

What is a Psychosocial Hazard?

A psychosocial hazard is any workplace factor that **may cause stress, strain, or harm to wellbeing.**

Psychosocial hazards often affect one or more core human needs.

- **Physical:** Rest, health, nourishment, recovery
- **Security:** Safety, predictability, stability
- **Connection:** Belonging, trust, inclusion, culturally safe relationships
- **Confidence:** Autonomy, competence, clarity, ability to contribute meaningfully
- **Fulfillment:** Purpose, growth, recognition, alignment with strengths

When these needs are repeatedly strained risks increase.

Quick Check: Is This a Psychosocial Hazard?

Ask yourself:

- Does the situation affect **your or other's sense of safety, connection, or stability?**
- Is it **causing stress, discomfort, or emotional strain?**
- Does it **interfere with safe and effective work?**
- Could it affect **wellbeing, relationships, or confidence?**
- Is it connected to **workplace systems, conditions or practices** (rather than personal preference)?

If you answer “yes” to one or more questions, the situation may require attention. Early recognition supports prevention.

When You Notice a Potential Hazard:

Pause and Reflect:

- Which human needs may be affected?
- Who else may be impacted?
- What workplace systems, practices, or conditions may be contributing?

Share Responsibility

Psychological safety is a shared responsibility across roles.

- **Employers:** Design policies and systems that protect wellbeing, allocate resources appropriately, and support managers with implementation.
- **Managers/Supervisors:** Guide employees and clarify expectations, implement procedures consistently, and address concerns and follow up appropriately.
- **Employees:** Identify potential hazards, raise concerns respectfully, and support colleagues' wellbeing.
- **JOHSC:** Monitor psychosocial risks, consult with workers, recommend preventative strategies and evaluate effectiveness of safety measures.

Examples in the Workplace

Scenario	Threatened Needs
Coworkers regularly socialize without including you.	Connection, Confidence
You assume a colleague's responsibilities during leave in addition to your own for an extended period.	Physical, Security, Fulfillment
You are asked to support a client without access to behavioural history.	Security, Physical, Confidence
A supervisor dismisses your safety concern.	Security, Confidence, Connection
No debrief occurs after a traumatic incident.	Physical, Connection, Security

Note: Performance reviews can impact confidence, fulfillment, or security needs, especially when they are unclear, inconsistent, overly critical, or lack constructive feedback. When conducted with clarity, fairness, and supportive guidance, a review is typically a growth opportunity rather than a source of harm.