

Mental Wellbeing

Instant Workplace Transformation

for

CEO's, Directors and Managers



Course Handbook

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LEADING SAFETY TRAINING

October 2021 Version 1

LEADING SAFETY TRAINING

Training Specialists in:

Health and Safety Committees
Safety Committee Chairperson
Mental Wellbeing in the Workplace
WHS for CEO's, Directors and Managers
Health and Safety Representative (HSR)
Mental Health & Wellbeing in the Workplace
White Card

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NOTICE

The information in this handbook is for general guidance only.

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About Dr. Ute Steinel

For over 25 years, Dr Ute Steinel worked as a Medical Practitioner in hospitals and solo practices in Germany and Australia and still operates a GP practice in the Sydney area.

She has treated many patients after workplace accidents and experienced the horrible, often lifelong effects on the injured and their families. A major part of her practice is counselling patients going through stressful life situations due to toxic workplace situations.

Her patients include a wide spectrum of the population: from cleaners to directors, from homeless to multi-millionaires.

Ute has migrated twice and raised 3 children as a single mum.

In 2014 she joined Coastal OHS Services Pty Ltd / Leading Safety Training as a Director.

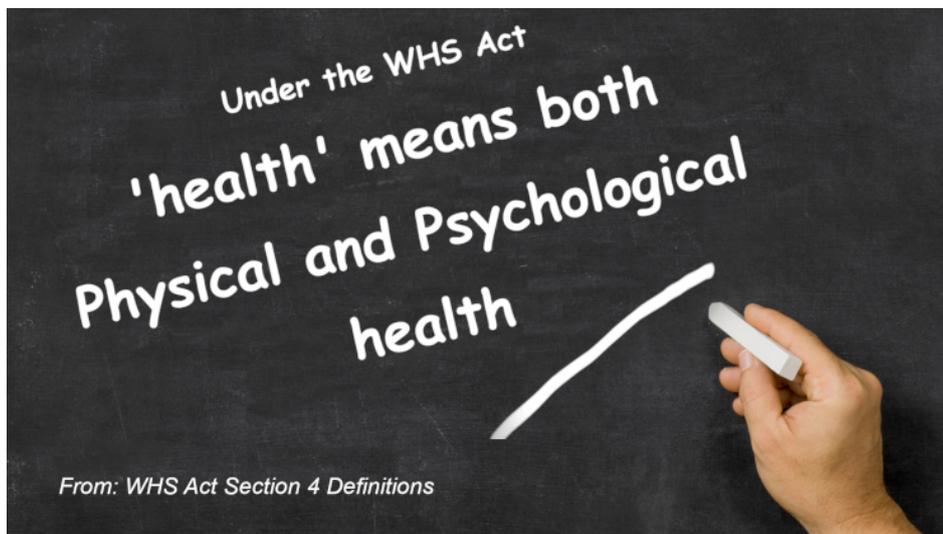
Dedicated to my mother

THE LEGAL CONTEXT

It is important to understand that under the Work Health and Safety (WHS) Act “health” is defined to both mean physical and psychological health.

This means that an employer must ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the psychological health of workers while the workers are at work in the business or undertaking. *(Under the WHS Act, employers are now referred to as 'Person Conducting a Business or Undertaking' or PCBU).*

Therefore, just like physical hazards, psychosocial hazards must be managed as well.



All people in the workplace have duties to achieve a safe and healthy workplace but the primary duty of care to ensure a safe workplace lies with the Person Conducting a Business or Undertaking or PCBU.

A PCBU can be a natural person such as a Self Employed person or Sole Trader, but many times it will be a legal entity such as a company.

In case of a company, top level management such as CEOs, directors and in some cases senior managers have a specific WHS duty called “Due Diligence”.

Top level managers must exercise this due diligence to ensure that the PCBU meets its primary duty of care.

This duty includes taking reasonable steps to gain an understanding of the psychosocial hazards and risks that arise from business activities and to ensure that there are appropriate resources and processes in place to manage psychosocial hazards effectively.



Of course, all workers, regardless what level they are at within the organizational hierarchy, have duties under the safety legislation as well.

All workers must comply with reasonable instructions from the PCBU, cooperate with policies and procedures they have been

notified of, take reasonable care for their own health and safety and they must take care that their acts or omissions do not adversely affect the psychological health of other workers.

Very similar duties are placed on “others” in the workplace such as visitors, shoppers or members of the public.

So all persons in the workplace have legal duties with regards to psychological health.

Under the safety laws, severe penalties and even jail sentences can be handed out to persons for not meeting their legal duties.

WHS laws do not operate in isolation

It is also important to realize that safety laws do not operate in isolation.

Other laws for example:

- Criminal,
- Anti-discrimination,
- Privacy and
- Fair Work legislation

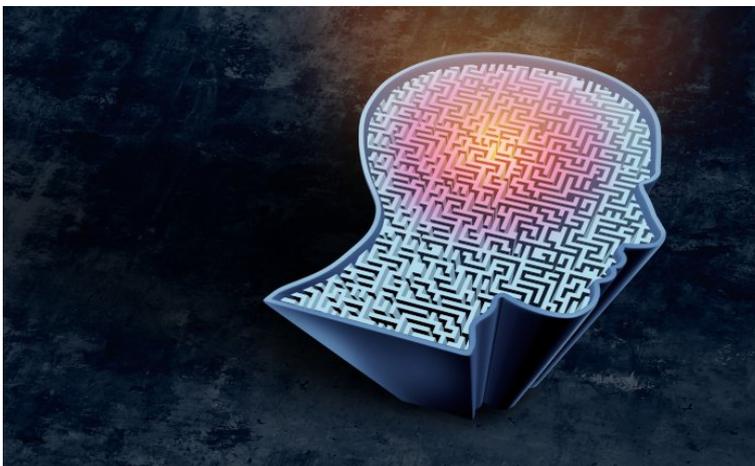
may also be relevant when managing psychosocial hazards.

