



# Protect

Work is important to our wellbeing. However, work can also be a source of stress and strain, which if extreme or ongoing, can affect our mental health. An important part of creating a mentally healthy small business is having measures in place to protect people from work-related harm.

Click here to read the complete guide



## Key takeaways



All small business owners have legal obligations related to workplace health and safety, which includes psychological health.



Many hazards and risks in the workplace can negatively impact mental health.



By identifying hazards and risks in your workplace, you can put plans in place to manage and minimise them, creating a better work environment for yourself and your team.

## ► Legal obligations related to mental health at work

### Work health and safety legislation, regulations and codes

Obligations to identify and manage hazards that may affect health, including psychological health. See [Safe Work Australia](#) for more details and to find your local jurisdiction.

### Workers' compensation legislation

Responsibilities to support workers who experience injuries or illnesses related to the workplace, including psychological injuries. See [Safe Work Australia](#) for more details and to find your local jurisdiction.

### Anti-discrimination legislation

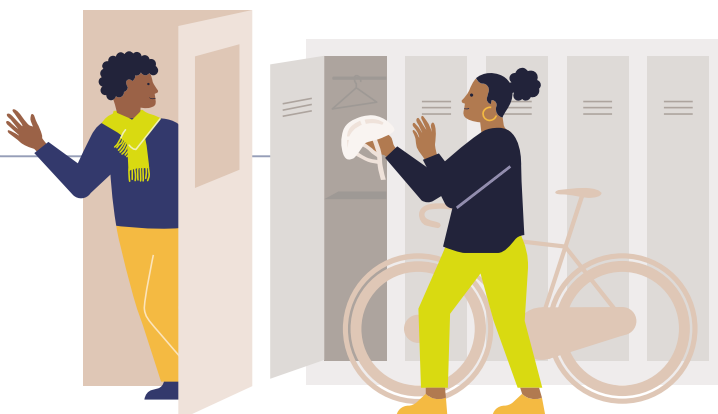
Protections to ensure people are not discriminated against based on factors, including mental illness. Visit the [Australian Human Rights Commission](#) for more information.

### Privacy legislation

Obligations related to privacy when collecting or managing personal or sensitive information, such as people's mental health status. The [Office of the Australian Information Commission](#) has more information about privacy for small business.

### Workplace relations legislation and agreements

Industrial relations obligations relating to leave, unfair dismissal and consultation processes. The [Fair Work Ombudsman](#) has resources for small business.



## ► Identifying and managing psychosocial hazards and risks

Generally, legal obligations related to work health and safety focus on doing what is 'reasonably practicable' to minimise the risk of psychosocial hazards in your business.

- having clear procedures to respond if these behaviours do occur
- addressing complaints early
- reducing risk factors
- getting legal advice.

A **psychosocial hazard** arises from, or relates to, work design or management, the work environment or workplace interactions or behaviours. It may cause psychological harm.

The [Model Code of Practice: Managing psychosocial hazards at work](#) has more information.

The Safe Work Australia [Guide for preventing and responding to workplace bullying](#) has more information.

A **psychosocial risk** is the risk to the health or safety of a work or other person arising from a psychosocial hazard.

### Managing bullying, harassment and discrimination at work

Bullying, harassment and discrimination are well-known psychosocial hazards. You can help manage bullying, harassment and discrimination in your workplace by:

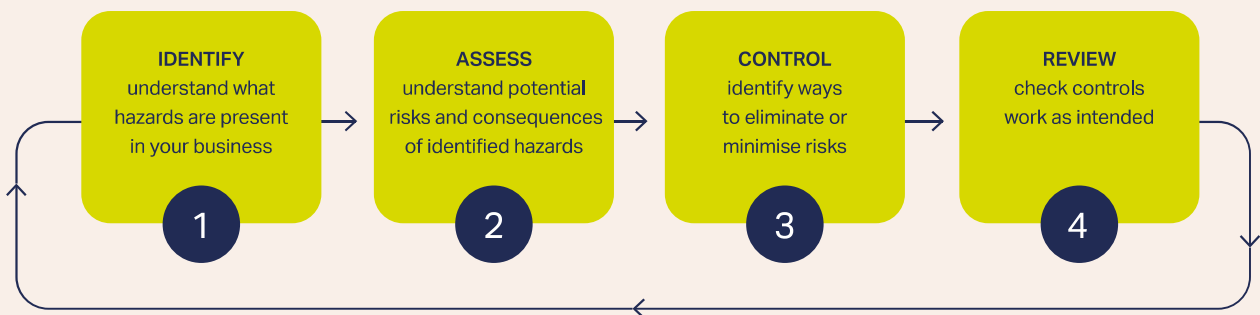
- creating a positive workplace culture
- creating workplace policies about acceptable behaviour that address these issues.

### Understanding work design

Poor work design also creates psychosocial hazards. Work design refers to the tasks and duties completed as part of your role, how you undertake them, and what resources are needed to complete them.

The Safe Work Australia [Good work design handbook](#) has more information about good work design.

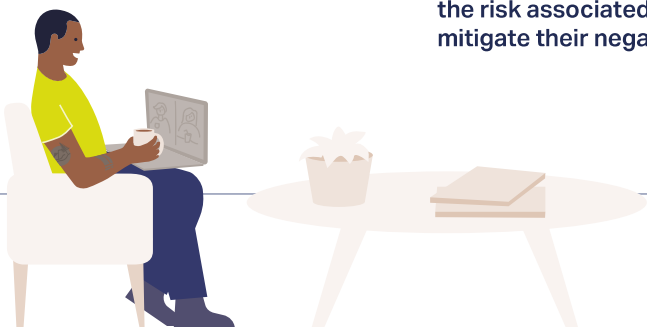
Safe Work Australia describes 4 key steps in managing psychosocial hazards and risks:



## ► Protecting your own mental health

You may not be able to prevent stressful situations from happening, but you can prepare for and manage the risk associated with them to help mitigate their negative effects:

- Plan for unexpected events.
- Implement good financial habits to reduce financial stress.
- Manage competing priorities.
- Manage stress and burnout.



If you or someone you know needs support, our [urgent help page](#) lists support services you can reach out to now. In an emergency, please call 000.