

Workplace Health & Safety Queensland's

'Managing the risk of psychosocial hazards at work –

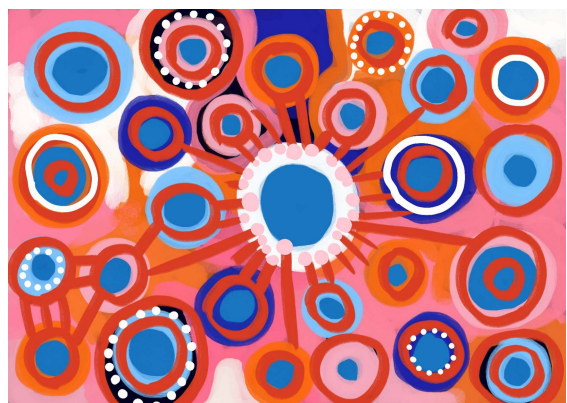
Code of Practice - Qld

MARCH 2023

1

Acknowledgement of country

- WorkCover Queensland acknowledges and pays respect to Queensland's Elders past, present and emerging.
- We thank the Traditional Custodians of Country throughout Australia for their ongoing custodianship of land, waters and community.



This artwork was created for WorkCover Queensland by renowned Queensland Aboriginal artist Rachael Sarra

2

Acknowledgement of country


2

Welcome

- About WorkCover
- Managing the risks of Psychosocial Hazards – Code of Practice
- Mental injury claim trends
- Mentally Healthy Workplaces
- Employer best practice

3


Working together



Queensland
Government

Minister for Industrial Relations

Develops legislation for workers' compensation, work health and safety and electrical safety



Queensland
Government

Office of Industrial Relations

Workplace Health and Safety Queensland
Workers' Compensation Regulatory Services
Electrical Safety Office

WorkCover
QUEENSLAND


Provides and manages workers' compensation insurance for Queensland employers and workers

www.worksafe.qld.gov.au/about/who-we-are

4

Towards 2024

Our vision
To be the best workers' compensation insurer and make a positive difference to people's lives.



Our purpose

We partner with and support our customers to keep Queenslanders working, through:






- Trusted partnerships which underpin our focus on return to work outcomes
- Tailored quality experiences for workers and employers
- Creating value for business through innovative and sustainable outcomes
- Influencing and investing in injury risk reduction

we cover
we care

Our values

<p>Excellence</p> <p>To deliver outcomes that are highly valued by our customers</p>	<p>Integrity</p> <p>To always do the right thing</p>	<p>Responsiveness</p> <p>To provide an experience that meets the individual needs of our customers</p>	<p>Respect</p> <p>To be considerate of the rights and dignity of everyone</p>
---	---	---	--

Customer strategy principles

				
FAIR/TRANSPARENT	EMPOWERED	VALUED	EASY	CONSISTENT

5

Highlights

Our organisation		Our employers		Our workers	
\$1.20	\$5.47B	174,599	\$96.51M	\$1.27B	<91.5%
average premium rate per \$100 of wages	funds under management	employers insured	premium savings for employers	statutory benefits and entitlements paid to workers	injured workers returned to work*
324,671	82%	111,934	309	63,371	2,990
customer calls to our contact centre	people survey response rate	customers renewed their policy online	customers helped onsite by our compliance advisors	injured workers assisted	new common law claims
7.2/10	67%	528	7.2/10	7.2/10	7.2/10
combined customer experience measure	sustainable employee engagement	employers helped through IPAM	average customer experience rating by employers	average customer experience rating by workers	

*During the 2021-2022 financial year errors were identified in recording the Final RTW outcome that creates the risk of this metric being materially misstated. The error rate was independently verified by PwC internal audit. Based on the analysis, there is a 95% probability that the true Final RTW rate is between 84.4% and 91.5% with a margin of error of 3.5%.

