



Mental Health in the Workplace

*What can be done that's
helpful and achievable?*

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Organisations spend massive amounts of time and money ensuring the physical well-being and safety of their people... and well they should.

However, what most organisations struggle to understand is that it's the failure to address the mental safety and well-being of their workgroup that will cost them the most money over time.

Source = *Compendium of WHS and Workers' Compensation Statistics*
(Australian Government, 2012)

11% = Percentage of Mental Stress claims of all WC claims

32% = Cost of Mental Stress claims in all WC claims

\$250,690 = Average cost of a Mental Stress claim

\$ 68,000 = Average cost of all other WC claims

Source of Mental Stress WC claims:

- Harassment / Bullying = 37%
- Work pressure = 30.5%
- Exposure to workplace aggression or violence = 15%

- **Around 1 in 3 relationships break-up**
- **40% of Australians experience a serious mental health issue at some point in their life**
- **Every year about 20% of the Australian population is diagnosed with a significant mood disorder**
- **32% of workers believe they don't have a healthy work / family balance.**

Source: ABS, 2010

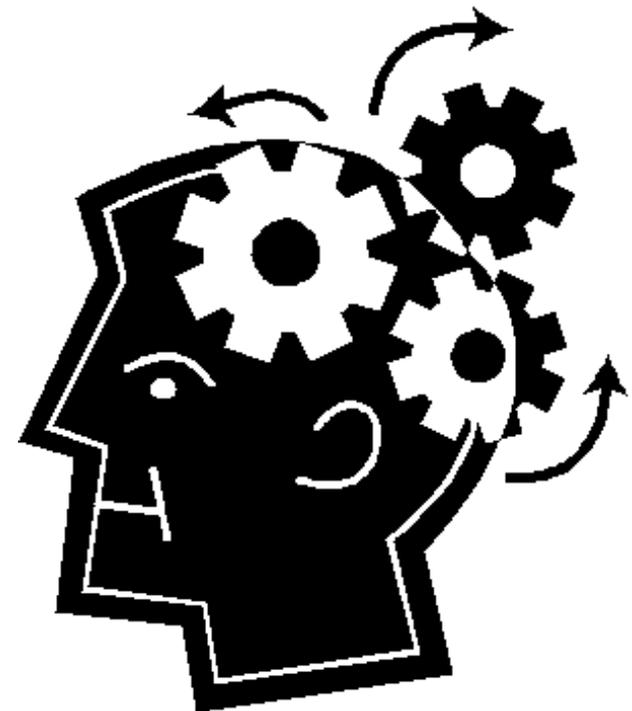
World health Organisation Report (2012)

- Depression is a common mental disorder. Globally, more than 350 million people of all ages suffer from depression.
- Depression is the leading cause of disability worldwide, and is a major contributor to the global burden of disease.
- Even in developed countries, it's estimated that two-thirds of those with depression are reluctant to seek help.

- **Absenteeism / Presenteeism**
- **Lower productivity**
- **Conflict / low employee morale**
- **Increased errors**
- **Greater risk exposure and safety concerns**
- **Damage to organisational reputation**
- **Escalation to problems beyond the work-place.**

Approximately 80% of the mental health problems impacting on the Australian workplace come from around 20% of the identified mental health disorders.

- **Mood Disorders**
- **Anxiety Disorders**
- **Substance related disorders.**
- **Sleep Disorders**



