Occupational stress

Occupational stress describes the physical, mental, and emotional reactions of workers who perceive that their work demands exceed their abilities and/or their resources (e.g.time, access to help/support) to do the work.

how does occupational stress affect you?

Unmanaged occupational stress in contact centres can result in:

- job dissatisfaction, low morale and workplace conflict
- low productivity
- increase in escalated calls
- absenteeism
- workers' compensation claims (both psychological and musculoskeletal)
- increased turnover.

how can occupational stress affect contact centre workers?

Occupational stress has been clearly identified as a significant health and safety issue for workers in contact centres.

Occupational stress risk factors () include:

- high mental, emotional and/or physical work demands
- low control over work and the way it is organised

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- low levels of support from supervisors and peers
- lack of role clarity or increased role confusion
- poorly managed workplace conflict
- poorly managed organisational change
- a poor workplace justice climate
- low levels of worker recognition and reward.

Ways to minimise occupational stress () in contact centres include:

- ensure workers have adequate training to perform their tasks
- ensure supervisors are adequately trained to provide timely and appropriate performance management in a reasonable manner
- ensure work demands are realistic and within workers' abilities, particularly during peak periods
- regularly review workloads to ensure workers have sufficient time and support to meet their work demands
- review workloads during team meetings, through an informal check-in, or by undertaking a worksite assessment
- encourage workers to speak up at an early stage if they feel their task demands are excessive
- encourage workers to seek guidance from management about priorities
- ensure worker's concerns are recorded in a hazard register and actioned
- ensure procedures are in place to allow worker

input on decisions about work design, rosters and safety issues
- implement processes which allow workers or their representatives more control over rotation/task variation opportunities
- consult with workers on decisions regarding control over the flow of calls or customer queues
- provide concise and clear scripting which allows workers some flexibility to adapt the information to their personal communication style
- provide flexibility around scheduled and personal breaks
- provide new workers with full induction training programs, including customer handling, conflict management, de-escalation techniques, and stress management
- provide workers ongoing training on effective communication and conflict resolution strategies
- provide software programs that are easy to view and understand and allow for efficient provision of services
- provide positive, supportive supervision
- ensure workers can access breakout areas to take a short break from emotionally demanding interactions with clients
- ensure staff appraisals/performance reviews:
- identify gaps in skills related to their role
- are based on workers' performance against the

requirements of their roles.

- provide clear procedures about monitoring systems and how they are to be used
- ensure reward and recognition systems are based on agreed performance outcomes
- promote and encourage workers to engage in internal and external health and wellbeing programs and initiatives
- provide workers with access to support services including employee assistance programs or other counselling services.

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Reference	https://www.worksafe.qld.gov.au/laws-and-compliance/workplace-health-and-safety-laws/specific-obligations/health-safety-contact-centres/occupational-stress
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Classification

Brief Description	Occupational stress
Category	Health and Wellness
Type	General Information
Industry	All Business Services
Other Tags	workplace
Country	Australia
State	QLD
Sort No	