WorkCover Queensland Annual Report 2021-2022

6

Mental injuries trends

Mental injury claims 2021-2022 for the Scheme (including self-insurers)

	NEW CLAIMS (LODGEMENTS)	COST PER CLAIM*	AVERAGE DAYS OFF WORK*
Statutory claims	90,424	\$28,163	72
Mental injury claims	5,530 (Around 6.1% of total statutory claims)	\$61,047	181.4
	Mental injury claims decreased by 2.4% from 2020-2021	Mental injury average cost per claim increased by 10.2% from 2020-2021	Mental injury average days off work increased by 7.7% from 2020-2021

Data source and definitions: [Office of Industrial Relations Queensland workers' compensation scheme statistics 2021-22](#)
*Average finalised, time lost claims

7

7

Why is this important?

Psychological health at work

50% of the Australian workforce surveyed had experienced a mental health condition, and 2 in 5 of those workers report that their workplace either caused their condition or made it worse (*Superfriend, 2019*)

Mentally unhealthy workplaces are estimated to cost up to \$39 billion each year in lost participation and productivity (Productivity Commission, 2020).

Recent national survey by the Australian Human Rights Commission revealed 1 in 3 people had experienced sexual harassment at work in the past 5 years. (AHRC, 2018)

Businesses receive an average return on investment of \$2.3 per \$1 invested in **effective workplace mental health strategies**, a win-win situation for employers and employees. (PwC, 2014)

The Business Case

How many workplace incidents?

On average, **1,300 serious mental disorder claims** are accepted in Queensland each year.

At what cost?

\$84 million is paid out annually for accepted mental disorder workers' compensation claims. Mental disorder claims typically cost around \$58,900 per claim on average, compared to \$27,200 for all serious claims.

Workdays lost?

Typically, **181 days are lost** for individuals experiencing work-related mental disorders compared to 72 days lost for all other serious workers' compensation claims.

Which occupation?

Health and welfare support workers, defence force members, fire fighters and police have the highest incidence rate of accepted mental disorder claims.

8

8

Managing the risks of psychosocial hazards at work Code of Practice 2022

Managing psychosocial hazards and risks at work is just as important as managing physical risks



9

9

Managing the risks of psychosocial hazards at work Code of Practice 2022

- A new Code of Practice is effective **from 1 April 2023**. The Code is legally enforceable by Workplace Health and Safety Queensland.
- The Code is a practical guide on how to prevent harm from psychosocial hazards at work, including psychological and physical harm.
- It does not create a *new* work health and safety duty or expand existing duties, rather it provides clarity through practical guidance for employers about their existing legal obligations.
- The Code provides information for persons conducting a business or undertaking (PCBU) on how psychosocial hazards and risks can be controlled or managed and can be used to help decide what's reasonably practicable to reduce risk.



10

10

Managing the risks of psychosocial hazards at work Code of Practice 2022

- The Office of Industrial Relations has released information resources to help businesses understand their obligations:
 - [Managing the risk of psychosocial hazards at work Code of Practice 2022 webpage](#) (includes toolbox talk presentation and FAQs for employers and workers)
 - The [Mentally healthy workplaces toolkit](#), which includes templates to assess risk in your workplace
 - <https://www.watchlive.com.au/psychosocialhazardsatwork>

The following information is produced from the WorkSafe Qld resources. For more information, please visit their website.



11

11

Managing the risks of psychosocial hazards at work Code of Practice 2022

Code of Practice

The principal aim of the code is to provide **practical guidance** on how to achieve *minimum* health and safety standards. It does this through providing clear, accessible, and useful information for PCBUs and other duty holders about psychosocial hazards at work.

Example content:

- What are work-related psychosocial hazards?
- Who has a health and safety duty in relation to psychosocial hazards?
- Identifying work-related psychosocial hazards.
- Factors that may put workers at higher risk.
- How to conduct a risk assessment.
- Recording the risk management process.
- Responding to complaints, incidents or reports of psychosocial hazards.
- Examples of work-related psychosocial hazards, example control measures, and an example work-related bullying policy.

