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Is there a problem with the way we manage psychological health in the workplace?

THE ISSUE:

Recent Watson Wyatt survey found that top issues for organizations were:

- rising medical costs
- increased prevalence of psychological disabilities
- work/life imbalance

Yet, only 10% of organizations were doing anything about these issues.



Health and Safety requirements (and common sense) have made assessment of environmental or physical risk in the workplace a necessity. Corresponding assessment of psychosocial hazards is equally necessary, perhaps more so, given that the modern workplace is dependent on the cognitive and interpersonal skills of the workforce and, when these are compromised, the result is often psychological illness and injury. Yet such assessments are rarely conducted despite emerging tools and datasets.

Psychosocial hazards are factors relating to the organisation, design and management of work that have the potential of psychological harm.

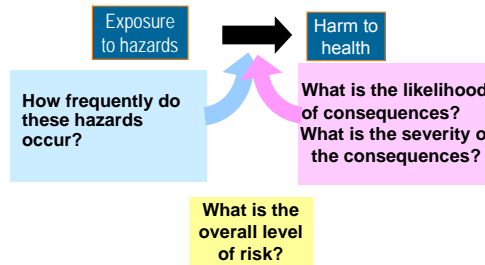
Psychological harm may result when an individual experiences demands and expectations that exceed their capacity, skills, needs or coping strategies.

Psychological Risk = the likelihood that exposure to a hazard will lead to harm

Examples of Psychosocial Hazards

- Inadequate/Unsafe equipment
- Environment (noise/odours/temperature)
- Low job control and high work demands
- Interpersonal conflict/bullying
- Poor job fit
- Change (positive or negative)
- Information overload
- Values conflict
- Lack of reward/recognition
- Poor work/life balance
- Perceived organisational injustice/ unfairness

RISK MANAGEMENT CONCEPTS



New tools to apply

- Systematically at the organisational level
- Immediately at the team/unit level
- As the basis for program and policy action

New thinking to apply

- Psychological health is an organisational issue
- Psychological health is an OHS issue
- Organizational approaches to prevention of psychological injuries can be effective

TOOL 1: Psychological Risk Employment Survey (PRES)

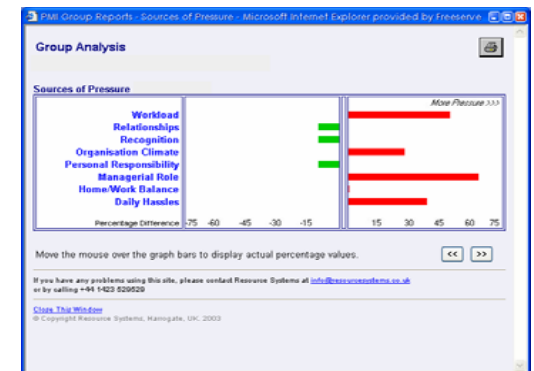
- Anonymous, on-line survey of factors impacting employee psychological health
- Identification of both frequency and impact of hazards
- Linked to organizational goals and indicators
- Identifies areas for action and/or outcomes of intervention



Example PRES Screenshot

TOOL 2: Pressure Management Indicator (PMI)

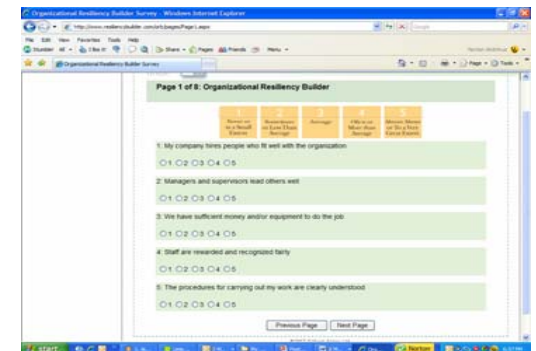
- Anonymous, on-line survey of employee stress
- Based on UK HSE standards
- Industry-specific and universal norms
- Individual & organizational feedback
 - E.g. factors: workload, balance, control, recognition



Example PMI Screenshot

TOOL 3: Organizational Resiliency Builder (ORB)

- On-line measure of team/organizational resilience
- Provides anonymous report to manager/supervisor
- Example themes: teamwork, resources, work flow
- Includes specific recommendations for action



Example ORB Screenshot