

Mentally healthy work

Good practice guidelines for managing psychosocial risks at work

Consultation draft

November 2023

When reviewing this draft guidance please note the following:

- This draft does not necessarily present WorkSafe's final position on any matters contained within it.
- Please use the submission feedback form provided on [WorkSafe's Consultation webpage](#) to provide your feedback.

Submissions close Friday 15 December 2023

Completed submission forms can be sent to:
guidanceandeducationdevelopment@worksafe.govt.nz

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

WorkSafe would like to acknowledge and thank the stakeholders who have contributed to the development of these guidelines.

Key points

- Workers health and wellbeing can be exposed to risks in any industry, anywhere in Aotearoa New Zealand.
- All businesses must provide and maintain a work environment that is without risks to health and safety, including mental health, so far as is reasonably practicable.
- Businesses must consult with their workers when deciding how to manage the risks related to their work.

NOTE

These guidelines use 'must' and 'should or 'could' to indicate whether an action is required by law or is a recommended practice or approach.

Term	Definition
Must	Legal requirement that has to be complied with
Should or could	Recommended practice or approach

Contents

Figures	5
Tables	5
1.0 About these guidelines	6
1.1 What are these guidelines about?	6
1.2 What do you need to understand first?	6
1.3 What do these guidelines cover?	6
1.4 What other guidance is available?	7
2.0 Why is it important you manage psychosocial risks at work?	8
2.1 The law requires you to create a safe and healthy work environment	8
2.2 Workers can be exposed to psychosocial risks anywhere	8
2.3 You can make a better place to work	8
2.4 Mentally healthy work is good for business	9
3.0 How can you understand wellbeing?	11
3.1 Understanding wellbeing can help you better manage psychosocial risks.....	11
3.2 Te Whare Tapa Whā – a Māori health and wellbeing model.....	11
4.0 How can you manage risks?	14
4.1 Introduction to risk management	14
4.2 Working together with other PCBUs to manage risk.....	16
5.0 Step 1: Identify hazards.....	19
5.1 Identifying psychosocial hazards that could increase health and safety risks.....	19
5.2 What to look at when identifying psychosocial hazards	19
5.3 How work is designed can impact worker wellbeing	20
5.4 Social factors at work can impact worker wellbeing	22
5.5 The work environment can impact worker wellbeing	24
6.0 Step 2: Assess the risk.....	28
6.1 Assess the risk for each psychosocial hazard you have identified	28
7.0 Step 3: Manage the risk	31
7.1 Consider what control measures to use to manage each psychosocial risk.....	31
7.2 Choosing the most effective control measures	32
7.3 Control measures that support mentally healthy work	35
7.4 Examples of control measures for how work is designed	35

7.5	Examples of control measures for social factors at work.....	37
7.6	Examples of control measures for the work environment.....	39
8.0	Managing psychosocial risk with inclusive practices.....	42
8.1	Culturally inclusive practices help create mentally healthy work	42
9.0	Step 4: Review control measures.....	46
9.1	Review and improve control measures used to manage each psychosocial risk	46
10.0	What to do when psychosocial harm has already happened.....	47
10.1	PCBU responsibility	47
10.2	Internal sources of support	47
10.3	External sources of support.....	48
10.4	Return to work processes.....	48
10.5	When WorkSafe might intervene in a workplace mental health matter.	49
11.0	More information.....	50

Figures

Figure 1:	Benefits of mentally healthy work	10
Figure 2:	Te Whare Tapa Whā - a Māori health and wellbeing model developed by Sir Mason Durie	11
Figure 3:	Risk management approach.....	14
Figure 4:	Overlapping duties	16
Figure 5:	Main areas that influence mentally healthy work	19
Figure 6:	Levels of intervention for preventing and managing psychosocial risks	33
Figure 7:	Benefits of culturally inclusive practices in a mentally healthy workplace	42

Tables

Table 1:	Early signs of common psychosocial hazards	9
Table 3:	Examples of how work design can impact worker wellbeing.....	22
Table 4:	Examples of social factors that can impact worker wellbeing	24
Table 5:	Examples of how the work environment can impact worker wellbeing	26
Table 6:	Risk assessment for each psychosocial hazard you have identified	29
Table 7:	Examples of control measures for work design	37
Table 8:	Examples of control measures for social factors at work	39
Table 9:	Examples of control measure for the work environment.....	40
Table 10:	Key Te Ao Māori values relevant to worker health and safety good practice	43
Table 11:	Examples of culturally inclusive practices at work	45

1.0 About these guidelines

There are a range of risks at work that can affect workers' health and wellbeing. These guidelines provide advice on ways to manage these risks.

1.1 What are these guidelines about?

These guidelines are for all persons conducting a business or undertaking (PCBUs).

As a PCBU, you must provide and maintain a work environment that is without risks to safety and health, so far as is reasonably practicable. This includes risks to worker mental health. These guidelines can help you manage these risks.

1.2 What do you need to understand first?

There are terms used in this guidance that you may not know. The most important terms are explained next.

What do we mean by 'psychosocial'?

Psychosocial is when people and their environment interact. It refers to the interaction between psychological (thoughts, emotions and behaviour) and social (interactions with others) factors that affect a person's health and wellbeing.

What are 'psychosocial hazards' and 'risks'?

Psychosocial hazards are sources or causes of harm to a person's health and wellbeing. At work they can relate to how work is designed, social factors and the work environment. These hazards can affect anyone, no matter where they work or what they do.

Risks arise from people being exposed to hazards (anything that can cause harm). If the worker is aware, alert, and well-supported, the chances of harm from the hazard are low. But if safety measures are lacking, and the worker is tired, distracted, poorly trained, or overworked, the risk goes up.

What is 'mentally healthy work'?

Mentally healthy work is where people's health and wellbeing is prioritised. Risks to their health and wellbeing are eliminated or minimised.

1.3 What do these guidelines cover?

In these guidelines we:

- explain the importance of managing psychosocial risks at work

- introduce the factors influencing mentally healthy work and how they can impact your business
- explain how the Māori health and wellbeing model, Te Whare Tapa Whā, is a helpful tool for understanding health and wellbeing
- introduce how to apply a risk management approach, to help manage psychosocial risks to your workers' health and wellbeing
- offer examples of control measures to get you thinking about ways you can manage psychosocial risks
- provide examples of culturally inclusive practices for creating mentally healthy work, and
- offer good practice advice for responding when workers have been exposed to psychosocial hazards at work.

1.4 What other guidance is available?

These good practice guidelines aim to provide an overview of how to manage the diverse range of risks to workers' health and wellbeing. We also have guidance on managing some of the most common psychosocial risks in greater detail:

- Stress quick guide
- [Bullying prevention toolkit](#)
- [Sexual harassment prevention toolkit](#)
- Vicarious trauma quick guide

If you need help, we recommend getting advice from a suitably qualified and experienced health and safety professional. Section 10.3 of these guidelines also has a list of external support services for further help.

2.0 Why is it important you manage psychosocial risks at work?

Workers thrive and are more productive when their health and wellbeing are prioritised.

There are many reasons why you must manage psychosocial risks. Some of these are explained below.

2.1 The law requires you to create a safe and healthy work environment

Under the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015 (HSWA) PCBUs are required to identify psychosocial hazards and take steps to eliminate or mitigate risks as much as reasonably practicable.

2.2 Workers can be exposed to psychosocial risks anywhere

Some work tasks, like using heavy machinery, or working at height have obvious risks that need to be managed. But, unlike those task-specific risks, psychosocial risks can impact any worker, from any industry, working anywhere in Aotearoa New Zealand.

2.3 You can make a better place to work

It is important for you to recognise the early signs of psychosocial hazards that can impact your workers and other persons at work so the risks to their health and wellbeing can be managed before serious harm happens.

Below are some common examples of psychosocial hazards at work and how they begin. See Section 5 of this guidance for more examples.

Common psychosocial hazards	Early signs
Work-related stress	Workers who experience this may start missing work, be more tense, have a change in behaviour and decreased performance.

Bullying	Workers who experience this may show signs of withdrawal, anxiety, low self-esteem and communicate less.
Lack of work/life balance	Workers with a work/life imbalance may be more tense, have trouble focusing and show signs of burnout.
Inadequate support	Workers with lack of support from management and colleagues may start isolating themselves, lack enthusiasm, and collaborate less.
Low job security	Workers who have non-permanent roles or are at risk of losing their jobs may experience increased anxiety, lack of commitment and decreased motivation.

Table 1: Early signs of common psychosocial hazards

2.4 Mentally healthy work is good for business

When people have good health and wellbeing, they can handle problems and stress better, and they tend to do well at work. Figure 1 describes some benefits for businesses and workers.



Figure 1: Benefits of mentally healthy work

3.0 How can you understand wellbeing?

3.1 Understanding wellbeing can help you better manage psychosocial risks

We often look at our workers as all the same, but this is not true. Workers have different needs based on their own personal experiences both at work and outside of work. To prevent or lessen risks to health and wellbeing you must consider those who are most at risk.

Workers do not leave their personal lives at home. For example, some might struggle with family pressures, financial pressures, or health. Therefore, knowing your workers, while respecting their privacy, can help reduce risks.

To help manage risks it is important you create a positive work culture where workers can feel comfortable enough to “bring their whole selves to work”. To realise what this truly means, you need to understand what wellbeing is. A helpful tool for doing this is, Te Whare Tapa Whā, a Māori health and wellbeing model developed by Sir Mason Durie.

3.2 Te Whare Tapa Whā – a Māori health and wellbeing model

Te Whare Tapa Whā translates to house with four sides. It represents hauora (health and wellbeing) as a whare (house), built over the whenua (foundation/land) with four sides representing a different dimension of wellbeing.

