

Building the psychosocial risk management capability of the workforce.

21 May 2025

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Psychosocial risks at work — such as stress, burnout, harassment, and poor work-life balance — significantly affect employees' health and organizational productivity. Managing these risks isn't solely the responsibility of leadership or health professionals; **it is crucial that all workers are empowered to participate in identifying, addressing, and mitigating any risks that could impact them.** Enhancing this participation requires a combination of organizational policies, capacity-building, communication structures, and inclusive culture.

Involving workers in the identification, assessment, and mitigation of these risks leads to a healthier work environment and better work outcomes (Sahan & Demiral, 2024).

*We do not do health & safety **to** our workers, we do it **with** them.*







Key Strategies for Enhancing Worker Participation

1. Education and Awareness

Workers must first understand what psychosocial risks are, how they manifest (e.g., anxiety, fatigue, disengagement), and how they can impact both individuals and teams.

Workers who understand the potential risks and their impact on health are more likely to engage in preventive measures (Schulte et al., 2024).

- ▶ Offer (mandatory) **training sessions on psychosocial health.**
- ▶ Use real-life scenarios to **build empathy and recognition** of risk signs.
- ▶ Share **legal and ethical frameworks** on mental well-being at work.

Emphasizing the legal and ethical imperative of protecting workers' mental health can further reinforce the need for participatory approaches.



Key Strategies for Enhancing Worker Participation

2. Strengthen Organizational Culture

A culture of **psychological safety** encourages workers to speak up without fear of retaliation or stigma (Edmondson & Bransby, 2023). Leadership plays a crucial role in fostering a culture of participation. When leaders actively support and encourage worker involvement, it sets the tone for a more engaged workforce (Kawakami & Kobayashi, 2015).

- ▶ **Promote open dialogue** between staff and management.
- ▶ Train managers in **emotional intelligence and active listening**.
- ▶ Recognize and **validate worker concerns** consistently.

Psychological Safety Climate.

"... policies, practices and procedures for the protection of worker psychological health and safety."
(Hall et al., 2010).

It reflects the organization's genuine care for workers psychological health (Yulita et al., 2022).



Management Commitment to employees' health and wellbeing, stressing prevention through support and involvement.



Management Priority given to health and safety over productivity goals.



Organisational Communication regarding health and wellbeing issues by provision of safe and usable channels and listening to concerns.



Organisational Participation at all levels in protecting and promoting health and safety of employees.



Key Strategies for Enhancing Worker Participation

3. Participatory Risk Assessment and Planning

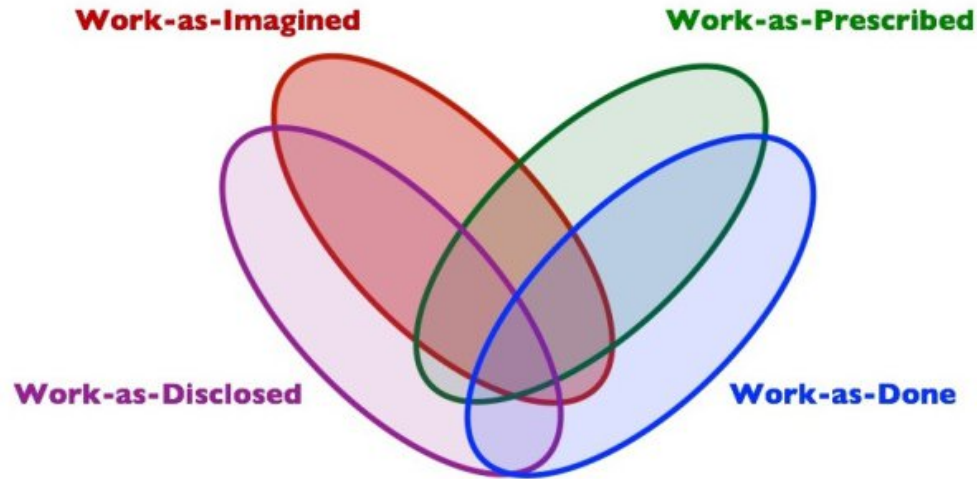
Involve workers directly in **risk identification and solution planning** through:

- ▶ Anonymous **surveys and pulse checks**.
- ▶ Participatory **focus groups or risk mapping sessions**.
- ▶ Joint safety committees with **equal worker representation**.