EXAMPLES OF PSYCHOSOCIAL HAZARDS

There are many situations that may contribute to psychological injury, for example;

- High job demands
- Low job demands
- Low job control
- Poor support from managers and/or co-workers
- Taking credit for the achievements of others
- Poor workplace relationships
- Uncertainty about the job
- Poor job recognition
- Hazardous environmental conditions, including noise, vibrations, lighting, air quality
- Repetitive work
- Bullying, harassment and discrimination
- Traumatic events such as incidents, accidents and violence
- Organizational restructuring

These are some of the most common hazards. There may be other hazards that are relevant to your work environment. You will need to identify those through your own risk management processes.



The management of psychosocial hazards in the workplace is very similar to managing physical hazards.

But like any approach, it all starts with leadership and management commitment.

Everybody from management to non management including your contractual network, must have a good understanding of their legal obligations under the safety laws, they must have a good understanding of company policies and how these requirements are expressed in their job roles and, of course, why managing psychosocial hazards is a concern to the organization.

Another important requirement in managing psychosocial hazards is to make sure you have effective consultation processes in place. HSRs, Safety Committees or other consultation processes are critical to gain an understanding what is going on within your organization and will provide critical information when deciding how to go about preventing or managing psychosocial hazards.



Step 1 - Identify psychosocial hazards

To identify psychosocial hazards consider the aspects of work and situations that could potentially harm people. For instance consider:

- The work environment
- Workplace culture
- Interactions and behaviours of people
- Design of your management structure
- Job design
- Work load
- Organizational changes

Observing and consulting with workers will provide valuable insights here. Be aware that cultural differences may exist between work teams such as shifts or even departments.

To collect data regarding psychosocial hazards you can make use of tools such as surveys, exit interviews and other consultation processes but you should also look at issues such as absenteeism, complaints, morale and worker attitudes.

Collecting this valuable data will set you on the path of creating a kinder and more productive workplace. Kind workplaces are good for business.



Step 2 - Assess and prioritise the psychosocial hazards and risks

A risk assessment will help you determine how serious a risk is and what level of priority it should be given. There are many risk assessment matrices available that are traditionally used for physical hazards. These matrices can be used for assessing psychosocial hazards as well.

Example risk assessment matrix:

		<i>Likelihood of the hazard causing injury</i> →			
		Very Likely	Likely	Unlikely	Very Unlikely
<i>Potential level of harm</i> ↑	Fatality	6	5	4	3
	Major Injury	5	4	3	2
	Minor Injury	4	3	2	1
	Negligible Injury	3	2	1	1

You should carry out a risk assessment if you are unclear about the level of risk involved or whenever changes are introduced into the workplace that may impact on the effectiveness of existing controls. The legislation may also require risk assessments to be carried out under certain circumstances.

Like with all risk assessments, you should take into account existing workplace conditions as well as reasonable foreseeable conditions.

Risk assessments are not a “one off” activity. They ought to be part of your continuous improvement process.

What to consider when carrying out a risk assessment

To assess psychosocial risk, determine both:

- The consequence a hazard may cause, e.g. the level and type of harm AND
- The likelihood a hazard may cause harm.

Additional considerations;

- Hazards that are severe and/or those that can impact a large number of people.
- Fully understand each aspect of the tasks workers are required to carry out including who may be affected, where the workers are and the potential duration of exposure.
- For new or high risk tasks, a detailed task analysis should be carried out.
- The likelihood of workers getting exposed and the possible consequences or severity of harm should they be exposed.
- The effectiveness of existing controls, if any.

The risk assessment matrix will then indicate an overall risk level of the hazard which will help you prioritise corrective or preventative action.

As a general rule, affected workers must be consulted during the risk assessment process.

To help improve the accuracy of the risk assessment process, you could separately consider risks that are:

- Likely/Unlikely but potentially very serious and
- Risks that are likely, but with potentially less serious consequences.

By assessing these two groups separate, you will help achieve that each group is given the appropriate level of importance.



Step 3 – Control psychosocial hazards and risks

Every business is different. Risk controls should be tailored to the nature of your business. As with physical risks, there may be a number of controls that need to be implemented to effectively control psychosocial risks.

So what considerations and processes can you use to select appropriate risk controls?

First of all, all controls must be arrived at using the wellknown and legally required process of the *Hierarchy of Control*. The Hierarchy of Control consists of 6 considerations with regards to how to correct hazards.

The first consideration must be the elimination of the hazard so far as is reasonably practicable. If the hazard can not be eliminated, you must consider all other steps in the Hierarchy from the top down.:

Hierarchy of Control

1. Eliminate the hazard if reasonably practicable

If not reasonably practicable to eliminate the hazard, proceed with steps 2 - 6

2. Substitution of the hazard with a less dangerous one
3. Isolation of the hazard from the person
4. Engineering means such as noise barriers, ergonomic equipment etc.
5. Administrative means such as procedures, training, supervision and instructions
6. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) such as hearing protection, gloves etc.

