



Psychosocial Hazard Quick Guide

POOR WORKPLACE RELATIONSHIPS

Poor workplace relationships can arise when **a relationship breaks down between two or more individuals in the workplace**. Conflict can arise about work tasks, processes, customers or personal issues, and poor workplace relationships can occur between leaders, supervisors, co-workers and/or any anyone else interacting in the workplace. Poor workplace relationships can lead to psychological injury if this experience is **severe, prolonged or frequent**.

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

WHAT TO LOOK OUT FOR

Look out for signs of poor workplace relationships across a few key factors:

INDIVIDUALS

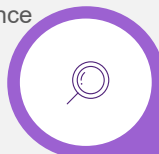


- Inappropriate behaviours between or directed toward individuals (e.g. *offensive language*; *spreading rumours*)
- Recurring confrontations and/or disagreements between individuals that go unresolved
- Excessive control or micromanagement from leaders creating relationship tension
- Lack of cooperation or power-struggles amongst individuals

THE WORKPLACE



- Inappropriate or offensive behaviours are tolerated across the workplace (e.g. *name-calling*)
- Instances of conflict or poor performance are managed inconsistently or inadequately
- It is unclear how to report or address inappropriate workplace behaviour



POTENTIAL EFFECTS OF POOR WORKPLACE RELATIONSHIPS

If instances of poor workplace relationships are severe and/or occur frequently over time, it can increase the risk of:



Stress and emotional distress due to ongoing workplace conflict



Decline in job satisfaction and/or overall happiness at work

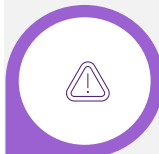


Decreased productivity if relationship conflicts disrupt workflows or collaboration



Legal and/or compliance consequences if poor relationships escalate (e.g. *harassment*)

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

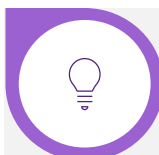
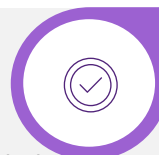


1. How **LONG** have issues been occurring?
2. How **OFTEN** are they occurring?
3. How much do these issues **IMPACT** your team members?

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Some actions you could take as a leader to help improve workplace relationships:

- ▶ Address instances of overlapping responsibilities or task uncertainty that may incite conflict
- ▶ Check that team members are clear about their role responsibilities and how these tie into their interactions with others
- ▶ Agree on rules for communication and behaviour with your team, and formalise these in a team charter
- ▶ Encourage your team members to discuss differing ideas constructively and provide platforms to do this (e.g. *brainstorming sessions*)
- ▶ Foster an open dialogue with your team so that they feel safe to raise concerns and provide inputs on workplace procedures and tasks
- ▶ Make sure your team are aware of the Staff Code of Conduct and feel supported to identify and report inappropriate behaviour



GOOD PRACTICE

Managing workplace relationships effectively is a continuous process and you should review your knowledge and the effectiveness of your actions regularly.

Keep these tips in mind:



Try to catch and resolve signs of relationship conflict early, to minimise the impact on those involved and mitigate the risk of issues escalating



Brush up on your knowledge. If you are unsure what relationship conflict looks like or how to address it, seek education or advice



Explore avenues to build positive conflict management skills for your team (e.g. *team training*)



Remember that conflict can occur at all levels of the workplace, including leaders, team members, clients and external stakeholders