This can be framed as Participatory Action Research. This approach involves workers in a **collaborative process of planning, implementing, and evaluating interventions**. It values workers' knowledge and experiences, making them active contributors to the solution process, and leads to more sustainable and effective solutions (Pignata et al., 2013).

Work-as-imagined is the work people think we should be doing or imagine we are doing.

Work-as-prescribed is the formalisation or specification of work.



This is what we say or write about work.

Work-as-done is actual activity – what people do.



Key Strategies for Enhancing Worker Participation

4. Capacity Building & Skill Development

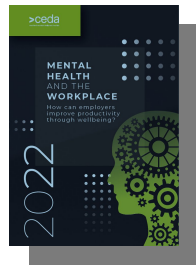
Equip workers with skills, **coping strategies** and **peer-support techniques** (Schulte et al., 2024) and ensure workers have access to necessary resources such as guidelines, tools, expert support (LaMontagne et al., 2014):

- ▶ Introduce **peer mental health champions** or **psychological first aiders**.
- ▶ Provide access to **coaching** or **resilience training**.
- ▶ Encourage workers to take part in **decision-making bodies** regarding workplace health.

Mental Health and the Workplace: How can Employers Improve Productivity Through Wellbeing?

Committee for Economic Development of Australia, 2022

<https://www.ceda.com.au/ResearchAndPolicies/Research/Health-Ageing/Mental-Health-and-the-Workplace>





Key Strategies for Enhancing Worker Participation

5. Use of Digital Tools & Feedback Channels

Implement **confidential platforms** or apps for ongoing psychosocial risk reporting and feedback.

- ▶ Ensure tools are **user-friendly and anonymous**.
 - Tools like the Mental Health Action Checklist (MHACL) can facilitate worker participation by providing a structured approach to identifying and addressing psychosocial risks. The MHACL has been successfully used to improve workplace environments through active worker involvement (Kawakami & Kobayashi, 2015)
- ▶ Utilizing digital platforms for reporting, assessing, and managing psychosocial risks can make participation more **accessible and convenient** for workers, and support **real-time feedback**.
- ▶ Periodically review feedback data and **publicize resulting actions**. This continuous process helps in maintaining a proactive approach to risk management.



Key Strategies for Enhancing Worker Participation

6. Inclusive Policy-Making

Developing clear policies that outline the importance of worker participation in psychosocial risk management ensures that it becomes an **integral part of the organizational culture**.

Workers should co-create policies on psychosocial health to ensure **diverse needs are met**:

- ▶ Include input from different **departments, genders, age groups, and roles**.
- ▶ Review policies regularly and ensure any additional worker feedback is incorporated.



Key Strategies for Enhancing Worker Participation

7. Encourage, Monitor and Incentivise Participation

Encourage and review worker participation to ensure it is maximised, efficient and adequately recognised.

- ▶ Convene **regular workplace meetings** and committees as platforms for participation in collaborative problem-solving.
- ▶ Monitor and evaluate the level of worker participation to assist in the **identification of barriers to involvement**. Make necessary adjustments.
- ▶ Offer **recognition and rewards** for workers who actively engage.



Proactive Approach

- From reactive to proactive
- Encourages ongoing worker participation
- Builds a culture of prevention



Empowered Workforce

- Go beyond awareness
- Structured involvement
- Foster safe communication spaces
- Promote inclusive leadership

Empowered employees drive well-being and productivity



designing work for wellbeing

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