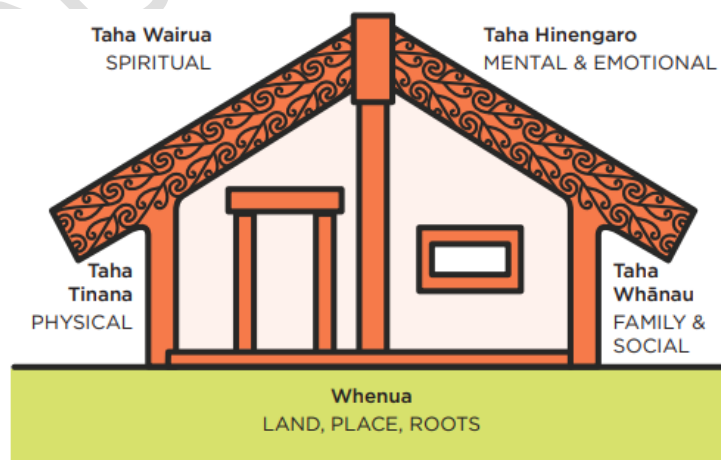


Figure 2: Te Whare Tapa Whā - a Māori health and wellbeing model developed by Sir Mason Durie

Areas of wellbeing interact. Like a whare (house), they can support and enhance each other. However, facing challenges in one area can result in further challenges in others.

The four dimensions of hauora (health and wellbeing) are:

- taha tinana (physical wellbeing) which is about how your body grows, develops, moves, and how you care for it
- taha wairua (spiritual wellbeing) which is about who and what you are, where you have come from and where you are going
- taha hinengaro (mental and emotional wellbeing) which is how you feel, how you think and how you communicate, and
- taha whānau (family and social wellbeing) which is about belonging, caring and sharing in a social system. Whānau is important and can affect how people feel, good or bad.

When one or more of these dimensions are out of balance, our hauora (health and wellbeing) is impacted. We need these different dimensions to be in balance for strength and stability. By nurturing and strengthening each of these areas, we can support wellbeing.

Whenua (foundation/land) represents interactions with the environment around us, which can impact wellbeing positively and negatively.

Whenua is where you have a sense of belonging, meaning the spaces where you feel comfortable, safe, and can be yourself. It is the connection to the land, a source of life, nourishment, and wellbeing for all.

In this context, whenua can include the work environment.

Because the environment around us impacts our wellbeing, it is important to build and maintain a positive work environment to support wellbeing.

Te Whare Tapa Whā encourages you to look at health and wellbeing as a whole (all four dimensions) so you can better understand how people feel and find the right solutions to problems.

So, with your workers, you should think about how to encourage everyone to use this model to understand their own health and wellbeing as well as others.

One way to put this into practice is by setting an example yourself. As a leader, use Te Whare Tapa Whā to be authentic and open up about your health and wellbeing. This can encourage your workers to feel more comfortable and do the same.

To successfully apply this model, remember to treat people as individuals, not just workers. Show empathy by understanding the challenges they face both at work and outside of work.

For more information on talking about wellbeing, see WorkSafe's [How we korero about mental wellbeing matters](#).

CONSULTATION DRAFT

4.0 How can you manage risks?

Using a risk management approach can help you manage psychosocial risks.

4.1 Introduction to risk management

As a PCBU, you have a primary duty of care to make sure the health and safety of your workers and others is not put at risk by the work that you do. This includes the mental health and wellbeing of your workers and other persons at work.

This section outlines a risk management approach you can use to manage, so far as is reasonably practicable, the risks to your workers and others work-related mental health.

Risks to health and safety arise from people being exposed to hazards (anything that can cause harm). Risk has two parts – the likelihood that it will occur and the consequences if it happens.

For example, if a manager unreasonably or publicly criticised and belittled a junior staff member this would be a hazard for the worker. They would likely risk psychosocial harm from the manager’s behaviour.

A risk management approach involves:

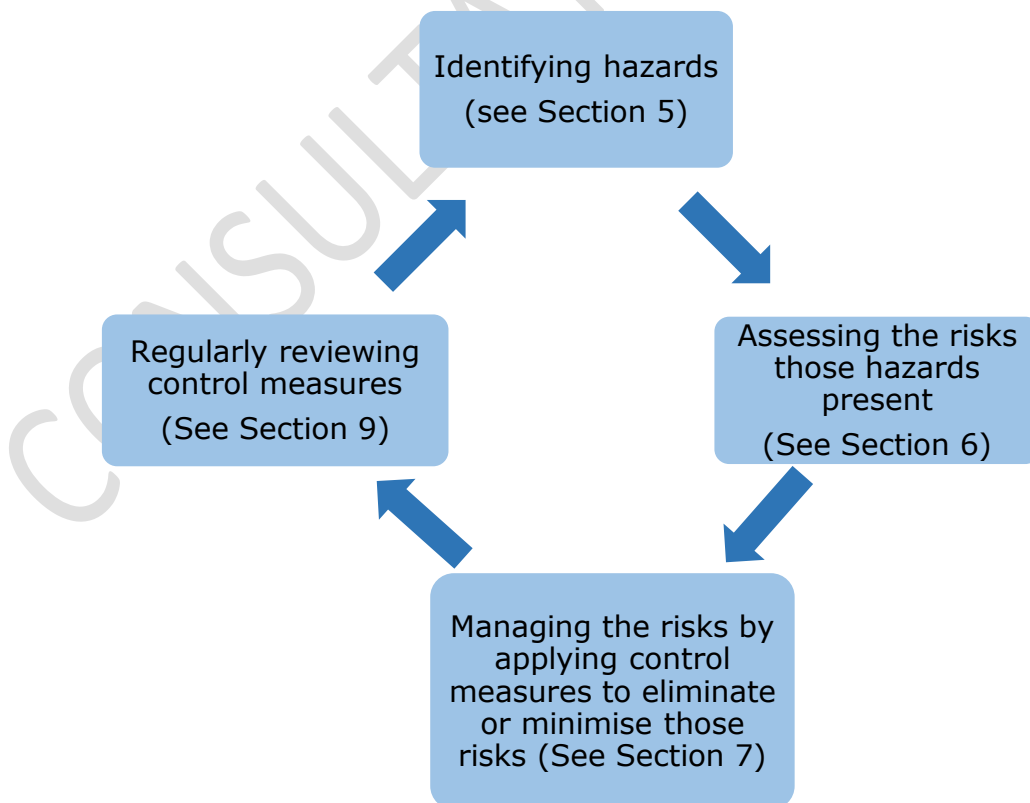


Figure 3: Risk management approach

This approach is explained in more detail in Section 5 to 9 of these guidelines.

Worker engagement and participation

Better outcomes are achieved when a business and its workers work together on health and safety. Your business should have planned, well-known ways to engage with workers and support their participation in health and safety matters.

This means having planned ways for:

- workers to give input on issues which will (or are likely to) affect their health and safety, and
- workers to improve work health and safety on an ongoing basis, for example, by raising concerns or suggesting improvements.

This will help you and your business to make better decisions that support mentally healthy work.

Worker participation in creating and maintaining mentally healthy work also helps workers feel invested in it too.

Talk to your workers when deciding how to manage risk

You must engage with workers and their representatives when deciding how to manage risk. This can include:

- when identifying and assessing psychosocial hazards and risks, and
- when making decisions about how to eliminate or minimise the psychosocial risks using appropriate control measures.

Things are likely to work better when you have a mix of formal and informal ways for workers to contribute. It can be as simple as having kai (food) and a korero (discussion) that can get the worker engagement you need.

More information on general health and safety duties like risk management and worker engagement, participation and representation see:

[What to know about 'other persons' at work](#)

[Identifying, assessing and managing work risks](#)

[Worker engagement and participation](#)

[Te ao Māori and risk management](#)

[General risk and workplace management – part 1](#)

4.2 Working together with other PCBUs to manage risk

Often a PCBU will have workers working alongside workers from a different PCBU on the same job, or be sharing a workplace with another PCBU. In these situations, it is likely that both the PCBUs will have health and safety duties in common. This is known as having overlapping duties.

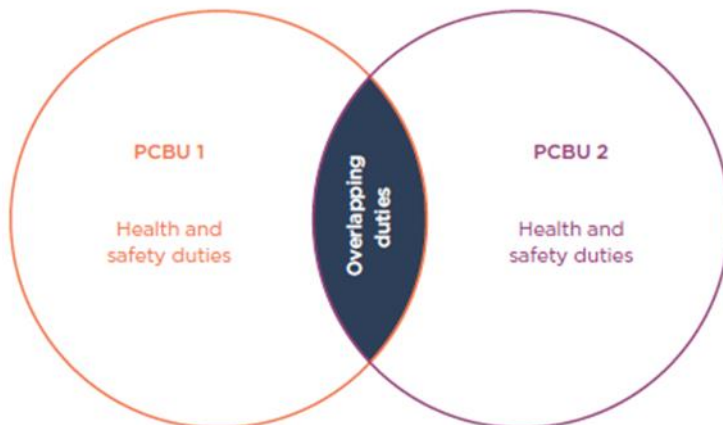


Figure 4: Overlapping duties

Examples of where overlapping duties may occur include:

- where there is a shared place of work such as a building site, port, or a shopping mall, or
- in a contracting chain, where contractors and subcontractors provide services to a head contractor or client. They do not necessarily have to share the same workplace.

PCBUs who have overlapping duties with other PCBUs must work together to manage health and safety risks. This includes managing any risks to worker mental health or wellbeing. They must **consult, cooperate** and **coordinate** with each other to identify and manage these risks.