12

12

Managing the risks of psychosocial hazards at work Code of Practice 2022

Common hazards

Common psychosocial hazards that arise from, or are related to, work may include:

- high and/or low job demands
- low job control
- poor support
- low role clarity
- poor organisational change management
- low reward and recognition
- poor organizational justice
- poor workplace relationships including interpersonal conflict
- remote or isolated work
- poor environmental conditions
- traumatic events
- violence and aggression
- bullying
- harassment including sexual harassment



13

13

Managing the risks of psychosocial hazards at work Code of Practice 2022

What do psychosocial hazards sound like?



14

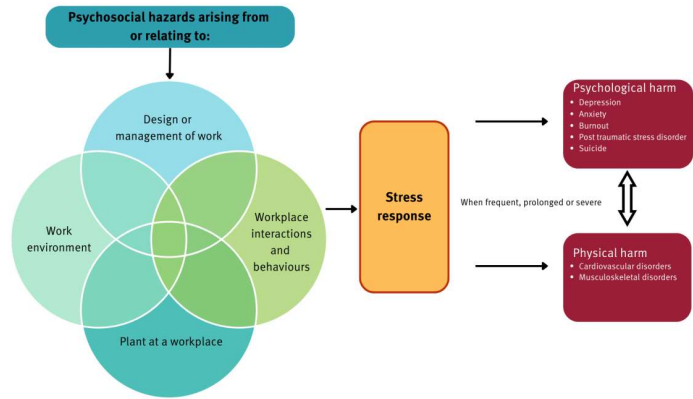
14

Managing the risks of psychosocial hazards at work Code of Practice 2022

- Psychosocial hazards are anything at work that may cause psychological or physical harm.
 - the way tasks or a job are designed, organised, managed and supervised
 - tasks or jobs where there are inherent psychosocial hazards and risks
 - the equipment, working environment or requirements to undertake duties in physically hazardous environments, and
 - social factors at work, workplace relationships and social interactions.

They can co-occur or combine to create or increase risk of harm.

Figure 2: Relationship between psychosocial hazards and injury outcomes



Managing the risks of psychosocial hazards at work Code of Practice 2022

Key principles

- RISK MANAGEMENT**
- HIERARCHY OF CONTROLS**
- CONSULTATION**

Risk management

The risk management process

- Duty holders are required to follow the risk management approach.
- Good risk management is important so that hazards and their source/s can be identified.
- Controls must be aimed at eliminating psychosocial hazards, or where this is not reasonably practicable, minimising psychosocial hazards, in order to be the most effective and sustainable.

Managing the risks of psychosocial hazards at work Code of Practice 2022

PCBUs have a duty to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health and safety of each worker while at work. **Health includes physical and psychological health.** PCBUs must ensure that psychosocial hazards at work are effectively managed. The PCBU's duty to workers includes ensuring the health and safety of workers from harmful acts from third parties, such as clients, visitors, or patients.

Examples of what the PCBU is required to do to manage psychosocial hazards include ensuring they provide and maintain:

- a safe working environment
- safe systems of work
- safe use, handling, and storage of equipment, structures and substances
- adequate facilities at work
- necessary information, training, instruction or supervision of workers, and
- conditions at the workplace are monitored to ensure any risks remain adequately controlled.

17

17

What do PCBUs do to comply?

PCBUs must adopt a risk management process, including eliminating psychosocial risks, so far as is reasonably practicable, or if it is not reasonably practicable to eliminate psychosocial risks, by minimising them.

PCBUs should follow a four-step risk management process to meet their health and safety obligations under the Code and Regulations:

1. Identify psychosocial hazards (talk, inspect, review, survey, consult)
2. Assess the risk (severity, likelihood, controls, urgency)
3. Control the risks (eliminate, substitute/isolate, supervision)
4. Review the controls (fit for purpose, suitable, sustainable)

Part 3 of the Code provides detailed information about these steps for psychosocial hazards.

18

18

‘Reasonably practicable’

What is reasonably practicable?