It is not uncommon for multiple levels of the Hierarchy of Control to be implemented.

Consultation with relevant workers must occur.



Other valuable processes include:

Good Work Design

- 'Good Work' means a healthy and safe workplace where the hazards and risks are eliminated or minimised so far as is reasonably practicable. "Good Work" is also where the work design optimises human performance, job satisfaction and productivity. Good work design considers;
 - ✓ The work itself such as task details, context of work and systems of work
 - ✓ The physical work environment including plant, equipment, materials, substances, vehicles, buildings and structures
 - ✓ The workers themselves including physical, mental and emotional capacities and needs

Provide and Maintain Safe Systems of Work

- Safe systems of work are organizational policies and procedures. They may include rostering arrangements, working hours, task rotation, standards for workplace behaviours etc. These systems of work must be developed and regularly reviewed in consultation with workers who are affected by these.

Provision of Information, Training, Instruction and Supervision

- There is a legal requirement on the PCBU to provide adequate information, training, instruction and supervision delivered by competent persons, to all workers. This requirement relates to issues such as the nature of the work, the psychosocial hazards and risks, control measures and reporting and responding to risks. And of course, the PCBU must ensure that all information, training and instruction is readily understood by any person it is provided to.

Ensure Reasonable Adjustment for Individual Workers

- Duty holders may also need to make reasonable adjustments to work design to accommodate any special needs that individual workers may require. For example a worker with a disability or returning to work after an injury. Other requirements such as anti discrimination and privacy laws may also need to be considered.

Controlling Residual Risks

- When implementing controls, a determination should be made with regards to any residual risks that may still be present. These residual risks could be rated from Adequately controlled through to Uncontrolled. Anything less than “adequately controlled” requires further action to reduce the risk further.

Implement and Maintain Effective Controls

- All controls must be supported with procedures, information, training, instructions and supervision and be regularly reviewed for their effectiveness in consultation with affected workers.

Step 4 – Proactively maintain, monitor and review the effectiveness of controls.

As workplaces change, implemented controls need to be reviewed regularly to ensure they remain suitable, are being used and stay effective over time. Affected workers must be consulted throughout the risk monitor and review process.

Managers and supervisors should be provided with the accountability, authority, responsibility and resources to implement and maintain controls.

Worker authority, responsibility and accountability should be clearly communicated. The risk management process should be documented.



RESPONDING TO PSYCHOSOCIAL INCIDENTS

There are various ways how a PCBU may become aware of a psychosocial hazard or incident. For instance this may be through consultation, risk or incident registers or reports from HSRs or safety committee members etc.

It is important that a positive organizational culture is created and maintained that supports reporting of psychosocial hazards.



Persons tasked with responding to incidents should consult and communicate with affected workers on how they propose to investigate & manage the matter and provide information on proposed actions, improvements, updates, timeframes and also make available fair and adequate access to psychological support.

Privacy and confidentiality considerations must be observed.

Any investigation must occur in a timely manner with the aim to rectify the situation and to prevent a recurrence. As with any investigation, the level of the investigation should be consistent with the seriousness of the incident and carried out by competent personnel. In some cases, assistance from experts and/or external professionals may be needed.

In case of serious injury, the incident may be a “notifiable incident” and must then, by law, immediately be reported to the regulator.

The PCBU should always ensure that privacy and confidentiality of affected workers is protected and that they are:

- Informed of their rights and obligations
- Provided with copies of applicable policies and procedures,
- Kept informed about developments and outcomes
- Provided with adequate and fair support.

A risk register should be kept and is a helpful way to record psychosocial and physical hazards, risks and incidents. It is also a way to monitor whether these issues are being adequately addressed.

The regulator may ask to see copies of any records relating to psychosocial risk management.

Other laws

You need to consider other legislative frameworks. WHS and Workers' Compensation laws do not operate in isolation and other laws may also be relevant e.g.:

- Criminal laws
- Anti-Discrimination laws
- Fair Work Act
- Privacy laws

Requesting workers to disclose their health conditions is a sensitive issue and may cause you to be in breach of other laws. You should get advice from a workplace relations expert on these matters.



Reasonable Management Action

Another important consideration is the meaning of “*Reasonable Management Action*”



Managing psychosocial hazards and risks may require decisions that may be perceived as causing stress and therefore a WHS risk.

However, reasonable management action, *when carried out lawfully and in a reasonable way*, may be uncomfortable or distressing to some, but is a legitimate way for managers and supervisors to:

- Lead, direct and control how work is done
- Give feedback and manage performance, including around inappropriate or harmful workplace behaviours
- Deal with differences of opinion and disagreements, or/and
- Recruit, assign, transfer, implement disciplinary action or terminate employment.

