

Daily Mental Health, Traumatic Event Mental Health.

EEA SAFETY WORKSHOP
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Mental Health: A State Of Wellbeing

- Mental health is:

A state of well-being in which every individual realises his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to her or his community.

(World Health Organisation)



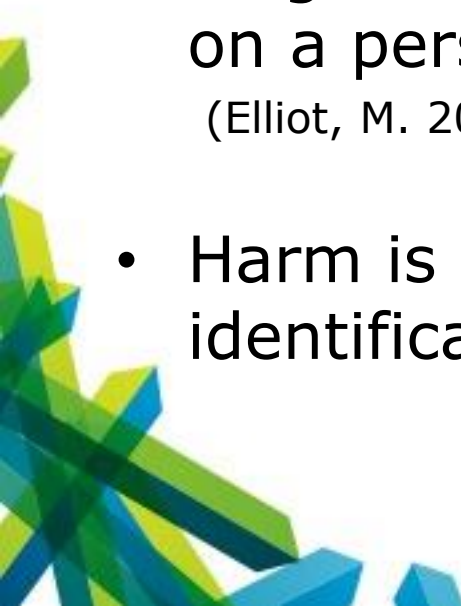
The HSE Amendment Act 2002

- Aims to promote the prevention of *harm* to all persons at work through the systematic management of *hazards*
- Harm:
 - (a) means illness, injury, or both; and
 - (b) includes physical or mental harm caused by work-related stress



Mental Harm Categories

- A medically diagnosable mental condition e.g., depression, post traumatic stress disorder, anxiety
- A mental state that, while not being a medically diagnosable condition, still has a negative impact on a person e.g., stress, emotional harm
(Elliot, M. 2010)
- Harm is prevented through the systematic identification and management of hazards



Hazards

- a. Means an activity, arrangement, circumstance, event, occurrence, phenomenon, process, situation, or substance (whether arising or caused within or outside a place of work) that is an actual or potential cause or source of harm; and
- b. includes-
 - a. a situation where a person's behaviour may be an actual or potential cause or source of harm to the person or another person; and
 - b. without limitation, a situation described in subparagraph (i) resulting from physical or mental fatigue, drugs, alcohol, traumatic shock, or another temporary condition that affects a person's behaviour.

Types Of Hazards

- Hazards can:
 - be actual or potential
 - be physical, ergonomic, chemical, biological, or psychosocial
 - arise or be caused within or outside a place of work
 - lead to both medically diagnosable mental condition or a mental state



Traumatic Events vs Daily Hassles

- A traumatic event is a critical incident (or threat of one), at or away from work, experienced directly or indirectly that can harm life and wellbeing e.g., an accident, injury, fatality, a robbery
- 'Daily hassles' are psychosocial hazards e.g., workload, conflicts, lack of job clarity, unsupportive managers and peers, work environment
- Both can result in a medically diagnosable mental condition and / or a mental state



Dealing With Critical Incidents

- The reactions to critical incidents are well known, predictable and similar to the stress responses elicited to 'normal' work stress, but can be more extreme
- Include a range of physical, emotional, behavioural and cognitive responses
- People respond differently. Most people experiencing a critical incident recover in the short term, others may take longer and some may develop Post Traumatic Stress Disorder or Acute Stress Disorder
- Challenge is that not all stress responses may be visible, as many people are reluctant to show their feelings, making it difficult to provide the support needed



Management Of Critical Incidents

Preparation

Prior to a critical incident

- Identify potential critical incidents .
- Develop a Critical Incident Plan (CIP) and procedures for responding to identified critical incidents
- Inform staff of procedures
- Practice emergency drills
- Train key staff in 'Psychological First Aid'
- Contract services of EAP and qualified 'debriefers'

Demobilisation

Before end of shift or before those involved leave

- Hold meeting for those involved to provide information and clarify uncertainties, show care and support, including the provision of 'Psychological First Aid'
- Make a plan of action and short-term arrangements for work responsibilities
- Offer information on defusing and debriefing

Defusing

Immediate small group support provided by trained staff within 12 hours of incident

- Bring experience of incident to a conclusion and provide immediate personal support
- Review event and clarify questions and concerns
- Encourage staff to talk about event, if they want to
- Identify current needs
- Provide advice, information and referrals to support agencies
- Arrange debriefing and follow up sessions

Debriefing

Structured voluntary group support provided 3-7 days after critical incident by trained debriefer