Keep in mind the following, when thinking about how best to consult, cooperate and coordinate with other PCBUs.

- PCBUs can enter into reasonable agreements with other PCBUs to make sure that everyone's health and safety duties are met. But PCBUs must monitor each other, to make sure each PCBU continues to do what was agreed.
- PCBUs cannot contract out of their health and safety duties or push risk onto other PCBUs.
- The more influence and control a PCBU has over a work site or a health and safety matter, the more responsibility they are likely to have.
- All PCBUs big or small, must work together on health and safety. This is crucial for dealing with issues like stress at work, bullying, and worker wellbeing.

When you recognise and act on these shared responsibilities, you create a positive culture of safety and wellbeing. This helps reduce the likelihood of harm from psychosocial risk to workers and ensures you are meeting your legal obligations.

For more information on overlapping duties, see [Overlapping duties – quick guide | WorkSafe](#)

Example

In a busy hospital under construction, different PCBUs are working on overlapping projects. The hospital is responsible for its workers and visitors safety. Contractors working on the project also have health and safety duties towards their workers and others on site.

All these groups must work together to keep everyone safe. They need to talk and plan together to manage shared risks. For example, the building company contracted to install drywall in the new hospital wing, will need to work with other PCBUs such as electricians, to complete this work. Patients and visitors are nearby.

Before they start, all PCBUs meet to make sure everyone knows how to:

- access the site
- keep tools and equipment safe to protect the public
- coordinate schedules with others
- time their work, and
- handle incidents involving hospital staff, patients or visitors.

During the project, there were a number of incidents where tensions escalated between the public and contractors as a result of work being carried out. This caused delays and safety concerns which impacted the wellbeing of some contractors.

Some contractors felt stressed by the threats of violence from the public, the risk of patients accessing their tools to self-harm and their increasing workload due to delays.

The building company owner raised these health and wellbeing concerns at the next contractor's health and safety meeting. Contractors agreed on some solutions.

- Clearer reporting for all incidents.
- Knowing who to call for safety and security.
- Keeping tools secure when not in use.
- Using an online tool to alert other contractors about issues.
- Providing training to de-escalate tense situations.

5.0 Step 1: Identify hazards

Assessing your workplace and work activity will help you identify psychosocial hazards.

5.1 Identifying psychosocial hazards that could increase health and safety risks

With your workers, identify what psychosocial hazards could harm the health of your workers or other people at work.

A hazard is a potential source or cause of harm (such as a physical injury, or harm to a person's health or wellbeing) and can include a person's behaviour.

Every work environment or work activity will be different.

5.2 What to look at when identifying psychosocial hazards

Wellbeing at work can be influenced by a number of factors. These factors can be grouped into three main areas:

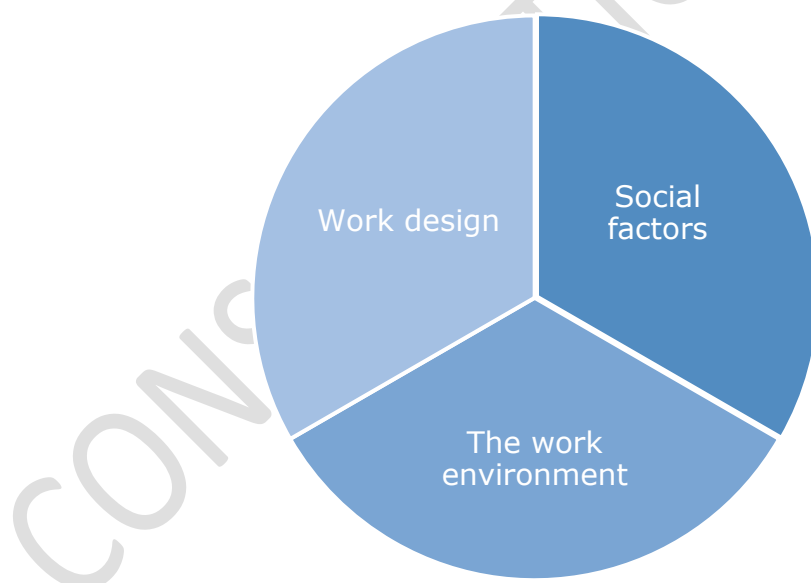


Figure 5: Main areas that influence mentally healthy work

When identifying psychosocial hazards at work, you should keep in mind that they often blend and overlap because of varying situations and demands. For example:

- interpersonal relationships

- social interactions
- job demands
- workload
- work/life balance, and
- organisational structure.

The following three sections list some common psychosocial hazards at work. They have been grouped into the three main areas: work design, social factors, and the work environment.

5.3 How work is designed can impact worker wellbeing

Good work design can significantly reduce psychosocial risks and promote a positive culture of wellbeing at work.

The table below lists examples of how work design can impact worker wellbeing.

Examples of how work design can impact worker wellbeing	
Role and expectations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - When it is not clear to workers what their responsibilities are in their role. - Situations where the expectations placed on workers contradict each other. For example, they may be expected to provide excellent customer service but not have enough time to spend with customers. - When workers experience uncertainty or frequent changes in their tasks and work standards. - Doing work with little value or purpose.
Job demands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Having too many tasks to complete in a limited time or with a limited number of workers. - Dealing with conflicting demands and deadlines. - Lack of task variety or doing highly repetitive tasks. - Regular interactions with people, for example, the public, customers, students and patients. - Underuse of skills.
Workload and work pace	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Too much or too little work.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Always having deadlines that tasks must be completed by without flexibility. - Rapid switching between tasks.
Job control or independence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Limited opportunity to participate in decision-making. - No control over workload and deadlines. - Low levels of influence and independence, such as not being able to influence the speed, order or schedule of work tasks and workload.
Working hours and schedule	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Shift work. - Unpredictable hours. - Long or unsocial hours. - Inflexible work schedules. - Expectation to complete work at short notice.
Organisational change management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Not offering enough practical support for workers during changes. - Extended or repetitive restructuring. - Lack of consultation and communication regarding changes at work, or poor-quality consultation and communication.
Job security	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Uncertainty about work availability, including irregular hours. - Risk of redundancy or temporary job loss with reduced pay. - Low paying work. - Working in situations without a written employment agreement.
Remote or isolated work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Working alone or isolated from colleagues, such as working from home. - Working in a geographically isolated or hard to access area with limited access to resources and communication. - Working outside regular business hours, for example shift/night work.
Traumatic events (Notifiable events)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Exposure to natural disasters, severe injuries, or fatalities. - Witnessing, hearing or reading about traumatic events, abuse or neglect.

	- Investigating traumatic events, abuse or neglect or providing support to victims.
--	---

Table 2: Examples of how work design can impact worker wellbeing

5.4 Social factors at work can impact worker wellbeing

Social interactions and relationships at work can have positive or negative effects on workers wellbeing.

Showing manaakitanga (uplifting people and showing respect, kindness, humility and hospitality) towards your workers shows you care for them. Providing a welcoming workplace and nurturing their sense of belonging will have a positive impact on their wellbeing.

It is important to recognise the mana of every worker through worker engagement, participation and representation. This means acknowledging and valuing the skills, knowledge, and experience that each worker brings with them.

The table below lists examples of social factors that can impact worker wellbeing.

Examples of social factors that can impact worker wellbeing

Interpersonal relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Poor communication throughout the workplace. - Poor relationships among managers, supervisors, co-workers, clients or others that workers interact with. - Regular interpersonal conflict. - Harassment, bullying, and third-party violence. - Lack of social support. - Power imbalances between groups of workers where one group holds more influence or control than others.
Violence or threat of violence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Work-related incidents that challenge health, safety, and wellbeing. These include abusive behaviour, threats, and physical, verbal, or sexual assault, including violence based on gender.
Bullying	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Repeated negative behaviours which can present a risk to health, safety and wellbeing at work. These behaviours can be obvious or hidden and include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o social or physical isolation

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ assigning meaningless or unsuitable tasks ○ name-calling, insults and intimidation ○ undermining workers and criticising them in front of others ○ not sharing information or resources necessary for work to be carried out ○ spreading malicious rumours or engaging in gossip, or ○ assigning impossible deadlines.
Harassment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Unwanted, offensive, intimidating behaviours (sexual or non-sexual in nature) targeting individuals based on specific characteristics, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ race ○ sex ○ gender identity ○ religion or belief ○ sexual orientation, or ○ disability.
Work/life balance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Work tasks, roles, schedules or expectations that require workers to work beyond their regular hours. - Conflicting demands between work and time away from home or whānau. - Work that hinders the workers' ability to recover.
Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Unclear vision and objectives. - Management style not suitable for the nature of the work and its demands. - Failing to listen or only casually listen to complaints and suggestions. - Poor communication and support. - Lack of accountability. - Lack of fairness. - Inconsistent and poor decision-making practices. - Abuse or misuse of power.
Organisational or workgroup culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Poor communication. - Insufficient support for problem-solving and personal development. - Undefined or unagreed organisational objectives. - Inconsistent and untimely application of policies and procedures.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Unfair decision-making.
Recognition and reward	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Workers not being acknowledged or rewarded for their work in a fair and timely manner.
Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lack of support from supervisors and co-workers. - Limited access to support services. - Lack of information or training to enhance work performance.
Politeness and respect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Not having enough trust, honesty, respect, politeness, and fairness at work. - Lack of respect and consideration in interactions among workers, as well as with customers, clients and the public.
Career development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No career movement available. - Job uncertainty. - Being demoted or promoted too quickly. - Lack of opportunity for skill development.

Table 3: Examples of social factors that can impact worker wellbeing

5.5 The work environment can impact worker wellbeing

Dangerous or unhealthy work environments, equipment and hazardous tasks can impact worker comfort, stress, and performance.