For more information on 'reasonable management action', refer to the Fair Work Commission website: <https://www.fwc.gov.au/>

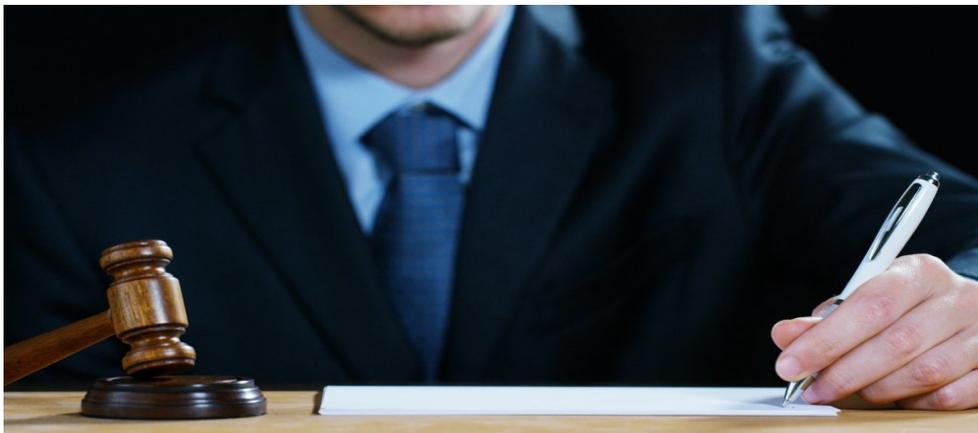
Specific advice on how to manage risks from bullying and fatigue may be found in the following publications from the SafeWork Australia website::

- ~ Guide to Preventing and Responding to Workplace Bullying
- ~ Dealing with Workplace Bullying – a Workers’ Guide
- Guide for Managing the Risks of Fatigue, and
- ~ Fatigue Management – A Guide for workers
- Work related psychological health and safety
- Principles of Good Work Design: a WHS Handbook

Other important resources:

Code of Practice : Managing Psychosocial Hazards at Work. (From SafeWork NSW)

People at Work : Australia’s only validated psychosocial risk assessment survey
(peopleatwork.gov.au)



WHY KIND WORKPLACES

According to the International Labour Organization (ILO), worldwide there are nearly 2.0 million deaths yearly due to workplace accidents; that means about 5500 fatalities every single day worldwide.



Australia is not immune from workplace accidents. In 2019, there were close to 200 fatalities and, in addition, well over 100,000 serious work related injuries and illnesses which equates to nearly 2000 serious workplace accidents per week.

This number of workplace injuries is more than double the number for road traffic hospitalised injuries.

Around 10% of injury claims are mental health related.

According to a September 2019 study by the University of South Australia, around 10 % of Australian employees admit to being bullied at work, but that figure may hide the true extent of the problem, with much antisocial workplace behaviour going unreported and research suggesting up to two-thirds of workers may experience unfair treatment on the job. *(from unisa.edu.au/unisanews/2019/september/story3/).*

The average workplace injury cost is around \$11,700 per claim. This figure does not take into account the cost of workplace disruption, the resulting low worker morale and the effect it has on absenteeism, workplace efficiency and product quality.

Workers suffering from mental health can not perform at optimum level. The negative impact this has on people and therefore a business can not be understated.

Consistent with this level of significance, the Work Health and Safety Acts clearly state that "health" means both physical and psychological health. As a result, organizations must take a proactive approach to managing mental health hazards and risks as well.

Health and Safety Laws place the Primary Duty of Care to ensure a safe workplace on the Person Conducting a Business or Undertaking (PCBU). Officers of the organization must make sure that the PCBU meets this legal obligation by exercising due diligence.



This course provides top level managers with tools and practices to help them meet this duty and achieve mentally healthier workplaces. Some of the practices suggested in the course may go against to what is considered established and good business practice. If that is the case, it can then also be argued that these established business practices have contributed to the huge mental health issues that we see in the workplace. Great things do not come from comfort zones.

It is time for change.

GOOD SAFETY IS GOOD FOR BUSINESS

This statement is a no brainer. But why then are so many businesses still not safe?

This may be because often there is still an attitude of: "no worries mate, it won't happen to us" or "we have done it like this for years and nothing has ever happened". Often in these situations, safety is not seen as a true business value, there no true commitment to pro-actively managing safety and no one feels personally responsible.

Although their relatively good safety record has been achieved through luck rather than wisdom, that record then becomes "proof" *that the no worries mate, it won't happen to us* attitude actually works and becomes the basis for future decisions. This of course is a recipe for disaster.

Smart managers will ponder the question whether their safety record is a result of "good luck or good management" and will naturally adopt a pro-active safety management approach.

Smart managers understand that psychological safety is just as important as physical safety. Workers affected by mental health issues will not perform at their best, and are likely to affect those working around them as well.

Workers compensation data shows that about 10% of claims are mental health related. Studies by the University of Adelaide have indicated that mental health issues are under reported. In other words, workers just tend to "live with it" without having the issue properly addressed.

The human cost of mental health is significant, and of course the resulting business cost in terms of absenteeism, low productivity, poor quality, low morale etc will be significant as well.

Good safety is good for business but smart managers will also understand that:

KIND WORKPLACES ARE GOOD FOR BUSINESS



Why Kind Workplaces

Increasing amounts of studies show that positive, kind workplaces actually achieve higher productivity and thus are good for business.

But in reality a lot of workplaces have a toxic work environment.

Staff members are often stressed, burnout rates are increasing at an alarming rate especially in Western societies.

High stress levels lead to more mistakes at the workplace and a higher likelihood of accidents. Increase in staff being afflicted with stress related conditions like hypertension, stomach ulcers, insomnia, etc.