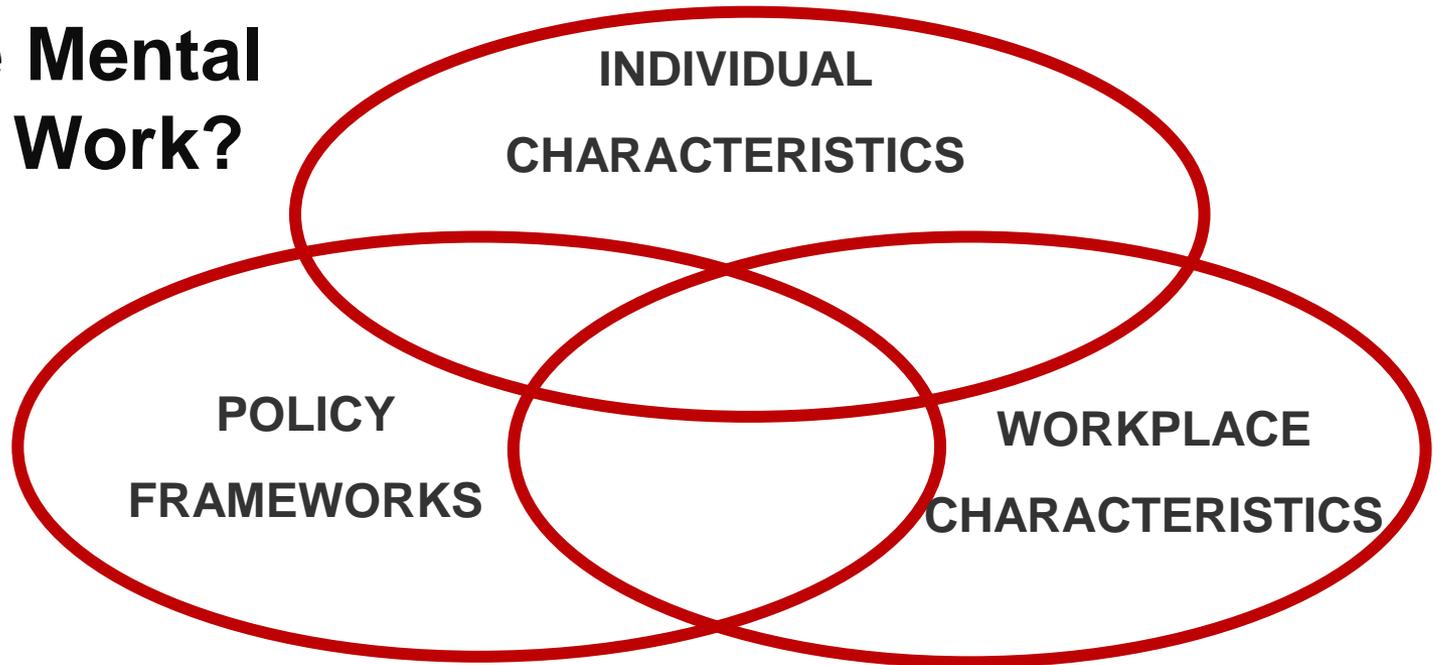
Mental Health Council of Australia

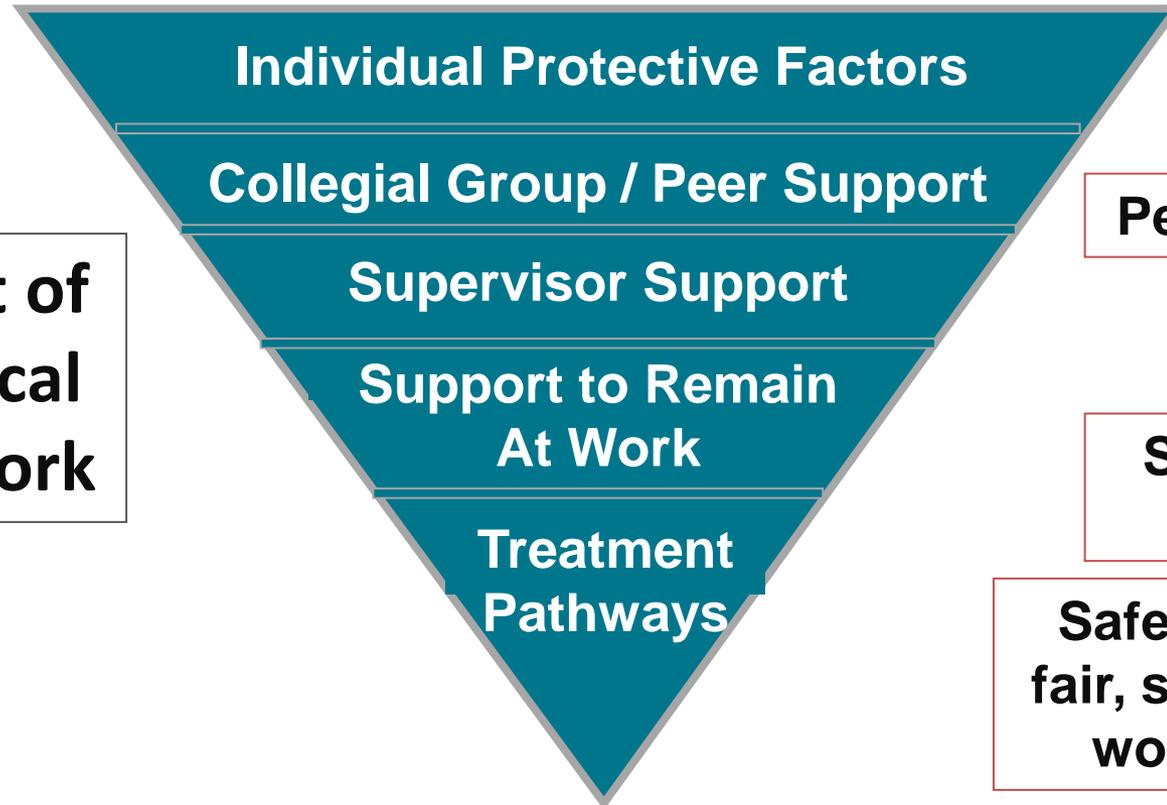
A person develops a new problem by trying to manage an old problem.