The question of what is reasonably practicable is determined objectively. It means that which is, or was at a particular time, reasonably able to be done to ensure health and safety, taking into account and weighing up all relevant matters including:

- the likelihood of the hazard or risk occurring
- the degree of harm that might result from the psychosocial hazard or risk
- what the person concerned knows, or ought reasonably to know, about the hazard or risk, and about ways of eliminating or minimising the risk
- the availability and suitability of ways to eliminate or minimise the risk
- lastly, the cost associated with eliminating or minimising the risk, including whether the cost is grossly disproportionate to the risk.

19

19

Managing the risks of psychosocial hazards at work Code of Practice 2022



20

20

Managing the risks of psychosocial hazards at work Code of Practice 2022

Role of WHSQ in responding to matters involving psychosocial hazards

WHSQ Inspectors can only act on situations that fall within the scope of the WHS Act. This includes verifying that a [PCBU](#) is:

- **consulting workers** about work health and safety
- **providing and maintaining a work environment** that is without risks to health and safety
- providing and maintaining **safe systems of work**
- **monitoring the health and safety of workers** and the conditions at the **workplace** to ensure that work-related illnesses and injuries are prevented
- providing **appropriate information, instruction, training or supervision** to workers and others at the workplace, to allow work to be carried out safely
- **implementing a process to identify and manage** psychosocial hazards at work.



21

21

Code of Practice 2022

A reminder of your WHS duties



The Model *Work Health and Safety Act 2011* (Act) requires a Person Conducting a Business or Undertaking (PCBU) to ensure the **health and safety** of workers, so far as is reasonably practicable.

The Act defines 'health' as **both physical and psychological**

These are **LEGAL** obligations

22

22

What to say if you get caught sleeping during training ...

1. "They told me at the blood bank this might happen"
2. "I was meditating on the mission statement and envisioning a new paradigm"
3. "This is one of the seven habits of highly effective people"
4. "I was testing the keyboard for drool resistance"
5. "I was performing the Stress Level Elimination Exercise Plan we were taught at the last seminar"
6. "Are you discriminating against people who meditate?"
7. "Why did you disturb me? I almost figured out a solution to the car-parking problem"
8. "The coffee machine is broken"
9. "That cold medicine I took last night just won't wear off"
10. "These are the unique and unpredictable circadian rhythms of the workaholic"
11. "I was trying to pick up a contact lens without using my hands"
12. "Amen"

23

23

Mentally Healthy Workplaces

This WHSQ toolkit aims to help employers, managers and leaders eliminate and minimise risks to psychological health, and create workplace environments that are mentally healthy.

Use the guidance material and practical tools in this toolkit to facilitate positive steps towards a mentally healthy workplace.

Toolkit contents:

1. Mentally healthy workplaces
2. Promote positive practices
3. Prevent psychological harm
4. Intervene early
5. Support recovery from injury
6. Mentally healthy workplaces for small business
7. Additional resources

Download the [toolkit](#) (PDF, 11.45 MB)

24

24

Mentally Healthy Workplaces - Toolkit

A mentally healthy workplace is one that:

- promotes workplace practices that support positive mental health
- eliminates and minimises psychological health and safety risks through the identification and assessment of psychosocial hazards
- builds the knowledge, skills and capabilities of workers to be resilient and thrive at work
- is free of stigma and discrimination
- supports the recovery of workers returning after a physical or psychological injury

This toolkit is structured around a four part model that outlines what makes a workplace mentally healthy.



25

25

Mentally Healthy Workplaces

The benefits of a mentally healthy workplace

- Decrease in work-related injuries and illnesses
- Decrease in workers' compensation claims
- Thriving workers
- Increase in productivity
- Decrease in absenteeism
- Increase in engagement and job satisfaction
- Decrease in turnover and selection costs
- Increase in attraction of top talent



26

26

People at work – free/validated Australian psychosocial risk assessment survey

Helping to create psychologically healthy and safe workplaces

Create your account >

Start your People at Work journey by registering for a free account.

People at Work process >

Gain an understanding of the five step People at Work process.