The table below lists examples of how the work environment can impact worker wellbeing.

Examples of how the work environment can impact wellbeing

<p>Physical work environment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Uncomfortable temperatures: if it is too hot or too cold at work this can cause physical discomfort, illness, and impact worker productivity. - Lighting: poor lighting strains the eyes, causes headaches and fatigue, leading to decreased productivity and increased stress levels. - Noise: excessive noise levels can damage hearing, increase stress, and reduce productivity. - Air quality: poor air quality may result in respiratory problems, allergies, and headaches, impacting worker productivity and mental health. - Ergonomics: the way furniture, equipment, lighting, and tasks are organised at work can cause physical discomfort, lower productivity, reduce job satisfaction, and increase fatigue and burnout. - Unpredictable environments: factors beyond workers' control, such as environmental conditions, can cause stress, especially if tasks or productivity lack flexibility to accommodate such instances. - Inadequate area for meal and rest breaks: not having a dedicated space for workers to eat or rest can reduce job satisfaction and impact worker productivity.
<p>Inadequate equipment or faulty equipment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Not having the right equipment can cause workers to feel anxious or stressed about their physical safety. - Outdated or poorly maintained equipment can cause frustration or work delays, leading to dissatisfaction.
<p>Hazardous tasks</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Manual handling tasks: tasks involving lifting, carrying, pushing or pulling heavy objects can cause discomfort, pain or injury. - Fire hazards: workplace fires, originating from various factors, can

	<p>cause severe injury and property damage.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Exposure to hazardous substances: workers exposed to chemicals, fumes, or dust at work can face health issues. - Violence: workers may experience violence from customers, colleagues, or others, resulting in physical injuries or emotional trauma.
--	--

Table 4: Examples of how the work environment can impact worker wellbeing

CONSULTATION DRAFT

Example

A small family-owned dairy farm employs a recent school leaver, Alex, as a farm hand.

Despite being new to the job Alex has already been asked to complete several tasks without proper training or instructions.

The supervisor, Sam, is always very busy, tired and gets frustrated when Alex asks questions. Because of this Alex no longer asks for help with tasks or asks questions when unsure, even when it involves machinery they have not used before. Although inexperienced, Alex is often working alone.

One day Alex is moving a tractor with a fertilizer spreader attached. The spreader comes loose due to a securing bolt being disengaged. There is damage to the equipment and the gate is hit, but the damage could have been worse, and someone could have been injured. Alex decides to report this incident to Sam and explain it was not their fault as they did not fit the spreader. Sam gets frustrated at Alex and calls them "stupid and negligent" and sends Alex to do a meaningless task.

The following day the farm owner speaks to Alex about the tractor incident. After listening to Alex and Sam's accounts separately the owner makes time to sit down and talk with them both. Together they identify some psychosocial hazards.

- Alex is often asked to complete tasks without clear instructions, making them unsure what is expected of them (role and expectations).
- Alex is frequently working alone, which is stressful given their inexperience (isolated work).
- Sam is often too busy and gets frustrated when Alex asks for clarification (support and leadership).
- When Alex reports the incident with the loose spreader, Sam responds by calling Alex "stupid and negligent" (interpersonal relationships and politeness and respect).
- Sam assigns Alex a meaningless and unnecessary job as a form of punishment (bullying).
- Sam is always very busy and frustrated, indicating that he might be dealing with too much work (workload).

6.0 Step 2: Assess the risk

Assessing risks together with your workers can help you choose the best control measures.

6.1 Assess the risk for each psychosocial hazard you have identified

You will need to carry out a risk assessment for each psychosocial hazard you have identified. You should involve your workers in this process.

Below are examples of questions to ask about each hazard you have identified.

Questions to ask	Things to consider
Who might be exposed to the psychosocial hazard?	For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - workers - vulnerable workers (for example, new, young, inexperienced or migrant workers), or - other people at work
How can this impact on wellbeing?	Using Te Whare Tapa Whā, think about how this hazard might impact the different dimensions of wellbeing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - taha tinana (physical wellbeing) - taha hinengaro (mental and emotional wellbeing) - taha whānau (family and social wellbeing), and - taha wairua (spiritual wellbeing).
What type of harm could occur?	For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - disengagement - decreased performance - social isolation - depression, or - sleep disorders.
How severe could the resulting harm be?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Could the hazard lead to immediate distress? - Could the hazard lead to longer-term mental harm? - Could the harm lead to other health issues (for example, cardiovascular disease,

	musculoskeletal disorders, diabetes, substance abuse, and unhealthy eating)?
When is the hazard present?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - All the time? - Some of the time? - Very rarely?
What factors could influence when the hazard will occur or be present?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Are there certain times of the day/week/year that are busier than others? - Are there likely to be seasonal variations to the level of risk? - Are there certain activities or tasks that have increased exposure to the hazard?
How likely are the consequences?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What is the likelihood of someone experiencing psychosocial harm as a result of exposure to the hazard?

Table 5: Risk assessment for each psychosocial hazard you have identified

Consider how psychosocial risks can interact with or be influenced by other work risks

Think about how psychosocial risks at work can be influenced by other work-related risks. These risks can cause physical and psychological harm, leading to more time off work and higher costs compared to physical injuries alone.

It is important to look at these risks together, rather than individually, because workers may be exposed to many risks all at once, and these can overlap and make things worse. These risks can also cause other problems, such as making mistakes or feeling pressured for time.

When you assess these various risks together, you can find better ways to control them. Prioritise dealing with the risks that have a higher chance of happening or causing big problems, like serious psychological or physical injuries, or long-term health issues.

Talk to your workers when assessing psychosocial risks

When assessing psychosocial risks it is especially important to talk with and listen to your workers *kanohi ki te kanohi* (face to face) and show *manaakitanga* (hospitality) when engaging with them. Section 8 of this guide has more information on this.

For more information on worker engagement, participation and representation see WorkSafe's [Worker engagement and participation](#)

Example

Together, Alex, Sam and the farm owner identify role and expectations as one of their psychosocial hazards (see the example on page 27). They then assess whether the role and expectations present a risk that needs to be managed.

Alex is frequently given tasks without clear instructions or training, and in this case, it resulted in damage to equipment and property in the workplace. But it also has the potential to result in more serious accidents, increased stress and lower job performance. Therefore, it is a risk that needs to be managed.

CONSULTATION DRAFT

7.0 Step 3: Manage the risk

While it may not be possible to eliminate psychosocial risks, there are steps that can be taken to minimise workers exposure to them.

7.1 Consider what control measures to use to manage each psychosocial risk

With your workers, consider what control measures to implement to manage each psychosocial risk you have identified.

You must first try to **eliminate** a risk so far as is reasonably practicable.

If it is not reasonably practicable to eliminate the risk, it must be **minimised** so far as is reasonably practicable.

Every workplace is different and there is no one size fits all. Therefore, controls will look different for every PCBU depending on the size, type of work, and the risks present.

CONSULTATION DRAFT

Reasonably practicable

Eliminating the risk should be the preferred approach when deciding what control measure is the most appropriate.

However, elimination may not always be reasonably practicable, and you may need to consider lower-level control measures to minimise the risk.

When considering whether you can use a particular control measure to ensure health and safety, you can take into account and weigh up relevant matters including:

- the likelihood of the risk concerned occurring or workers being exposed to the hazard
- the degree of harm that might result
- what the person concerned knows, or ought reasonably to know, about:
 - o the hazard or risk, and
 - o ways of eliminating or minimising the risk
- the availability and suitability of ways to eliminate or minimise the risk, or
- after assessing the extent of the risk and the available ways of eliminating or minimising the risk, the cost associated with available ways of eliminating or minimising the risk, including whether the cost is grossly disproportionate to the risk.

If in doubt – seek expert advice

You may choose to seek advice from a suitably qualified health and safety professional when seeking to understand the risks your workers face and how best to manage those risks.

If you do seek expert advice, this advice should be considered alongside the outcomes of consulting with your workers, and contractors or subcontractors (if applicable).

7.2 Choosing the most effective control measures

There are a range of controls that your organisation can use to protect the

health and wellbeing of your workers. These are categorised into three different levels of intervention: primary, secondary and tertiary.

