

A Key Job Design Hazards (as outlined by WorkSafeBC)

- Low role clarity
- High or low variety of job tasks
- Poor job fit
- High or low job demands
- Low job control
- Prolonged, unreasonably excessive workload

Signs of Job Design Hazards

Core Need	Threats to Core Needs	Early Signals (What This May Feel Like)
Physical Needs	Workloads prevent breaks, recovery time, or manageable pacing	Persistent fatigue, skipped breaks, difficulty staying focused
Security Needs	Roles, expectations, procedures, or decision-making authority are unclear	Anxiety, uncertainty about priorities, tension around shifting expectations
Connection Needs	Work is isolated without collaboration or peer support	Withdrawal, reduced communication, feeling alone in decision-making
Confidence Needs	Limited autonomy or insufficient training and clarity	Self-doubt, hesitation, irritability related to workload
Fulfillment Needs	Strengths are underused and growth opportunities are limited	Reduced motivation, diminished sense of purpose

Common Job Design Hazards in Community Social Services

- Unclear service pathways or boundaries
- Undefined or expanding caseloads without clear discharge processes
- Managing multiple complex cases without support
- Ambiguity in procedures and practices
- Inconsistent approaches across team members
- Chronic unpaid overtime due to staffing shortages or high workload

Instead of asking, “*Can I handle this?*” ask, “*Is this role structured in a sustainable way?*”

Role-Based Responsibilities

Employers

- Define and communicate service scope and role boundaries
- Align expectations with available staffing and funding
- Develop procedures in consultation with staff
- Provide capacity-building training for all staff, including managers
- Allocate protected time for documentation, debriefing, and recovery
- Clarify priorities and trade-offs Monitor overtime, turnover, and workload patterns
- Provide staffing, cross-training, and resources to maintain coverage

Managers/Supervisors

- Regularly review workload distribution and staffing levels
- Adjust assignments when responsibilities increase
- Encourage early conversations about workload concerns
- Coordinate leadership messaging to reduce role confusion
- Support autonomy within clearly defined boundaries
- Provide structured debriefing opportunities
- Schedule recurring workload review conversations
- Implement cross-training and assign backup coverage

Employees

- Communicate when workload becomes unsustainable
- Seek clarity when expectations shift
- Participate in workflow improvement discussions
- Document patterns of strain to support constructive dialogue

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- Review trends in overtime and stress-related absences
- Consult workers about systemic concerns
- Recommend structural improvements
- Monitor role ambiguity and workload patterns

Strengthening Job Design: Reflection & Action

- Regardless of your role, take a moment to reflect on:
- Are responsibilities clearly defined? Do people know what is expected and how to prioritize tasks?
- Can decisions be made confidently within the role without unnecessary approvals?
- Are there realistic limits to how many tasks or cases one person handles?
- Are strengths being used effectively? Is the work aligned with skills and purpose?