This leads to higher amount of sick days which reduces productivity of a company. In turn this can lead to a high staff turnover which again costs a company time and money to retrain new people.

Be aware: People usually don't quit their jobs, they quit people at work!

Another huge workplace problem is Bullying. And just to be clear, constructive criticism and monitoring is not bullying.

Workplace Bullying is a persistent mistreatment of others in the workplace that causes either physical or emotional harm.

Researchers at the University of South Australia revealed that although only 10% of workers self identify as victims of workplace bullying the true number is likely to be much higher. According to their study two-thirds of Australians experience bullying. Bullying is a huge problem.

Bullying behaviours include:

- verbal (mockery, humiliation, jokes, gossip or other spoken abuse)
- intimidating others, including threats, social exclusions in the workplace, spying or other invasions of privacy such as reading their private emails.
- bullying related to work performance can include wrongful blame, work sabotage or taking false credit for ideas
- institutional bullying: institutional bullying happens when a workplace accepts, allows and even encourages bullying to take place
- bullying behaviour is usually repeated over time

Who gets bullied?



From research in 2017 from Workplace Bullying Institute we read that:

- females are targeted more often
- more males than females are bullies (70:30 %)
- 60% of bullying comes from Bosses and Supervisors
- around 30% of bullying is due to co-workers bullying other co-workers
- the rest is people bullying their supervisors or managers

Bullying can have significant, serious effects on physical and mental health of the individual person.

How does bullying affect the workplace?

Workplaces with high rates of bullying can also experience negative consequences such as

- financial loss resulting from legal costs or bullying investigation
- decreased productivity and morale
- increased employee absences
- high staff turnover
- poor team dynamics
- reduced trust, effort and loyalty from employees

To sum it up bullying is a serious issue in many workplaces.

We know that bullying is bad for business, so why does it still continue?

Workplace bullying is one of the leading causes of work-related mental stress in Australia, according to the Australian Productivity Commission's draft mental health report, released in 2019.

The report estimated that the issue costs Australia's economy between \$22 billion and \$47.4 billion each year due to loss of productivity, absenteeism, legal costs and early retirement payouts.

So why does bullying still occur?

Projection - Psychology of the human mind

To understand that we have to look at the psychology of the human mind. There are many theories out there that can give us a better understanding of what is going on.

Every human being has positive and negative qualities. Let's call the negative qualities the shadow side of the human. If we are not aware and conscious of that and we haven't healed our own hearts we can very easily be triggered and lash out at somebody in complete anger or other unconscious behaviour patterns. That is called *projection*.

Projection is unconscious and works in a way as to protect the bully from their own pain of one kind or another (emotional or mental) It is a process that works independently from a person's awareness or everyday understanding. It is designed to reduce anxiousness or distress of any kind by assisting the bully to externalise their pain onto another person.

It could be true to say that most bullies are actually trying to produce the very fears and feelings that they have within themselves into the victim. In other words the bully is indicating and revealing their own fears, insecurities and weaknesses by bullying the victim simply by producing those very things within the victim.

So the way out of this is becoming aware and conscious and owning our own emotions without projecting them onto others. This can be a lifelong journey.

We must learn to become a responder not a reactor.

Psychopaths

At this stage I also want to mention a group of people which psychology calls psychopaths. A psychopath is traditionally a personality disorder characterized by persistent anti social behaviour with very little or no empathy and compassion for others.

Psychopaths are uncaring for other people's needs, show no remorse and also have strong egotistical traits.

Research by Professor Clive Boddy, published on the website of the University of Tasmania, estimates that 1% of the population falls into that category.



Now what does that have to do with workplaces and managers because traditionally we associate psychopaths with crime, violence and court cases. However, the same research estimates that we find a much higher proportion of psychopaths of 3 to 10 % in the Corporate region.

To make it very clear, none of you who are doing this course belongs to this group.

Why? Because it is not in the interest of a psychopath to make workplaces safer and kinder.

So why do I talk about this then? I think this is very helpful if you look at your organization and the people who work there. You might ask: How did psychopaths ever come up into the Corporate region, how did they manage to get promoted with those character qualities?

First of all psychopaths can be utterly charming, they can fool you in the beginning, lying is nothing to them, they look into your eyes and you could not even detect that they are lying. Psychopaths thrive and love to create stress and drama wherever they work.

If you have employees who love to do their work in peace and in a harmonious work atmosphere and mix them with even 1 psychopath the following scenario unfolds:

The people who love peace and quiet get so distressed with the constant stress which a psychopath always emits so that they can't focus and thus not achieve that much. So if a boss looks around before promoting staff the psychopath seems the obvious choice as he is unaffected by all the stress he causes and he often gets the promotion.

A Real Life Example

Let me tell you a real life example. A good friend of mine worked in an organisation, her manager had all the characteristics of a psychopath and terrorised the whole department. As a result my friend developed blinding migraines and stomach upsets and eventually left. They lost a very valuable staff member due to mismanagement at leadership level. She is now running a highly successful business herself.

So to have psychopaths in corporate functions can be quite costly to the company, as good workers with high integrity loose motivation or just leave.

Remember people never quit jobs they quit people.

You might ask what does all that information have to do with me? You as a Manager, Director or CEO set the tone at your company. You are responsible for the culture in your business. Now, kindness is not a subject which is taught at most business colleges at the moment but trust me it will be in the future. Kindness is not an inherited gift, it is teachable and learnable, like any other skill. The more you practice the better you get at it.