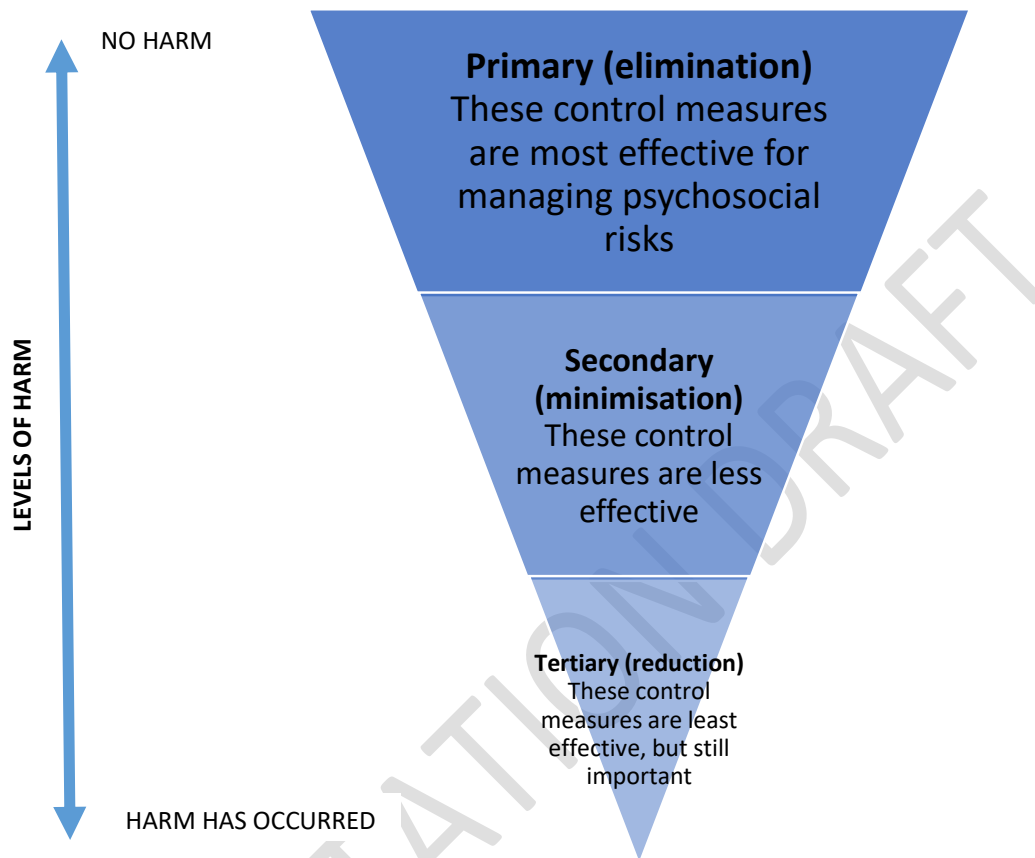


Figure 6: Levels of intervention for preventing and managing psychosocial risks

Primary intervention – look at the organisation

Primary intervention is the most important level, where you should concentrate most of your effort. The aim here is to stop psychosocial risks from happening in the first place, preventing harm.

Your focus should be on preventing risks before they can harm anyone and on activities that benefit all workers. To achieve this, look at your organisation and how it works as the source of these risks. Focus on:

- designing good work
- building a positive culture
- developing and supporting effective leadership

- having good worker engagement and participation, and
- eliminating risks at an early stage.

Secondary intervention – look at your work practices

If it is not reasonably practicable to eliminate the risk, then you need to minimise the impact of psychosocial risks and prevent them from escalating. This is done by having work practices in place for monitoring and responding to harm immediately. Focus on:

- having good training and supervision processes in place
- having regular check ins with workers to make sure their health and wellbeing is good and if not, what can be done to improve it or help
- ensuring you know what workload workers have so they do not get overwhelmed by too much work or bored with too little work, and
- training for managers and supervisors so they can better support and engage with their teams.

Control measures at this level focus on engaging with your workers and providing them with coaching and mentoring to detect and manage harm.

Encourage your workers to look at their own health and wellbeing, and to share what they need you to do to support this.

Tertiary intervention - support the person and continue making improvements

This level focuses on addressing the consequences and long-term effects of the risk that has occurred.

This is the least effective area in terms of managing psychosocial risks, but it is still important. It involves providing support and measures to prevent further harm or recurrence. Focus on targeted support such as:

- employee assistance programmes
- incident support, and
- return to work programme.

It is important to review your processes and control measures if harm occurs, so you can make necessary improvements to avoid it happening again or minimise

the impact of it.

There is more information on actions you can take when psychosocial harm has happened in Section 10 of this guidance.

7.3 Control measures that support mentally healthy work

To ensure the wellbeing of your workers, it is essential to consult with them and consider as many possible control measures as you can. Keep in mind, that every work environment or activity is unique, so controls will differ for each PCBU.

To assist you, we have specific guidance on stress, bullying, sexual harassment and working from home, which include examples of risks and possible control measures. See WorkSafe's [placeholder for link]

You should use a combination of control measures. Using multiple control measures means that if a single control measure fails, workers will not be left without any protection.

The key is to address the risks at multiple levels, proactively prevent risks, intervene early to support workers, and provide necessary support and rehabilitation when harm has occurred.

In Section 5.2 we introduced three key areas that influence mentally healthy work: work design, social factors and the work environment. In Section 7.4 to 7.6 we give examples of managing psychosocial risks in each of these areas, at different levels of intervention (primary, secondary and tertiary).

Please note that these examples are not exhaustive but are provided to give you an idea of what you could consider.

7.4 Examples of control measures for how work is designed

If exposure to psychosocial risks cannot be eliminated, look at how you can minimise the risk of exposure through work design.

The risk	Examples of control measures
Role and expectations: unclear job expectations, conflicting responsibilities, and role uncertainty can lead to confusion, job	Primary Make sure job roles and expectations are clearly defined and communicated to your workers. This can include training and supervision, creating clear job descriptions, giving written guidelines, and conducting orientation sessions clearly explaining responsibilities and performance expectations. Secondary

<p>dissatisfaction, and increased stress levels.</p>	<p>Set up regular feedback systems to track workers performance and provide helpful feedback on how well they are fulfilling their roles. This can include performance evaluations, or one-on-one meetings.</p> <p>Tertiary Adjusting roles to match evolving business needs and minimise conflicts or confusion. This could include adjusting job tasks or clarifying responsibilities.</p>
<p>Job demands: high workloads, tight deadlines, and unrealistic job demands can lead to stress and pressure on workers.</p>	<p>Primary Redesign job tasks and responsibilities to ensure a better balance of workload between available resources.</p> <p>Secondary Conduct regular surveys to identify specific job demands and their impact on workers wellbeing.</p> <p>Tertiary If your business allows, you could consider adjusting tasks or deadlines to help relieve workers stress.</p>
<p>Job control or independence: workers who have limited control over the speed, order or schedule of work tasks and workload may experience feelings of frustration and dissatisfaction.</p>	<p>Primary Make sure there are worker engagement, participation, and representation processes in place so workers have a say in decision making processes.</p> <p>Secondary Put systems in place where workers can raise concerns and then work together to find solutions.</p> <p>Tertiary Managers and supervisors should attend leadership training to strengthen their support for worker independence. The training should promote inclusive leadership, building trust, and fostering a supportive relationship.</p>
<p>Organisational change: frequent or poorly managed organisational changes can create uncertainty, job insecurity, and emotional distress among employees.</p>	<p>Primary Make sure that there is clear and honest communication throughout the organisation about upcoming changes. This can include regular updates, meetings, or informational sessions to provide workers with a clear understanding of changes and its impact.</p> <p>Secondary Make sure leadership have the skills to guide and support workers during a change. Consider providing training to managers on change management,</p>

	<p>effective communication and empathy to help them better support workers.</p> <p>Tertiary Offer ongoing training and resources to help workers adapt to the new way the organisation works. This can include training sessions, workshops, or mentoring programs to develop the necessary skills for the changes.</p>
--	--

Table 6: Examples of control measures for work design

7.5 Examples of control measures for social factors at work

If exposure to psychosocial risks cannot be eliminated, look at how you can minimise the risk of exposure through social factors.

The risk	Examples of control measures
<p>Interpersonal relationships: poor relationships with others at work and regular interpersonal conflict can create a negative work environment and increase stress levels.</p>	<p>Primary Develop and implement clear codes of conduct or workplace policies that define expected behaviours and promote respectful interactions among workers. To help you we have provided examples of culturally inclusive practices in Section 8 of this guidance.</p> <p>Secondary Offer training programs to all workers on how to manage relationships and conflict at work.</p> <p>Tertiary Implement support services such as employee assistance programmes, counselling services, or peer support networks, to assist workers in dealing with relationship issues at work.</p>
<p>Bullying: repeated bullying behaviours can have a severe risk to health, safety and wellbeing at work.</p>	<p>Primary Create clear policies that forbid bullying at work. These policies should define what counts as bullying, what the consequences are for those who engage in it and offer guidance on how to report incidents. For more information on bullying see WorkSafe’s bullying prevention toolkit: Bullying WorkSafe</p> <p>Secondary Set up a structured process to handle bullying complaints. Have designated individuals or teams to investigate reports of bullying, maintaining</p>

	<p>confidentiality and taking necessary disciplinary action promptly and thoroughly.</p> <p>Tertiary Encourage a culture of empathy and support among all employees by establishing peer support networks for those who have experienced or witnessed bullying.</p>
<p>Lack of work/life balance: when workers struggle to maintain a healthy balance between their work and personal life, it can lead to stress, fatigue, and difficulties in managing responsibilities.</p>	<p>Primary If your business allows, consider implementing policies that allow for flexible work schedules such as remote work options, shorter work weeks, or flexible hours.</p> <p>Secondary Regularly check workloads to find areas where there is too much or too little work and make changes as needed. This involves keeping track of how tasks are assigned, adjusting priorities, and giving different tasks to balance the workload and reduce stress on workers.</p> <p>Tertiary Consider introducing wellbeing initiatives that support work/life balance.</p>
<p>Leadership: poor leadership, inadequate support from supervisors, and a lack of clear communication can reduce trust and contribute to tension at work.</p>	<p>Primary Make sure leaders at all levels are committed to having healthy and safe work. Establish clear expectations for leaders so they understand their role and responsibilities and have consistency in their approach.</p> <p>Secondary Create a feedback system where leaders receive input from different sources like their team members, colleagues, and supervisors to understand their strengths and areas for improvement.</p> <p>Tertiary Regularly evaluate your leaders' performance to assess how effective they are and provide feedback on their leadership skills.</p>
<p>Support: when workers feel unsupported or isolated, it can lead to feelings of loneliness, anxiety, and decreased job satisfaction.</p>	<p>Primary Develop and implement workplace policies that prioritise worker support and wellbeing. This can include policies on work-life balance, flexible working arrangements or support services to ensure workers have access to resources and support when needed.</p> <p>Secondary</p>

	<p>Train managers and supervisors so they can better support and engage with their teams. This includes teaching effective communication, active listening, and providing regular feedback and recognition to workers.</p> <p>Tertiary Introducing wellness programs may help promote overall wellbeing. This can include stress management workshops, mindfulness sessions or providing access to a fitness gym.</p>
--	--

Table 7: Examples of control measures for social factors at work

7.6 Examples of control measures for the work environment

If exposure to psychosocial risks cannot be eliminated, look at how you can minimise the risk of exposure through the work environment, equipment and hazardous task.

