

1:1 Consultation Tool for Leaders

Conversation guide around psychosocial hazards and risks

Consultation with workers must be undertaken during the risk management approach.

A safe workplace is more easily achieved when everyone talks openly about work health and safety issues and concerns, helps to identify hazards and risks, and works together to find solutions.

While the data suggests work-related violence and aggression, workplace bullying and harassment, and high job demands are the most common psychosocial hazards and risks experienced within the health care and social assistance sector, it's important to identify and understand all hazards that may be occurring within your specific organisation.

Consulting with workers is one of the best ways to understand what psychosocial hazards and risks are being experienced and how these may be addressed.

Sometimes having these conversations can be challenging for both leaders and workers. To assist with this, a Consultation Tool for one-on-one conversations has been developed to provide guidance.

The Consultation Tool can assist in obtaining good quality information about psychosocial hazards and risks, whilst ensuring those involved feel safe, supported and confident in this process.

Remember – you don't need to be an expert to talk with workers about mental health and psychosocial hazards and risks.



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Prior to engaging in conversation

- 1 Make sure you are aware and up to date on any existing reviews of psychosocial hazards and risks within the workplace (previous conversations, reporting of incidents).
- 2 Ensure that you understand the potential psychosocial hazards and risks that may be most relevant to your organisation (e.g., are there regular reports of exposure to workplace violence).
- 3 Approach the conversation informed but with an open mind regarding what psychosocial hazards and risks may be present.
- 4 Inform the worker that psychosocial hazards and risks will be the topic of discussion to allow them to be prepared. This may include providing details on what psychosocial hazards and risks are or describing it to them in simple ways such as wanting to discuss the things at work that may impact their health and wellbeing to provide a better place to work.
- 5 Ensure the conversation is held in a private and confidential environment.
- 6 Allow extra time for the conversation to ensure that workers can provide appropriate information.
- 7 Be prepared to listen and acknowledge challenges, as well as understand that solutions may not be apparent immediately.
- 8 Be aware of mental health supports available in case issues are raised that indicate support is needed.

During the conversation

- 1 Ask open ended questions such as “what is going well or not so well at work” or “what are the biggest challenges/stressors you are facing regarding your work?”
- 2 Be supportive and acknowledge the challenges being experienced.

Understand people may talk differently about psychosocial hazards and risks and how they are impacting them. (The different ways in which people may talk about impacts of psychosocial hazards and risks can be found on page 2 of the [Health Care and Social Assistance Guide](#) - “What psychosocial hazards sound like” QR code).
- 3 Allow for workers to offer solutions to address the challenges faced.
- 4 Summarise the psychosocial hazards and risks highlighted, as well as what areas that they feel need to be addressed first.
- 5 Summarise solutions provided by workers on ways to address presenting psychosocial hazards and risks.
- 6 Summarise the next steps in the process of addressing these challenges (e.g., detail ways in which the organisation will use the information provided to address issues).
- 7 If things raised during the conversation indicate the person needs mental health support, inform them of supports available (page 11 of the [Health Care and Social Assistance Guide](#)). If this is the case, check in on them the next day, or as soon as practicable, to see how they are.

After the conversation

- 1 Allow further information to be provided outside of the meeting times to ensure workers haven’t missed anything.
- 2 Use the information provided alongside other information gathered to identify the major areas that require focus.
- 3 Develop a plan of how the presenting issues from workers will be addressed and responded to, and provide to workers to allow for further feedback.
- 4 Be prepared to clarify the information provided to ensure you are fully understanding the challenges experienced, as well as potential solutions.
- 5 Regularly communicate with workers on how issues within the workplace are being addressed. Monitor and review solutions to ensure they are effective.