Kind workplaces are good for business.

To help create a kind workplace...always start with yourself, be nice to yourself, don't beat yourself up. Treat yourself kindly.



CHARACTER QUESTIONNAIRE

Strategy 1. Character Questionnaire. The character questionnaire is the first of the 9 strategies you can start implementing right now to create safer and kinder workplaces. Even if you only implement 1 or several of these points I firmly believe this will change the workplace for the better.

Let's get an indication of your character and how you can change to create a kinder workplace

Here are 6 simple questions. Answer these honestly and rate each answer anywhere on the scale from 1 to 10. This will highlight areas where improvements can be made. At the end of the questionnaire, add all the scores up.

	Questions	0 - None	10 - Highest
1	Am I interested in the personal wellbeing of my employees?		
2	Do I show compassion and empathy towards my employees?		
3	Do I go out of my way to help employees?		
4	What level of integrity and honesty am I at?		
5	Do I tolerate bullying at my workplace?	<i>(If often: score 0)</i>	<i>(If never: score 10)</i>
6	Do I bully other people?	<i>(If often: score 0)</i>	<i>(If never: score 10)</i>

Your Total Score:

If you honestly score 60 you are most likely an excellent leader. Congratulations!!!!

If you score 0 you might be very honest and need a good counsellor to heal.

If you are like most somewhere in the middle the good news is: Change is possible.

All these qualities are trainable, the same way you train your arm muscles, you can train your kindness muscles.

It is best to repeat the questionnaire in 3 months and then 2x yearly. If you want to go the extra mile give this questionnaire to any of your staff members, anonymous of course, and then compare with your own evaluation. But for the purpose of this course it is not necessary. I really want to stress here anonymous so that no one can get identified.

MINDFUL INTERACTIONS

Strategy 2. If you change yourself the world changes around you.

"Be the Change You Want To See in the World" is a well known phrase that encourages people to take personal responsibility for situations they are facing. It stops people from judging others, causes one to reflect on self rather than complaining and stirs us into taking control over ourselves rather than waiting for others to take action that we like to see happen.

Mahatma Ghandi implied it in 1913 when he wrote:

"We but mirror the world. All the tendencies present in the outer world are to be found in the world of our body. If we could change ourselves, the tendencies in the world would also change. As a man changes his own nature, so does the attitude of the world change towards him".

However, in 1970 it was American high school educator Arleen Lorraine who came up with the phrase *"be the change you wish to see happen"*. Arleen was a school teacher at Thomas Jefferson High in Brooklyn, which was going through difficult times in the 1960s and early 1970s. Local poverty and violence were having very negative effects on the school and the students there.

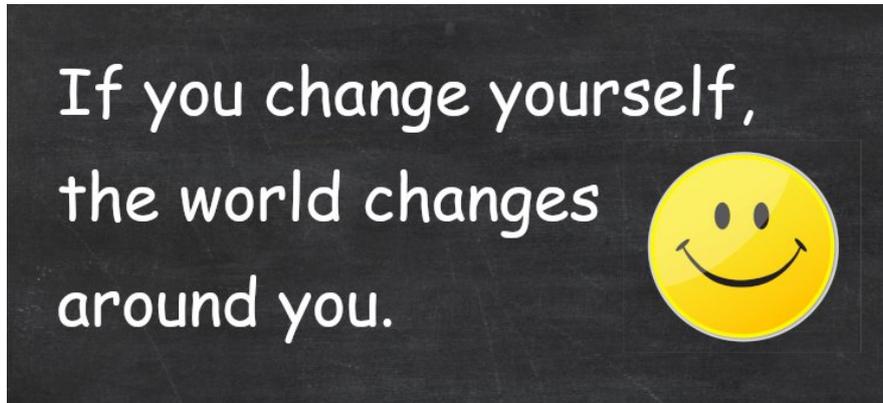
Ms Lorraine implemented in the school what she called "The Love Project" using her, amongst others, the "be the change you wish to see happen" concept.

According to school reports and newspaper articles from the time, The Love Project was a great success at Thomas Jefferson High and the school was transformed within 7 months in a very positive way for the rest of the 1970s.

In her book, Ms Lorraine described the origins of her approach as follows:

"For seven years I served my sentence and marked off institutional time; I complained, cried, accepted hopelessness, put down the rest of the faculty for all the things they didn't do, and devoted all my energies to trying to change others and the system. It came in on me loud and clear that I was the only one who could imprison (or release) me, that I was the only one I could do anything about changing. So I let go of my anger and negativism and made a decision to simply be totally loving, open and vulnerable all the time."

In organizations we spend a lot of time trying to change other people. This approach will not be very successful unless you are willing to walk your talk. Start by changing yourself.



Strategy 3. Dream Teams

Put good teams together. Ask yourself who in an ideal world would you like to work with? This applies to others as well. Instead of bluntly forcing people to work together, try to put people together who you believe can work together well.

Of course it depends how many staff members you have, and this may be an ongoing project but it is definitively worth the effort.

Let your staff consider the same, give them an anonymous questionnaire with preferences 1 to 3.