The risk	Examples of control measures
<p>Physical work environment: exposure to physical hazards such as extreme temperatures, inadequate lighting, noise, poor air quality or ergonomic issues can lead to physical discomfort, stress and increased risk of injury.</p>	<p>Primary Create and enforce safety policies and procedures that address physical risks at work.</p> <p>Secondary Forming safety committees or appointing representatives to assess the work environment, identify improvements, and communicate safety concerns to management.</p> <p>Tertiary Establish programs to help workers recover from injuries or physical discomfort related to hazards at work. Consider providing access to physical therapy, stress management and ergonomic assessments for your workers.</p>
<p>Inadequate equipment or faulty equipment: lack of necessary resources, outdated equipment, or inadequate tools can impact on job performance, increase frustration and</p>	<p>Primary Carry out thorough assessments to identify workers equipment needs and provide equipment accordingly. Consider factors like functionality, safety and ergonomic design when selecting equipment.</p> <p>Secondary Set up a system for workers to report faulty equipment promptly and make sure repairs or replacements are timely.</p>

<p>contribute to job dissatisfaction.</p>	<p>Tertiary Set up a system for managing equipment throughout its lifecycle, including proper retirement or disposal of outdated or unsafe equipment. This ensures equipment is regularly assessed and upgraded or replaced as necessary.</p>
<p>Hazardous tasks: work that involves high-risk activities, such as manual handling tasks, or dealing with dangerous substances, can contribute to increased stress, fear, and anxiety among employees.</p>	<p>Primary Analyse hazardous tasks to find ways to make them safer. This includes changing work processes, using engineering controls, or finding safer alternatives to reduce or eliminate hazards.</p> <p>Secondary Consider regular supervision and monitoring of workers in hazardous tasks to ensure they follow safety protocols. This includes inspections, audits, and feedback to identify any deviations from safe practices.</p> <p>Tertiary Investigate incidents and near-misses in hazardous tasks to find out why they happened and correct it. Sharing lessons learned can help prevent similar incidents in the future.</p>

Table 8: Examples of control measure for the work environment

More information on possible control measures

[Psychosocial hazards in work environments](#)

[Supporting a positive work culture](#)

[Bullying prevention toolbox](#)

[Sexual harassment prevention toolkit](#)

Example

Jamie is a nurse in an emergency department. During a Saturday evening shift, a drunk and distressed patient threatens Jamie with violence and verbal abuse. Another staff member stepped in, and the patient was moved to a different area and calmed down.

Such incidents are common in the emergency department, especially on weekends when it is regularly overcrowded. Jamie has not received training on how to handle these situations and reporting them is time consuming. So, not all incidents get reported.

Jamie cannot take time to process the emotions they have just experienced because the emergency department is always busy, and Jamie feels pressure to appear in control. This incident leaves Jamie feeling anxious, and unsupported as their manager does not check on them.

The workload also leaves Jamie too tired for activities they enjoy, and the violence and abuse at work add to their stress.

Jamie and their colleagues talk to their manager about the increasing incidents and safety concerns. Senior management acknowledge the problem and commit to making improvements.

Management review past incidents, identify patterns, and talk to workers about their experiences.

After engaging with workers, the emergency department implemented the following controls.

- Simplified incident reporting system.
- Provided training on incident reporting.
- Created a violence prevention policy with input from ambulance services and police.
- Trained staff in de-escalation techniques.
- Explored ways to reduce overcrowding, for example protective barriers for workers at higher risk.
- Introduced buddy systems for high-risk situations.
- Trained management to support stressed workers.
- Ensured staff took adequate breaks.
- Reviewed staffing needs to understand when more staff may be required.

These actions are considered reasonably practicable in minimising psychosocial risks and improving health and safety in the emergency department.

These controls help to strengthen the policies, reporting procedures and practices of the emergency department. However, challenges like high workload and inadequate staffing levels still affect wellbeing of staff and need further assessment.

8.0 Managing psychosocial risk with inclusive practices

8.1 Culturally inclusive practices help create mentally healthy work

Adopting culturally inclusive practices can help improve your workers health and wellbeing at work and can have several benefits for your business, including:

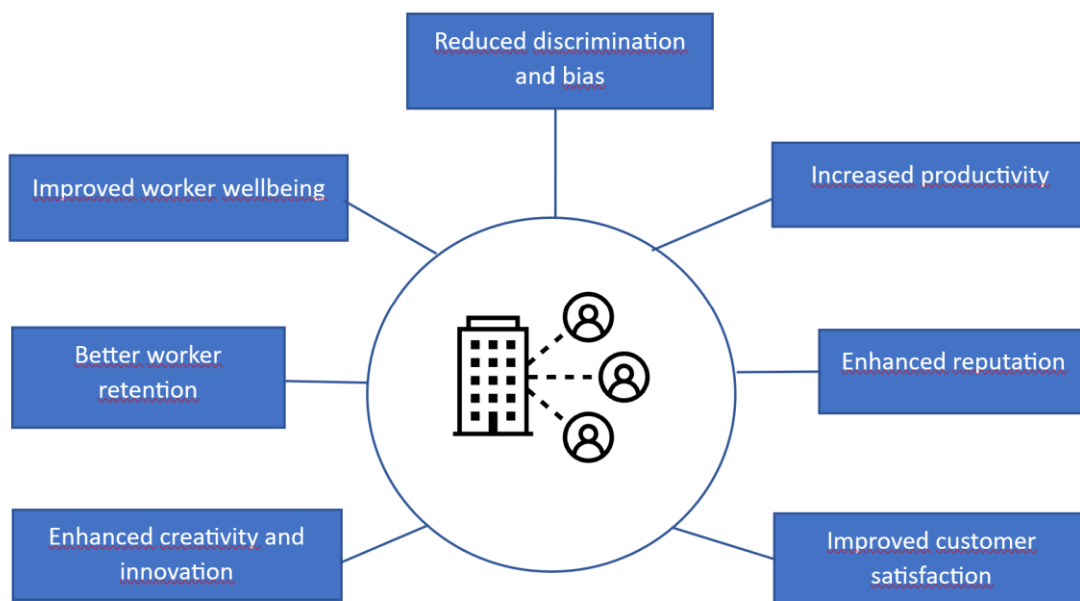



Figure 7: Benefits of culturally inclusive practices in a mentally healthy workplace

Below are some key Te Ao Māori values - often relevant to worker health and safety good practice – that can help you create and maintain an inclusive environment.

Value	What it can look like
 <p>Whanaungatanga</p>	<p>Fostering good relationships between workers and management and between PCBUs in the contracting chain.</p>




<p>A sense of belonging, getting to know one another.</p>	
 <p>Manaakitanga</p> <p>Extending hospitality and uplifting people.</p>	<p>Showing care for your workers and their wellbeing, and respect for all workers involved in the contracting chain.</p> <p>Recognising the mana of every worker during worker engagement and participation. When consulting with your workers on health and safety matters, acknowledge and value their skills, knowledge, and experience that they each bring.</p>
 <p>Kotahitanga</p> <p>Collaboration, oneness.</p>	<p>Focusing on the 'we' – all PCBUs working together in the contracting chain towards a common goal (completing the project or job on time and within budget and keeping workers healthy and safe while doing so).</p> <p>Understanding who you are working with on a personal level. This can help with communication, especially when things go wrong.</p>
 <p>Kaitiakitanga</p> <p>Guardianship of the land and the environment.</p>	<p>Engaging with local iwi who are the kaitiaki of that area. Acknowledging how the work and people affect the environment, and how the environment affects the work and the people.</p>

Table 9: Key Te Ao Māori values relevant to worker health and safety good practice

Below are some examples of culturally inclusive practices you could consider adopting at work to help improve wellbeing.

Example	Practical steps you can take
Inclusive and diverse	Consider using recruitment practices that attract a diverse pool of people. This could include advertising job openings

recruitment processes	on a variety of platforms and networks, using gender-neutral language and ensuring diverse interview panels to reduce biases.
Inclusive communication	<p>Internal and external communications should be inclusive. Below are examples of how you could do this.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Have accessible formats of communications for workers with disabilities or language difficulties. - Use images and visuals that represent diverse populations. - Consider any cultural implications of messaging. - Encourage workers to use preferred pronouns and avoid assumptions. Ask if you are unsure. - Make the effort to correctly pronounce names in a different language. You can do this by asking workers directly about pronunciation of their name, then practicing it and confirming with them that it is correct.
Regular diversity and inclusion training	Continuously educate management staff and workers on the importance of diversity and inclusion through workshops, seminars and training sessions. This can help challenge biases and promote respectful behaviour.
Celebrating cultural events	<p>New Zealand is a diverse country and recognises many cultural events, holidays and festivals from various backgrounds, for example, Pride Week, Diwali and various language weeks.</p> <p>You might consider different ways to celebrate or acknowledge some of these events at work through decorations, food or learning opportunities.</p>
Promoting the use of te reo Māori at work	This practice is an important way for you to show your commitment to Aotearoa New Zealand’s bicultural heritage and to create a more inclusive workplace. Below are examples of how you could do this.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Use signage in English and te reo Māori at work, such as posters, signage, and notices. - Incorporate te reo Māori into workplace communication such as, email signatures, company documents, and other forms of written communication. - Recognise and host Māori cultural events and customs such as Matariki, Māori Language Week events, or a powhiri to welcome new staff members.
<p>Te Tiriti o Waitangi (Treaty of Waitangi) education</p>	<p>As our countries founding document, it is valuable for all businesses and its workers to understand its importance. Educating and training yourself and your workers on the principles of the treaty will increase understanding and help promote cultural inclusivity.</p>
<p>Understanding the significance of the environment your workers are working in</p>	<p>For some people, work carried out in locations that are of cultural significance may require them to adhere to certain practices prior to, during, or after working in those areas.</p> <p>Examples of culturally sensitive places include urupā (cemeteries) or wāhi tapu (sacred sites) such as sites where previous fatalities may have occurred or sites of historical significance.</p> <p>Below are examples of practices that may be appropriate to include.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Use of karakia – regardless of religion or belief systems someone may have, the use of karakia helps to create a positive space for all. It can be used to start and finish off the day, bring people together and help connect people to their environment. - Use of water – water is considered noa (free of restriction) and can be used to cleanse and lift the tapu or free people of restrictions. Water is used to cleanse after leaving urupā or wāhi tapu, and after being around the dead.

