

Psychosocial Hazard Quick Guide

POOR SUPPORT

Poor support in the workplace occurs when team members are **not receiving the information, training, tools, equipment, resources or interactions they need** from supervisors and/or co-workers to do their job effectively. When team members do not feel supported to perform their role or maintain their job performance, it can create feelings of mental stress and fatigue, which can lead to psychological injury if these experiences are **severe, prolonged or frequent**.

A quick guide to managing the risk of poor support is summarised below, to help you understand how to spot and address poor support in your teams.

WHAT TO LOOK OUT FOR

Look out for signs of poor support across these key factors:

INFORMATION



- Team members receiving limited, conflicting or unclear instructions
- Feedback on performance is infrequent or unhelpful
- Team members do not feel adequately trained for their role

RESOURCES



- Team members don't have the tools they need to get work done properly or on time
- Tools or equipment are poorly maintained or unreliable (e.g. *outdated system software*)

INTERACTIONS



- Guidance from leaders is limited or lacking (e.g. *leaders manage very large teams*)
- Team members do not support each other and/or compete for resources
- It is difficult to collaborate or ask questions in your work environment



POTENTIAL EFFECTS OF POOR SUPPORT

If instances of poor support are severe and/or occur frequently over time, they can increase the risk of:



Mental stress if team members face constant challenges without assistance



Strained relationships if poor support leads to interpersonal frustration or tension



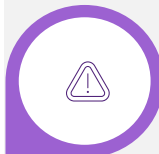
Exacerbation of, or interaction with, other psychosocial hazards (e.g. *low job control*)



Decreased job satisfaction and more absenteeism

When considering the level of risk for this hazard in your team or workplace, remember to ask yourself:

1. How **LONG** have issues been occurring?
2. How **OFTEN** are they occurring?
3. How much do these issues **IMPACT** your team members?



WHAT YOU CAN DO

Some actions you could take as a leader to help address the risk of poor support:

- ▶ Ask for additional support or resources if you need them to be able to effectively support your team (e.g. *can you reduce the number of direct reports if you manage a big team?*)
- ▶ Make information as clear and easy to access as possible (e.g. *reporting lines, team charter, standard tasks/procedures, work goals etc.*)
- ▶ Actively encourage and enable team mutual collaboration and support (e.g. *regular team meetings, leader 'office hours', peer mentoring programs etc.*)
- ▶ Review work systems and resources to make sure all team members can access and effectively use these (e.g. *team members don't need to compete to use systems*)
- ▶ Display empathy in your leadership, and make sure you provide regular, fair and constructive feedback for team member development
- ▶ Review how your team members are trained and raise concerns if you think this needs improvement



GOOD PRACTICE



Managing workplace support is an ongoing process and you should review your knowledge and the effectiveness of your actions regularly.

Keep these tips in mind:



Think ahead to ensure your team members are supported during busy periods (e.g. *role backfilling*)



Incentivize job support by rewarding and recognising when team members help each other



Regularly audit the systems, tools and resources your team use; Just because they are effective now does mean they will be in the near future



Make yourself available to role model support and open communication for your team members, while providing them with a safe channel to raise any concerns