About People at Work >

Learn about People at Work: the funding partners and research history.

Resources >

A hub of useful resources for your workplace and workers.

Psychological health and safety >

Find out about your workplace responsibilities, psychosocial hazards and building a business case.

FAQ >

Find answers to frequently asked questions about People at Work.

27

27

Safety

- Provide a safe work environment.
- Prepare for workplace incidents before they happen.
- Report serious incidents to WHSQ.
- Investigate all incidents and reassess WHS policies, procedures and systems.

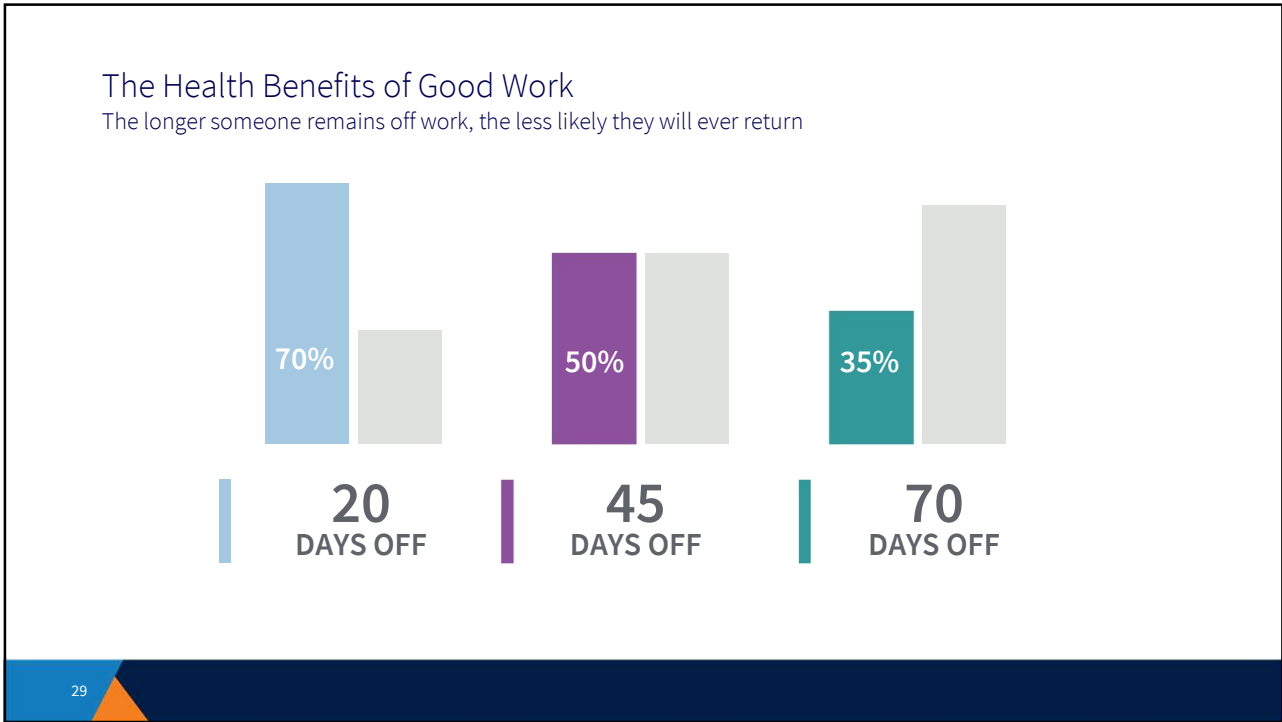
Return to work

- Returning to work is a necessary step in a worker's recovery.
- Workers who stay at work or gradually return to work often recover more quickly.
- Make sure you offer suitable duties to support your worker.

