

Fact sheet

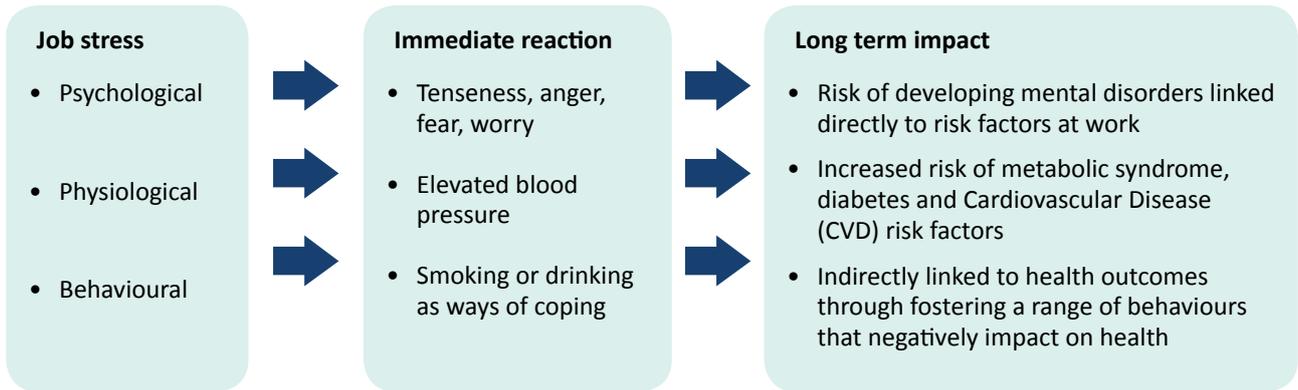
How work impacts mental health

- Workplaces play an active role in people’s health and wellbeing, as well as in recovery from mental health problems.
- Good work is beneficial to our overall wellbeing and can act as a protective factor against mental illness and distress.
- Work can also have negative impacts on mental health and wellbeing when workplaces don’t provide the right protection.
- Workplaces with cultures that value mental wellbeing create a space for people to feel good, function well and have strong social connections.
- There is a combination of interrelated factors that contribute to a mentally healthy workplace.
- For actions to be effective they must address risk factors and promote protective factors across all areas of work.^{1,2}

Areas of work that can impact wellbeing^{3,4}

	Factors to consider	Risk factors	Protective factors
Work and its content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The demands of the job • Access to resources and equipment • The physical environment • Opportunity to develop and use skills • Clear communication 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work overload, long hours • Lack of control • Changing from low strain to high strain job • Poor or deteriorating work conditions • Lack of variety • Job insecurity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appropriate balance between demands and resources • Sufficient resources to perform work • Workers actively engaged with work and shaping job so they experience success
Relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interactions with co-workers, supervisor and customers • Access to social supports • Work/life balance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor social support • Negative or high conflict interactions • Conflict between work role and out of work roles • Bullying and harassment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respectful and trusting relationships with supervisors, team leaders and peers • Effective management of interpersonal conflict • Zero tolerance for bullying or harassment • Effort rewarded & success celebrated
Purpose and meaning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarity on what is expected • How role is valued (by worker and others) • Work goals are worthwhile • Sense of progress and achievement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unclear work role • Effort/reward imbalance • Low status • Lack of progress in role and career 	Work that contributes to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning opportunities • Fair work practices • Environmental clarity • Sense of worth and value • Career outlook • Equity
Leadership, management and supervision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impact of manager on team • Commitment to wellbeing • Fair processes and policies • Provision of feedback and support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No commitment to wellbeing • Lack of fairness • Poor communication • Lack of participation in decision making • Poor supervision and feedback 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Worker opinions valued • Appropriate feedback and support provided • Employee growth encouraged • Consideration for individuals • Confidence in discussing mental health

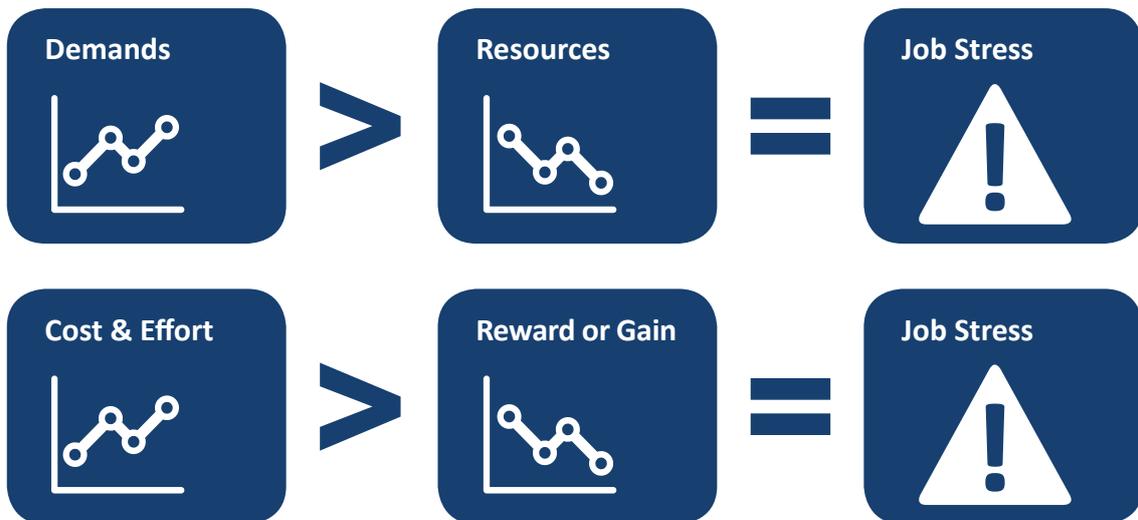
Potential impacts on health⁴



Challenge versus stress^{3,4}

Job stress is the harmful physical and emotional response resulting from a situation where the demands of a job are not matched by the resources provided to get the job done (job-related distress).

Some degree of challenge is an important part of a rewarding job. The achievement and experience that goes along with meeting challenges can be beneficial for mental wellbeing. This type of pressure or stress is not a problem and can support wellbeing. Problems arise when the balance of demands, resources and control exceed the ability for the person to cope or where there is an effort vs reward imbalance. This is when pressure can lead to job stress.



The solution is to find a balance where the job requirements match the capabilities, resources and needs of the people carrying out the work, and effort is rewarded appropriately.

Work areas that can be modified to reduce or prevent job stress