Table 10: Examples of culturally inclusive practices at work

9.0 Step 4: Review control measures

With your workers, regularly monitor and review control measures to make sure they are effective and suitable.

9.1 Review and improve control measures used to manage each psychosocial risk

With your workers, regularly monitor control measures to confirm they remain effective, fit-for-purpose, suitable for the nature and duration of the work and are used correctly.

You should review control measures when:

- a new psychosocial hazard is identified
- there is a change at the work or to the work that may be considered a psychosocial hazard
- workers or their health and safety representative (HSR) ask for a review, or
- there is evidence control measures may not be working effectively to manage the psychosocial risk (for example, when you receive monitoring results or a report following an incident investigation).

Engaging with your workers helps prevent harm. Reviewing control measures should include checking in with your workers regularly to ask about their wellbeing. Ask questions that allow your workers to be open and honest about their wellbeing. This will tell you whether other control measures are working and allow you to support any worker who may show signs of psychosocial harm.

If the review of your control measures, including conversations with your workers, show they are no longer effective or suitable you will need to reassess the risks and put new control measures in place to manage those risks. Refer to Section 5 to 8.

Example

The emergency department (see the example on page 41) have arranged a review of their incident reporting system every three months to check how well it is working. This will include asking workers if they are aware of the new system, how to use it and if they think that it is making a difference. If changes are needed to the system staff will require additional training, so this will need to be considered also.

For more information see WorkSafe's [Identifying, assessing and managing work risks](#).

10.0 What to do when psychosocial harm has already happened

You should take steps to minimise the impacts of psychosocial harm if it occurs.

10.1 PCBU responsibility

If a worker or workers have experienced harm from being exposed to psychosocial hazards, there are some actions you should take to support them and ensure that it does not happen again.

Support systems and resources will vary from one workplace to another. It is important you have internal support services available to your workers when it is needed.

You have a responsibility to create a safe and supportive workplace, take action to prevent psychosocial risks and address psychosocial harm, and provide support internally to help your workers recover from harm they may have experienced. The following sections give you information about actions you can take to support your workers.

For more information on privacy, disability information and resources, flexible working, stress leave, requirement for medical examination, mental incapacity and leave with and without pay, see the [Employment New Zealand website](#).

10.2 Internal sources of support

It is important you have good internal support systems in place to help any workers who experience psychosocial harm. These could include but are not limited to:

- immediate support following an incident of psychosocial harm
- open communication
- clear, accessible policies and procedures to address psychosocial harm
- employee assistance programmes
- employee-led networks, or
- training programmes about psychosocial harm, its signs, and its impact.

10.3 External sources of support

If workers need additional help from trained professionals, you should refer them to external support services. These support services could include:

- local General Practitioners (GPs)
- counselling services, or
- community support organisations in your area.

If any of your workers are in immediate danger, please call 111 or take them to the nearest hospital emergency department.

For more information on where to get further help for workers, see WorkSafe's: [Information for workers – where to get help | WorkSafe](#) or Mental Health Foundation's: [Accessing Mental Health Services | Mental Health Foundation](#)

10.4 Return to work processes

There may be times where a worker who has experienced psychosocial harm needs some time away from work to recover.

It is recommended you have a return to work policy for your workplace. It should include a clear process that prioritises talking with the affected worker (and any people supporting them) to understand what extra support or flexibility they need. You should carry out this process in confidence and include the worker in any decision making.

When a worker is ready to come back to work they need your understanding and support throughout their transition back. You can help them by:

- communicating openly and with empathy
- agreeing on a return-to-work plan specific to the worker
- making necessary adjustments at work
- offering access to external support services, if and when required, and
- providing ongoing monitoring and support.

Remember, every workers situation is unique so it is important to tailor support to their specific needs and maintain a flexible approach.

If you require advice about return to work processes, please see a suitably qualified and experienced professional, such as HR advisor.

For more information on supporting a return to work see [business.govt.nz: Supporting a return to work after illness or injury — business.govt.nz](https://business.govt.nz/supporting-a-return-to-work-after-illness-or-injury)

10.5 When WorkSafe might intervene in a workplace mental health matter

WorkSafe's policy [When We Intervene](#) sets out how we make decisions about when we intervene.

For work-related psychosocial risks we may intervene when a PCBU, group of PCBUs, or sector has a persistent pattern of harm or poorly managed risk.

We are unlikely to intervene in individual cases.

11.0 More information

WorkSafe guidance

[Overlapping duties](#)

[How we korero about mental wellbeing matters](#)

[Te ao Māori and risk management](#)

[What to know about 'other persons' at work](#)

[Identifying, assessing and managing work risks](#)

[Worker engagement and participation](#)

[General risk and workplace management – part 1](#)

[Psychosocial hazards in work environments](#)

[Supporting a positive work culture](#)

[Supporting mentally healthy work](#)

[What to know about 'other persons' at work](#)

Good practice guidelines

[Good practice for worker engagement, participation and representation | WorkSafe](#)

Interpretive guidelines

[Requirements for Health and Safety Representatives and Health and Safety Committees | WorkSafe](#)

Further reading

[SafeWork NSW: Managing psychosocial hazards at work](#)

[Creating mentally healthy workplace environments for Māori | Mental Health Foundation](#)

[Psychosocial hazards in work environments and effective approaches for managing them](#)

Glossary

Term	Definition
Anxiety	An emotion characterised by feelings of fear or apprehension about what's to come.
Control measure (controls)	A way of eliminating or minimising risks to both mental and physical health and safety.
Depression	A mental illness that negatively affects how you feel, the way you think and how you act. Depression causes feelings of sadness, persistent low mood, and/or a loss of interest in activities you once enjoyed. It can lead to a variety of emotional and physical problems and can decrease your ability to function at work and at home.
Duty	A legal obligation to act responsibly according to the law.
Fatigue	A feeling of exhaustion, lethargy, or decreased energy. It is usually experienced as a weakening or depletion of one's physical or mental resources and results in decreased performance.
Hauora	The Māori view of health and wellbeing. There are four dimensions of hauora: te taha hingengaro (mental wellbeing), te taha tinana (physical wellbeing), te taha whānau (social wellbeing), and te taha wairua (spiritual wellbeing).
Hazard	A potential source of harm, including mental harm. It could include an object, situation, or behaviour.
HSWA	Health and Safety at Work Act 2015. The key work health and safety legislation in New Zealand. HSWA applies to all work and workplaces unless specifically excluded. You can find the full text of the Act on the New Zealand Legislation website
Kanohi ki te kanohi	Māori term for face-to-face communication.
Kaumātua	Elder in Māori society.
Mental wellbeing	A state of wellbeing in which every individual: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • realises their own potential

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • can cope with the normal stresses of life • can work productively and fruitfully, and • contributes to their community.
PCBU	<p>Person conducting a business or undertaking.</p> <p>In most cases a PCBU will be a business entity, such as a company. However, an individual carrying out business as a sole trader or self-employed person is also a PCBU.</p> <p>For more information, see Appendix 1 below.</p>
Psychosocial harm	<p>The significant cognitive, emotional, or behavioural impact arising from, or made worse by, work-related risk factors. Psychosocial harm may be immediate or long-term and can come from single or repeated exposure to risk factors.</p>
Psychosocial hazard	<p>Psychosocial hazards are sources or causes of harm to a person's health and wellbeing. At work they can relate to how work is designed and organised, social factors, the work environment, equipment and hazardous tasks. These hazards can impact anyone, no matter where they work or what they do.</p>
Psychosocial work environment	<p>The psychosocial work environment refers to interactions between people at work and how these interactions influence worker behaviour and development and the impact this has on the worker, organisational conditions and workplace culture.</p>
Reasonably practicable	<p>What is, or was, reasonably able to be done to ensure health and safety.</p> <p>See Appendix 2 below for more information.</p>
Risk	<p>Risks to health and safety arise from people being exposed to hazards (anything that can cause harm).</p>
Stress	<p>The physical and psychological reactions someone has when excessive pressures or demands are made upon them. Stress is a normal part of life but when it affects a person negatively this is when it can become harmful.</p>
Substance abuse	<p>The excessive use of alcohol or illegal or prescription drugs which can lead to social, physical, emotional and job-related problems.</p>
Wellbeing	<p>Made up of four different elements of positive mental health – physical, emotional, social and spiritual.</p>

Worker	<p>A person who carries out work in any capacity for a PCBU.</p> <p>Workers can be at any level (for example, managers are workers too).</p> <p>PCBU is also a worker if the PCBU is an individual who carries out work in that business or undertaking.</p> <p>For examples of workers, see Appendix 1 below.</p>
Workplace	<p>Any place where a worker goes or is likely to be while at work, or where work is being carried out or is customarily carried out.</p> <p>Most duties under HSWA relate to the conduct of work. However, some duties are linked to workplaces.</p>

CONSULTATION DRAFT

Appendix 1: Health and Safety at Work Act 2015 duties

[The Health and Safety at Work Act 2015](#) (HSWA) is New Zealand’s key work health and safety law.