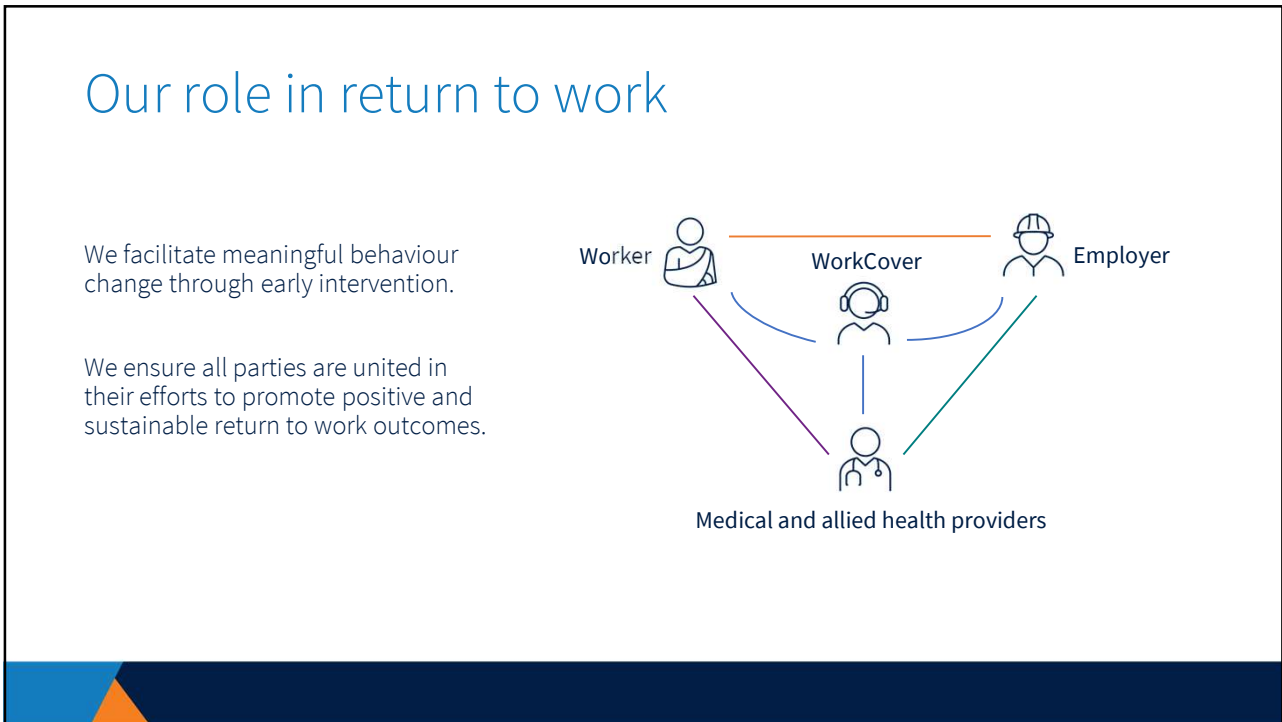
28

Employer best practice

28



29



30

Working better together

We can influence positive outcomes through working together with all of these parties:

Worker

- Regular, honest communication
- Participate in rehabilitation
- Actively take part in planning return to work

Employer

- Safety
- Reporting
- Communication
- Support return to work
- Offer suitable duties

WorkCover

- Facilitate return to work
- Provide early intervention
- Promote positive sustainable return to work
- Communication

Medical and allied health providers

- Timely services
- Communication
- Rehabilitation
- Return to work focus

Key elements to delivering best outcomes:

Transparent
communication

----- Collaboration -----

Focused on positive
return to work
outcomes

31

31

How you need to support your worker during their recovery

- Offer return to work options – light or alternative duties
- Get input from the worker, their doctor and other treating practitioners
- Keep talking to the worker about their progress



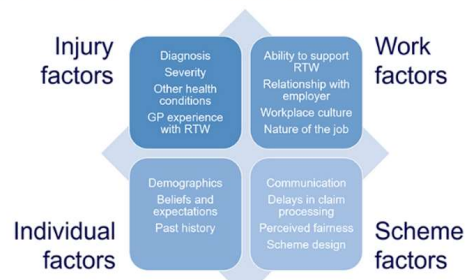
32

32

Plan for their return

- Graduated return to work
- Focus on what they CAN do
- Aim for sustainable return to work

FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE DELAYED RTW



33

33

When they return

- Welcome them back
- Supportive culture
- Monitor adjustments
- Tailor their program
- Review regularly

Use resources at [worksafe.qld.gov.au](https://www.worksafe.qld.gov.au) to help you plan their return to work.