For example:

Dream Team Questionnaire

Dear..., in our ongoing quest to create kinder and safer workplaces could you please fill out this questionnaire to help us put the most suitable people into teams.	
a) <i>Who would you love to work with the most?</i>	1.
	2.
	3.
	No preferences
b) <i>Who is the one person you would really not like to work with?</i>	1.
	No preferences
Thank you for your help, we cannot make guarantees but we endeavour to put amazing teams together. Signed: John Amazing - CEO	



When you receive the questionnaire back from your staff, sit down again with paper and match your team the best you can.

In an ideal world you would only pair dream teams together but even if you create a few teams with less friction it is a win win situation. When we reduce friction we increase efficiency. When we work efficiently we use less time, resources and human effort to do the work. Efficiency in the workplace is a very important KPI in your business, dream teams help you achieve that KPI with ease.

And of course treat everyone with dignity, just because they work for you doesn't mean you own them. Again this doesn't cost you anything but the benefits are huge.

Strategy 4. Find Out Why Staff Is Leaving

As a general rule of thumb you want to retain good staff members as anytime a staff member leaves you may lose all that expertise and you have to find a replacement. This process can be quite expensive and disruptive for the company. If you experience high levels of staff turnover I would suggest you give them a questionnaire or "exit interview", even if they left the company earlier.

This can't be done anonymously but you will most likely get honest answers.

Questionnaire: Staff Leaving	
Dear..., I am sorry to hear you are leaving this company. In order to improve our services would you be so kind to take this short survey	
<i>a. Why did you leave (are you leaving)?</i>	No career prospects
	Monetary aspects: not earning enough
	Not being treated well by colleagues
	Not being treated well by management
	Other
<i>b. Could you please outline in a few sentences what we could have done to improve the workplace.</i>	
Thank you . signed: John Amazing - CEO	

Once you receive the answers write the person a Thank You note:

Thank You Note

Hi I really appreciate you filling out this survey. Thank you for having worked in our business. Wishing you all the best for your personal and professional future.

Kind regards.

signed: John Amazing
CEO

It is always good to end on a good note, you never know when you might meet again. Now look at the results. The answers are likely to be very honest. What is going on in your company?

You might find out facts you had no idea of.



Strategy 5 - Staff Promotion

Before you consider promoting someone inside the business do an anonymous survey among your staff members who they think is the most suitable person for the role. This does not mean you give your power away you are just collecting more information so you can make the right decision.

A survey could look like this;

Staff Promotion Questionnaire

Survey before promotion.

The following position needs to be filled.....

- Who in your opinion is the most suitable person for the job?
- Who is the second most suitable person and who is the most unsuited person for the job?

Thank you for your participation.

signed: Janet Awesome

Director

Compare your notes with the surveys of your staff members. Great, if the same name appears as number 1 or even 2

But be careful if you wanted to appoint a person who appears in the survey as the least suitable. Rethink your decision, get more information.



Strategy 6 - Communication Box

Put an old fashioned beautiful box somewhere visible in a public space but make sure only you can take papers out. Encourage staff to give you information in an anonymous way which you might otherwise not get. Often staff is being bullied but does not have the courage to tell you.

This is a great way to stay informed what's really going on in your department. Investigate and then act on what you see written.



Strategy 7 - Celebrations In The Workplace

By now you might already have an annual Christmas Party but consider to add many little celebrations throughout the year. Ask yourself honestly: would I rather have many gifts and celebrations throughout the year or just 1 big party at Christmas.

If your answer is : *"Just one party a year is enough"*, you might want to do some work around your Inner Child.

And no, I am not kidding; we all carry in us that innocent childlike aspect which we call in psychology "The Inner Child". And that part in us just wants to celebrate.

Let's be clear, at the root of our Being we are all Tribal Beings. In our inner core we all want to be part of a tribe. Now the Tribe can be your immediate family, your friends, your spiritual groupings or in ever increasing your colleagues at your workplace.

And you as a Manager or CEO are literally speaking their Tribal Leader.

Do you know that most people spend more time at their workplaces than with their loved ones? Let's make this time together a good time.

For example you could celebrate birthdays together. We all want to be appreciated not just with money but with nice gestures such as a birthday card. Make it a habit to celebrate an employee's birthday with a nice card, handwritten and signed by other members. Buy a small present like a plant, bunch of flowers, bottle of champagne or ticket to the movies.

Be creative, it does not have to be expensive. Order a (healthy) cake or other nice, healthy food for afternoon tea and take 15 minutes out of the day to sit together and celebrate. And no, it's not you who has to do the work, delegate it to an event planner, there are so many people who would love to organize little parties.

That reminds me of a patient I had in Germany. He was a Judge at a local court and though he was quite strict and authoritarian his whole department loved him. He would celebrate every birthday of his staff members, would take time to talk to his staff whenever they had a personal problem. This resulted in great staff morale and all the work got done with the highest efficiency.

And again, this cost hardly anything but it did bring great appreciation and joy into people's life.



WORKPLACE ENHANCEMENTS

Strategy 8 - Ambience at the workplace

No workplace needs to be a 5 star resort but there is no need for it to look daggy and run down either. We can learn from how the 5 star hotels are decorated. They are designed to make people feel good and appreciated so guests have a great experience. Work should be no different.

Aiming to build a great workplace where employees feel good will contribute in a positive way to achieving better business results. So to create a great ambience at work is a good strategy. This applies to both offices and factories.

