CPH-NEW Stress@Work](#)

[CCOHS Psychosocial Risk](#)

[OSHA Europa Psychosocial Risk](#)

# Leadership/Worker/Community for Sharing by the OEHS Professional

## What is it?

Workplace psychosocial hazards stem from poor work design, organization, and management and may result in negative psychological, physical, and social outcomes such as work-related stress, burnout, or depression. Some examples of working conditions contributing to psychosocial hazards are:

- Excessive workloads in a low-support environment
- Conflicting demands and lack of role clarity
- Poor communication
- Lack of support from supervisor or colleagues
- Psychological and sexual harassment, bullying, third-party violence

## Why should you care?

Chronic stressful working conditions can:

- Lead to heart disease, high blood pressure, depression, burnout, and other chronic illnesses
- Increase presenteeism and absenteeism
- Increase injury and incident rates
- Lower productivity

Successfully creating a psychologically safe and healthy work environment can lead to:

- Greater productivity



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- Increased retention
- Higher worker morale

## What can you do about it?

Focus on prevention by reducing stress exposure. Here are a few examples:

### Improve Job Design

- Provide protection from sustained exposure to physical, chemical, and biological exposures
- Allow workers to use their skills and learn new ones
- Evaluate shift work design; implement a fatigue management plan

### Improve Communication and Supervisor Support

- Teach and expect supervisors to perform supportive behaviors
- Clearly define workers' roles and responsibilities

### Consult Workers

- Give workers opportunities to participate in decisions that affect their jobs
- Establish work schedules that allow for meeting both work and personal demands

### Support Workers' Stress Management

- Educate workers about how to access benefits

**For the OEHS professional:** share an example of an organization doing well from your own experience.

## Want to know more?

[SHIP - Supportive Supervision for All Industries](#)

[Stress@Work](#)

[ISO 45003:2021](#)

[Occupational health and safety management — Psychological health and safety at work — Guidelines for managing psychosocial risks](#)

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