EXAMPLE: a person develops an alcohol or drugs problem after using these to deal with anxiety or depression.



What will influence Mental Health at Work?





The impact of psychological issues at work

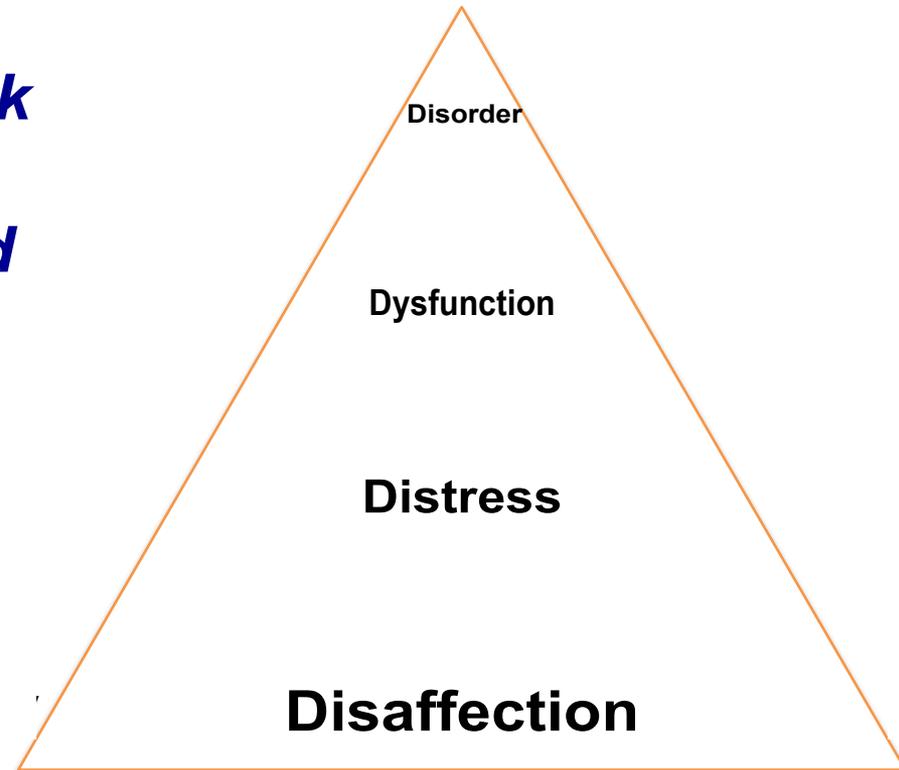
Perceptions



Satisfying work

Safe, secure, fair, supportive workplace

***Not every problem at work
is a Mental Health issue.
The need to diagnose and
label dysfunctional
behaviour can lead to
mismanagement and
exacerbate the situation.***



Mitigation of Psychological Issues

Pre-employment screening for job suitability and pre-existing Mental Health issues.

- *Depends on accuracy of role specification*
- *Multiple variables to take into account*
- *Potential for a high rate of false negatives and false positives*
- *Can be open to distortion.*

Effective policies and procedures that incorporate psychological safety are well communicated and well used.

➤ *OSH, EEO, FFW, etc*

Provide training that promotes psychological safety.

➤ *Employee training (e.g. Mental Health Awareness, Resilience training, etc)*

➤ *Supervisor training (e.g. Psychological First-aid, Suicide Prevention, etc)*

STOP

Suicide: Training On Prevention

a training course for leaders in industry, construction and the resources sector.



STOP Training

- Note the hazard
- Assess the risk
- Act
 - Talk with the employee
 - Seek advice
 - Link into help
- Focus on supervisors / leaders
- Half-day training

Be proactive with support programs that mitigate Mental Health issues. Don't wait until disaffection becomes distress.

- ***Have a functional and effective Employee Assistance Program (EAP)***
- ***Initiate programs such as Peer Support, which create supportive networks within the workgroup.***

PEER SUPPORT

a training course for the resources sector,
construction and transportation industries.



Peer Support Training

A program in which people in a workplace are trained to assist workmates affected by stress.

- Encourage accessing early assistance
- Reach those who wouldn't ask for help
- Complement other support avenues
- Build support skills in the work-group.

Use pre-emptive fitness for work / fitness for duty assessments to initiate constructive actions, rather than relying on the “the system”.

- ***Alcohol and other drugs***
- ***Fatigue assessments***
- ***Mental Health assessments.***

Whenever possible, stay in control of the situation. Don't wait for a crisis point before taking action.

- *More serious the issue, the less control the organisation has and the greater reliance on external organisations and experts (e.g. insurance companies, rehabilitation providers, medical specialists, etc).*

“A state of wellbeing in which the individual ... can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to his or her community.”

World Health Organisation (WHO)