Here are suggestions how to improve the ambience of a workplace:

a. Flowers

Whenever you work in an office or any space really get fresh flowers or plants in that space. It instantly improves the energy and the wellbeing you experience working there. Our local car mechanic had pot plants in his workshop and everyone commented on that.



b. Decorate empty walls with nature photos or other artworks.

Beautiful photos or other artworks will instantly lift the energy. Have a theme which suits your business. An air conditioning business might like to have some picture of the hot Australian desert. Pictures of rocks and mountains can induce a feeling of trust and stability.



c. Kitchen Area

In the kitchen area you want to achieve a feeling of rest and nurturing through healthy food choices. The times of cheap biscuits and a cup of instant coffee are gone. There are beautiful, healthy snacks for any kitchen area, beautiful teas, coffee machines and juices. Buy some nice cups, colourful glasses and serviettes, make it look nice. Maybe nominate an event coordinator who is into healthy food to stock up the kitchen with healthy snacks. The healthier you and your staff are the more productive your team is.



d. Toilets and Bathrooms

This brings us to a much neglected area at workplaces, the toilets. Each of us has to use a toilet at work say around 3 to 4 times per day depending on how much you drink and eat. Toilets should be rest areas where people love to go to. If you want to know what I mean go to a casino once and look at their rest rooms. They are absolutely stunning.

Ideas for toilet areas:

- cleanliness and hygiene has to be a top priority
- separate male and female areas; ideally double the amount of female toilets
- filtered light, avoid too bright light
- good mirrors
- beautiful soothing music
- soundproof
- plants or at least a bunch of flowers
- scents and diffusers
- a chair
- beautiful soaps and hand sanitisers
- nicely decorated walls with art

This might cost a little bit to implement but is worth every cent in terms of staff appreciation.

e. Oxygen

The most important thing for every human being is oxygen and breath.

You can live several weeks without food, a few days without water but you can't live longer than a few minutes without breath. It is essential to have good air quality, so make sure you ventilate the rooms well ideally with fresh air or at least make sure all the air conditioners units are cleaned regularly.

From a health perspective I would encourage every director to make sure staff goes into the fresh air at least once during their breaks, ideally more often.

In Australia we are lucky. You can go outside during every part of the year. But even in cold climates it is highly advantageous to go outside and go for a short walk probably best after lunch (to eat lunch and keep sitting at the computer is not a healthy habit at all).

Or you might decide to have a business lunch meeting and walk to the next cafe. We have a builder who regularly takes his workers for a morning or afternoon coffee break at the local cafe. That's team building at its best. So, fresh air is really important.



f. Rest Oasis

Every person has its own bio-rhythm. Some workers work best in the morning, some do better in the afternoon or evening. In an ideal world we would put them into those shifts, however in the real world this is often not possible.

It is good for businesses to create a little rest area maybe with a privacy screen where employees can go, relax or meditate or even take a mini nap. Put a comfortable recliner chair, some nice magazines, paper and pens etc.

Often ingenious ideas and invention come in when the mind relaxes. Inspiration can then flow in. Some companies know about these principles and use it intentionally to increase efficiency in the business.

Yes, you can enforce people to sit 8 hours at their desk but you cannot enforce productivity and creativity.

Also allow employees to get up often wherever they are, doing stretching exercises and yoga or Tai Chi, just to name a few. These exercises will improve blood flow and oxygen to the brain, this is indirectly increasing productivity.

You all probably know about the afternoon dip, instead of coffee and chocolate how about some stretches, exercise or fresh air?

Be creative, ask around what your staff members would enjoy. Delegate these ideas to someone who enjoys organizing that.



g. Heating / Cooling

The right temperature at the workplace is another issue which can cause emotional and physical problems. This is tricky as we all have a slightly different set point which we feel as comfortable. Some people freeze, some feel too hot and as far as employees are concerned, air conditioners only have 2 settings: too cold or too hot.

As a lot of our workplaces are air conditioned, try the following: Set the temperature in winter at around 21 to 22 degrees and for those who feel cold have e.g. blankets or allow them to wear warm footwear so called ugg boots in Australia when sitting at the desk. In summer adjust the temperature to around 24 degrees (and not to 19 or 20 degrees as often done). This will also save you money too.



Strategy 9 - Humour

Have some fun and humour when you are at work; you can cultivate a sense of humour if you are struggling with it. You can google jokes. If the team energy gets a bit low one could read a joke and all can have a good laugh. This always works.

There is also a technique which I learned in a German coaching seminar:

If you smile intensively for at least 1 minute you are tricking the chemicals in your brain. Do an extreme smile for 1 minute and see if you still feel your anger, I guarantee you it's gone. Great simple way to get your stress hormones down. Do that several times a day, it always works.



SUMMARY

- If you have to go to work every day make this enjoyable for yourself and others.
- Good Safety is Good for Business. Kind Workplaces are Good for Business.
- Kind, compassionate workplaces are more productive. Good workplace energy leads to less stress among workers, less burnouts, less loss of productivity, less staff turnover and less sick days.
- Encouraging the tribal connection leads to more employer and employee wellbeing.
- Celebrate in workplaces and infuse them with humour and fun.
- Create Kind and Safe Workplaces.

All these ideas can be implemented straight away. You can start with a single strategy and keep expanding to have safer and kinder workplaces right here and now.

In a world where you can be anything ... Be KIND.

KIND Workplaces
are
GOOD for Business



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