

Psychosocial Safety tip sheet

Poor Relationships & Conflict (Psychosocial Hazard #8)



Poor relationships or conflict between employees, managers, supervisors, co-workers, students, or others with whom employees are required to interact. This may include:

- Frequent or excessive disagreements regarding work tasks, processes, customers, or other interpersonal issues.
- Disparaging or rude comments.
- Exclusion of others from information, conversations, or decisions.

Poor relationships and conflict can:



Are we OK?

Watch out for:

- Unresolved conflict, disagreements, or tension in the team.
- Repeated or frequent conflict, disagreements, or tension in the team.
- Gossip, rumours, or employees frequently talking about each other.
- Disrespectful behaviour such as eye-rolling, speaking over the top of one another, sighing or inattentive or dismissive body language.
- Complaints about performance or behaviour.
- Team members being excluded from social activities, conversations, or meetings.
- Name calling, negative descriptions of others' character, assuming that the other person will be uncooperative.

It looks & sounds ...

- Employees may be reluctant to collaborate on tasks or projects.
- Employees may seem disengaged or unwilling to speak in team meetings.
- There may be visible disagreements or arguments.
- Employees may complain about each other.
- Employees may avoid situations where they need to interact with each other / a stakeholder / a student.
- Employees may be visibly upset following interactions with another person.

For more info:

- Visit the Safe Work Queensland Website
- Contact the Health & Wellbeing Team via: heathandwellbeing@griffith.edu.au

Tips for building psychosocial safety:

Prevent team conflict:

- Provide opportunities for team members to interact with each other informally and to get to know each other as humans.
- Establish 'ground rules' for how the team will interact and work together and what appropriate behaviour looks like.
- Ensure there are clear and agreed to processes and expectations across the team.
- Consider team building workshops or activities when teams are newly formed, when there have been significant changes to team membership and at least once per year.
- Consider upskilling team members around communication and conflict resolution.

Respond early to conflict:

- It is much easier to resolve disagreements early than it is to resolve a repeated pattern of conflict. Be proactive in resolving very minor disagreements and preserving relationships.