



Psychosocial hazards education

What IS a psychosocial hazard and what is NOT

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What is a Psychosocial Hazard?

Definition: A psychosocial hazard is any aspect of work or workplace interaction that has the potential to cause psychological harm. These hazards predominantly arise from:

1. The way work is **designed, managed,** and **organised**, and/or
2. From the **social interactions** at work.

Poor Organisational Change Management

What IS a hazard:

- Sudden restructures with no communication
- Lack of consultation or information during change

What is NOT a hazard:

- Transparent and consultative change processes
- Change with clear communication and training

Poor Organisational Justice

What IS a hazard:

- Biased or unfair decision-making
- Inconsistent application of rules or policies

What is NOT a hazard:

- Disappointment with an outcome that was transparently and fairly decided
- Accountability held across all staff consistently

Low Job Control

What IS a hazard:

- Little or no say over how or when work is done
- Micromanagement

What is NOT a hazard:

- Clear performance expectations with flexibility to manage your day
- Guidance from a manager when needed

Job Demands

What IS a hazard:

- Excessive workload and pressure
- Unrealistic deadlines
- Emotionally demanding work with inadequate support, e.g. highly demanding clients with no boundaries

What is NOT a hazard:

- Being busy during peak periods with sufficient support
- Challenging work that is achievable with good planning

Poor Support

What IS a hazard:

- Lack of assistance from supervisors or colleagues
- Inaccessible resources or tools to do the job

What is NOT a hazard:

- Being expected to work independently in line with your title/pay with support available when required
- Receiving constructive feedback

Lack of Role Clarity

What IS a hazard:

- Conflicting responsibilities
- Unclear job descriptions or expectations

What is NOT a hazard:

- Multi-tasking with clear boundaries and communication
- Flexibility in a well-defined role

Inadequate Reward and Recognition

What IS a hazard:

- Consistent lack of acknowledgment for good work
- Inequitable pay or benefits for the same work

What is NOT a hazard:

- Occasional missed thanks when performance is otherwise recognised
- Fair compensation with clear remuneration policies

Traumatic Events or Material

What IS a hazard:

- Repeated exposure to trauma without proper support, debriefing, or recovery time
- Being unprepared or not adequately trained to handle traumatic material

What is NOT a hazard:

- Reading or hearing about challenging topics in non-traumatic context
- General exposure to emotionally neutral difficult content

Remote or Isolated Work

What IS a hazard

- Working alone without regular contact
- Limited access to emergency support

What is NOT a hazard:

- Working remotely with regular check-ins and accessible support
- Flexible work arrangements with social connection

Poor Physical Environment

What IS a hazard

- Excessive noise, heat, cold, or poor lighting
- Unsafe or uncomfortable workspaces

What is NOT a hazard

- Minor physical discomforts managed with reasonable controls
- Temporary changes during renovations with adjustments

Violence and Aggression

What IS a hazard

- Physical assault, threats, or verbal abuse from clients or colleagues
- Hostile behaviour causing fear

What is NOT a hazard

- Firm disagreement or raised voice in a professional discussion
- Resolving conflicts constructively and respectfully

Bullying

What IS a hazard

- Repeated unreasonable behaviour intended to intimidate or humiliate
- Targeting an individual with exclusion or insults

What is NOT a hazard:

- Performance management conducted respectfully
- Isolated disagreements or personality clashes

Harassment (Including Sexual and Gender-Based)

What IS a hazard

- Unwanted sexual advances or comments
- Jokes or behaviour based on gender or identity that a reasonable person would consider offensive or intimidating

What is NOT a hazard

- Respectful compliments or humour that is inclusive and appropriate
- Interpersonal conflict unrelated to protected attributes

Conflict or Poor Relationships

What IS a hazard

- Ongoing tension, gossip, or exclusion
- Poor communication and hostility in teams

What is NOT a hazard

- Occasional disagreements resolved constructively
- Diverse opinions when handled respectfully

Intrusive Surveillance

What IS a hazard

- Monitoring without employee knowledge or consent
- Excessive surveillance causing stress or anxiety

What is NOT a hazard

- Transparent performance monitoring with clear boundaries
- Data collection for safety or operational reasons with consent

Fatigue

What IS a hazard

- Long hours or shift work with inadequate rest
- Work schedules preventing recovery

What is NOT a hazard

- Tiredness from a single late night
- Fatigue due to non-work personal choices (unless work-related scheduling contributes)

Job Insecurity

What IS a hazard

- Uncertainty about continued employment
- Regular contract renewals with no clarity or support

What is NOT a hazard

- Probation periods with clear communication
- Project-based roles with defined timeframes and transition support