All work and workplaces are covered by HSWA unless they have been specifically excluded. For example, HSWA does not apply to the armed forces in certain situations.

HSWA sets out the work health and safety duties that duty holders must comply with.

There are four types of duty holder under HSWA:

- a person conducting a business or undertaking (PCBU)
- an officer
- a worker
- an ‘other person’ at the workplace.

Most duties under HSWA relate to **how** work is carried out. However some duties are linked to **where** work is carried out: the workplace.

A **workplace** is a place where work is being carried out or usually carried out for a business or undertaking. It includes any place where a worker goes or is likely to be while at work ([section 20 of HSWA](#)).

Duty holder	Who are they?	Examples	What are their duties?	For more information
Person Conducting a Business or Undertaking (PCBU)	<p>A person conducting a business or undertaking (PCBU) may be an individual person or an organisation.</p> <p><i>The following are not PCBUs:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - officers - workers - other persons at a workplace - volunteer associations that do not have employees - home occupiers (such as home owners or tenants) who pay someone to do work around the home (section 17 of HSWA). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - a business - a self-employed person - partners in a partnership - a government agency - a local council - a school or university. 	<p>A PCBU has many duties. Key duties are summarised below.</p> <p>Primary duty of care (section 36 of HSWA) A PCBU must ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health and safety of workers, and that other persons are not put at risk by its work.</p> <p>Managing risks (section 30 of HSWA) Risks to health and safety arise from people being exposed to hazards (anything that can cause harm). A PCBU must manage work health and safety risks.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A PCBU must first try to eliminate a risk so far as is reasonably practicable. This can be done by removing the source of harm – for example, removing faulty equipment or a trip hazard. - If it is not reasonably practicable to eliminate the risk, it must be minimised so far as is reasonably practicable. <p>Overlapping duties: working with other PCBUs (section 34 of HSWA) A PCBU with overlapping duties must, so far as is reasonably practicable, consult, cooperate and coordinate activities with</p>	<p>Introduction to the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015</p> <p>Appendix 2 of this guidance for an explanation of ‘so far as is reasonably practicable’</p> <p>Identifying, assessing and managing work risks</p> <p>Sections 5 to 9 of this guidance</p> <p>Section 4.2 of this guidance</p>

Duty holder	Who are they?	Examples	What are their duties?	For more information
			<p>other PCBUs they share duties with.</p> <p>Involving workers: worker engagement, participation and representation (Part 3 of HSWA)</p> <p>A PCBU must, so far as is reasonably practicable, engage with their workers (or their workers' representatives) about health and safety matters that will directly affect the workers.</p> <p>A PCBU must have worker participation practices that give their workers reasonable opportunities to participate in improving health and safety on an ongoing basis.</p>	Appendix 3 of this guidance
Upstream PCBU	A PCBU in the supply chain	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - a designer - a manufacturer - a supplier - an importer - an installer, constructor, or commissioner. 	<p>Upstream PCBU (sections 39-43 of HSWA)</p> <p>An upstream PCBU must ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that the work they do or the things they provide to other workplaces do not create health and safety risks.</p>	Introduction to the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015
Officer	A specified person or a person who exercises significant influence over the management of the business or undertaking (section 18 of HSWA).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - a company director - a partner or general partner - a chief executive. 	<p>Officer (section 44 of HSWA)</p> <p>An officer must exercise due diligence that includes taking reasonable steps to ensure that the PCBU meets their health and safety duties.</p>	Introduction to the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015
Worker	An individual who carries out work for a PCBU (section 19 of HSWA).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - an employee - a contractor or sub-contractor - an employee of a contractor or sub-contractor - an employee of a labour hire company - an outworker (including homeworker) - an apprentice or trainee - a person gaining work experience or on work trials - a volunteer worker. 	<p>Worker (section 45 of HSWA)</p> <p>A worker must take reasonable care of their own health and safety, and take reasonable care that they do not harm others at work.</p> <p>A worker must cooperate with reasonable policies and procedures the PCBU has in place that the worker has been told about.</p> <p>A worker must comply, as far as they are reasonably able, with any reasonable instruction given by the PCBU so the PCBU can meet their legal duties.</p>	Introduction to the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015
Other person at the workplace	An individual present at a workplace (not a worker)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - a workplace visitor - a casual volunteer (not a volunteer worker) - a customer. 	<p>Other person at the workplace (section 46 of HSWA)</p> <p>An 'other person' has a duty to take reasonable care of their own health and safety, and not adversely affect the health and safety of anyone else.</p> <p>They must comply, as far as they are reasonably able, with reasonable instructions relating to health and safety at the workplace.</p>	Introduction to the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015

Appendix 2: So far as is reasonably practicable ([section 22 of HSWA](#))

Certain PCBU duties (the [section 36-43](#) duties including the primary duty of care) must be carried out 'so far as is reasonably practicable'.

What to consider when deciding what is 'reasonably practicable'

Just because something is possible to do, does not mean it is reasonably practicable in the circumstances.

Consider:

- What possible actions can be taken to ensure health and safety?
- Of these possible actions, at a particular time, what is reasonable to do?

Think about the following questions.

What is known about the risk?

- How likely is the risk to occur?
- How severe is the illness or injury that might occur if something goes wrong?
- What is known, or should reasonably be known, about the risk?

What is known about possible control measures?

- What is known, or should reasonably be known, about the ways (control measures) to eliminate or minimise the risk?
- What control measures are available?
- How appropriate (suitable) are the control measures to manage the risk?
- What are the costs of these control measures?
- Are the costs grossly disproportionate to the risk? Cost must only be used as a reason to not do something when that cost is grossly out of proportion to the risk.

While PCBUs should check if there are widely used control measures for that risk (such as industry standards), they should always keep their specific circumstances in mind. A common industry practice might not be the most effective or appropriate control measure to use.

If PCBUs are not sure what control measures are appropriate, WorkSafe recommends getting advice from a suitably qualified and experienced health and safety professional.

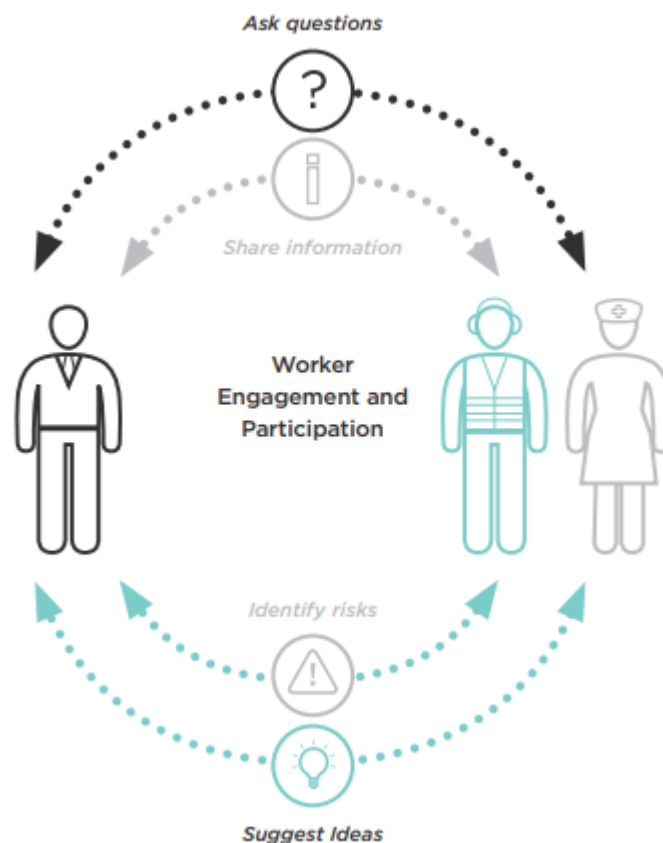
For more information, see our guidance: [Reasonably practicable](#)

Appendix 3: Worker engagement, participation and representation ([Part 3 of HSWA](#))

Engage with workers and enable their participation

A PCBU has two main duties related to worker engagement and participation:

- to engage with workers on health and safety matters that affect or are likely to affect workers, so far as is reasonably practicable, and
- to have practices that give workers reasonable opportunities to participate effectively in the ongoing improvement of work health and safety.



A PCBU can engage with workers by:

- sharing information about health and safety matters so that workers are well-informed, know what is going on and can contribute to decision-making
- giving workers reasonable opportunities to have a say about health and safety matters
- listening to and considering what workers have to say at each step of the risk management process
- considering workers' views when health and safety decisions are being made
- updating workers about what decisions have been made.

A PCBU must engage with workers during specified times, including when identifying hazards and assessing risks.

A PCBU must have clear, effective, and ongoing ways for workers to suggest improvements or raise concerns.

Worker representation

Workers can be represented by a Health and Safety Representative (HSR), a union representing workers, or a person that workers authorise to represent them (for example, a community or church leader, or another trusted member of the community).

HSRs and Health and Safety Committees (HSCs) are two well-established methods of participation and representation. If workers are represented by an HSR, worker engagement must also involve that representative.

CONSULTATION DRAFT