

Psychosocial Safety tip sheet

Lack of Role Clarity (Psychosocial Hazard #4)



A lack of role clarity exists where:

- There is uncertainty about, or frequent changes to, tasks and work standards.
- Important task information is not available to workers.
- There are conflicting job roles, responsibilities, or expectations.

Low role clarity can:



Are we OK?

Watch out for:

- Uncertainty around 'who is responsible for what' following a process change, restructure or change to team membership.
- Changes to role requirements that are not well communicated or understood by employees.
- New or existing roles that may not be well defined.
- Employees who receive work requests from multiple managers/clients/stakeholders, especially where these requests may be in conflict (two high priority tasks due at the same time or stake holders disagree around what should be done).
- Employees with multiple supervisors (eg, Manager, Mentor, Research Supervisor), especially where there may be differences in expectations between these supervisors.
- Roles where there is a high degree of overlap in responsibilities or where the boundaries of the roles may be unclear.

It looks & sounds like:

- Employees may be unsure of what is expected of them.
- Employees may ask questions to clarify expectations, timeframes, and priorities.
- Engagement survey results may indicate dissatisfaction with Role Clarity or Processes.
- There may be disagreements among employees around who is responsible for what.
- Key tasks may be missed because 'no-one owns it'.
- Employees may seem to have more work or less capacity than expected (work has been allocated that you are not aware of).
- Employees may be completing tasks that are outside of their roles and/or missing tasks that are requirements of their roles.

For more info:

- Visit the [Safe Work Australia Website](#).
- Contact the Health & Wellbeing Team via: heathandwellbeing@griffith.edu.au.

Tips for building psychosocial safety:

- Speak with employees early in their tenure and regularly thereafter about what is expected of them in their roles.
- Where employees have multiple supervisors, speak with those supervisors about how you will set consistent expectations and maintain visibility over the employees' workload to ensure it is reasonable.
- Where there have been changes to processes, roles, or team membership, speak with all employees about what is expected of them in their roles and who is responsible for what.
- Ensure there are clearly documented processes for key activities and that all employees are aware of these processes.
- Meet with employees regularly to discuss what they are working on and to check that they have a clear understanding of what the priorities are.