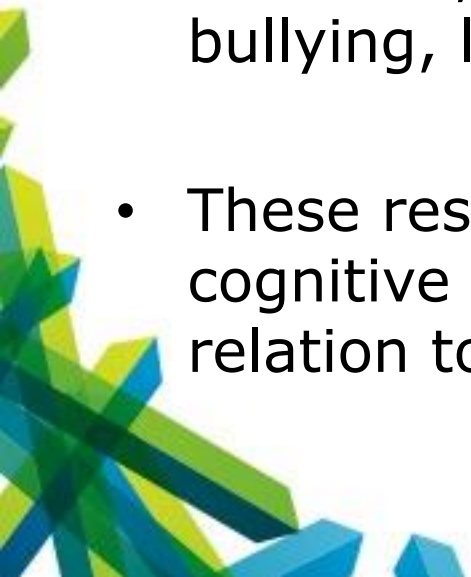
- Explore and understand range of issues such as sequence of event, causes and consequences, personal experiences and memories, normal psychological reactions to critical incidents and ways to deal with responses resulting from the critical incident

Follow up support

- Provide additional short term counselling and medical treatment

Dealing With Daily Hassles

- As traumatising as a critical incident is, it is often the accumulated effect of 'daily hassles' that takes a long term toll on psychological wellbeing
- Daily hassles are the psychosocial demands or hazards that are present in the workplace e.g., workload, lack of resources, unsupportive managers, bullying, lack of job clarity, conflicting expectations
- These result in physical, emotional, behavioural and cognitive responses similar to those experienced in relation to a critical incident

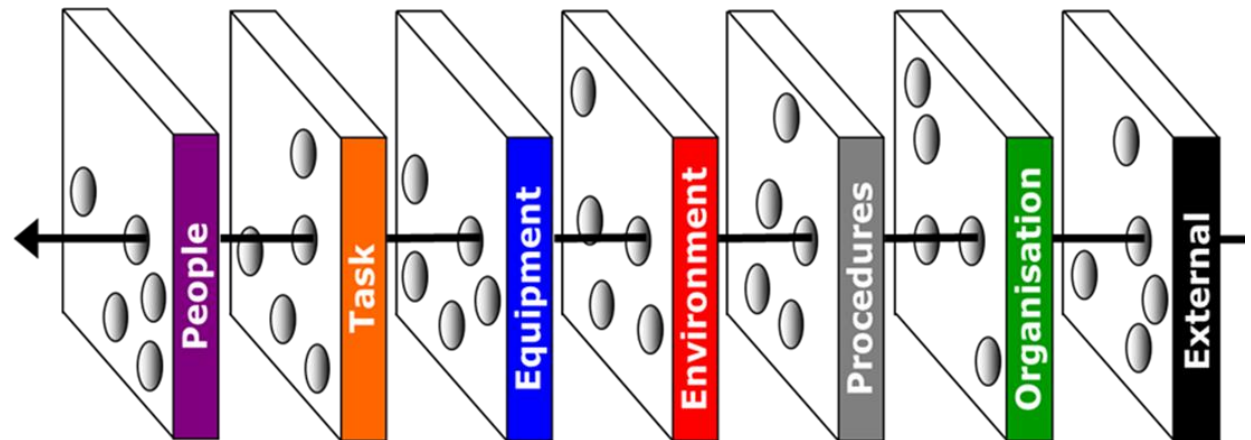


Management Of Daily Hassles

Stress Risk Assessment	Building Resiliency	Treatment
<p>A risk assessment for work-related stress and psychosocial hazards involves the same basic principles and process as for any other workplace hazard.</p> <p>A team-based stress risk assessment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identifies levels of work-related stress i.e., assesses potential harm• Identifies commonly experienced work related demands i.e., assesses hazards• Identifies the significant work related demands i.e., assesses risk• Develops practical solutions to deal with psychosocial hazards	<p>Increase the capacity of staff to deal with the daily work demands or 'hassles' through the development of</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• more effective behaviours• healthier thinking patterns• enhanced emotional functioning and improved self care practices	<p>Treatment of stress symptoms through the provision of professional medical and psychological support.</p>

Holes In Our Cheese

- Psychosocial hazards or 'daily hassles' are often well known - they are the 'holes in our cheese' with the potential to cause mental harm
- We need to identify them and take all practicable steps to control them to build physical and psychologically safe workplaces



Preventing Mental Harm

- Mental harm, whether arising from critical incidents or daily hassles, is costly to individuals, organisations and communities
- We are all familiar with the need to protect physical health and safety in the workplace.
- There is a growing realisation that the protection of workers also includes attending to their mental health and safety in the workplace