34

34

Suitable duties

- Ideally a worker will return to work with their pre-injury employer
- Recovery at work could involve suitable alternative duties
- Suitable duties benefits
 - The worker
 - The employer
 - Your policy

If a worker can't return with the original employer, we may refer them for workplace rehabilitation services.



35

35

Workplace Rehabilitation Services

- Helps a worker maintain work activities or a return to the workforce after injury or illness
- It takes into account:
 - existing work skills
 - the effects of medical conditions
 - A range of other rehabilitation issues to be addressed



36

36

Workplace rehabilitation providers

Services include:

- Workplace evaluation assessment
- Suitable duties program
- Job seeking skills assessment
- Job preparation service
- Job placement service – new employer
- Job placement service – work hardening
- Vocational assessment
- Functional capacity evaluation
- Monitoring suitable duties program

These services are delivered by WorkCover's Return to Work panel providers.

37

37

Case study Deborah

Click play button



38

Case Studies

38

Insights to offer

- Preventive approach – there is no wining in the reactive; primary and secondary mental injury
- Communication and consultation – are you nurturing meaningful relationships?
- “People don’t care how much you know, until they know how much you care” – demonstrate spontaneous care?
- Early intervention and inclusion – what is your culture? Labelling can be disabling
- Person centred care and a goal orientated approach – do we understand the shared goals?
- Leadership sponsorship and capability – what is your mental health literacy?
- Hazards often co-occur – what is your safety ecosystem? Manage any blind spot
- Reflective practice framework – how do you demonstrate continuous improvement? Return on Investment Energy
- Principle of foreseeability – do your people feel safe?
- Your wellbeing – how do you role model self-care?

39

39

Resources

- Mentally healthy workplaces toolkit worksafe.qld.gov.au/injury-prevention-safety/mentally-healthy-workplaces/toolkit
- People at Work worksafe.qld.gov.au/injury-prevention-safety/mentally-healthy-workplaces/guidance-and-tools/people-at-work
- [Managing the risk of psychosocial hazards at work Code of Practice 2022](#)
- LeadingWell Queensland leadingwellqld.com.au
- Safework Australia Work-related psychological health and safety safeworkaustralia.gov.au/doc/work-related-psychological-health-and-safety-systematic-approach-meeting-your-duties and [Safe Work Australia Conversation Guide](#)
- SuperFriend 2019 Indicators of a Thriving Workplace survey superfriend.com.au/further-resources/2019-indicators-of-a-thriving-workplace-survey and [peer support booklet](#) and [SuperFriend support resources](#)
- Black Dog Institute – [Mental Health Toolkit](#) supports individual wellbeing and the overall wellbeing of a business.
- The [Australian Human Rights Commission](#) guide for managers in understanding and supporting workers with a mental injury.
- [The Men’s Shed movement](#) addressing health and wellbeing and helping men to once again become valued and productive members of our community.
- Sleep hygiene - tips on building routines around sleep from the [Sleep Health Foundation](#).
- Activity and exercise - Beyond Blue talks about [exercising your way to good mental health](#).
- [Heads Up](#) was developed by Beyond Blue with a specific focus on mentally healthy workplaces.
- National Mental Health Commission <https://beta.mentallyhealthyworkplaces.gov.au/>
- [Australian Human Rights Commission Guide to supporting workers with a mental injury](#)
- [SuperFriend 2019 Indicators of a Thriving Workplace survey](#)
- [Thrive at Work - Stigma reduction](#)

40

40

Thank you

280 Adelaide Street
Brisbane City QLD 4000

info@workcoverqld.com.au
1300 362 128