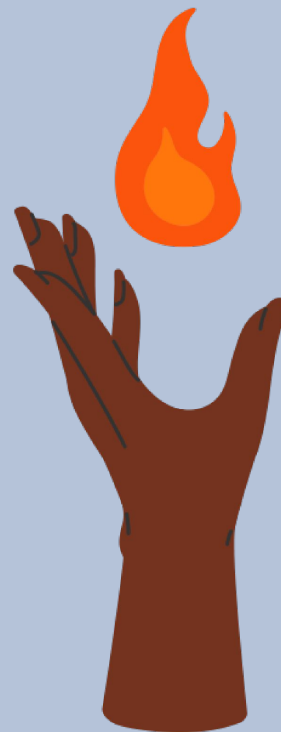


FW° MASTERCLASS

Under pressure:
Building psychological
safety to prevent burnout



What is psychological safety?



Psychological safety

Everyone can:

- Voice different opinions
- Have difficult conversations
- Take risks
- Make and own up to mistakes
- Ask for help

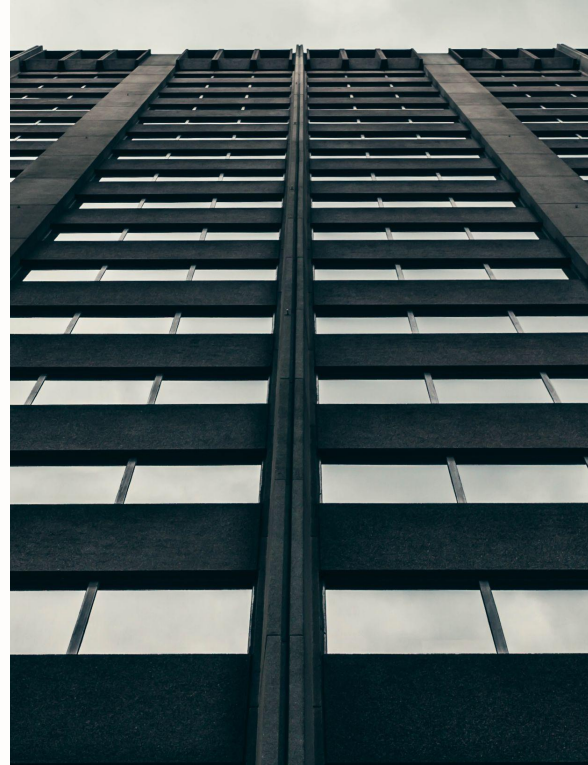


How to build psychologically safe workplaces

- Model vulnerability and lead by example
 - admit your own mistakes
 - ask for help
 - show empathy and compassion.
- Foster open communication and feedback
 - encourage open discussion
 - listen 'actively'
 - solicit and respond to feedback
- Redefine mistakes and risk taking
- Address conflict constructively
- Promote inclusion and respect
 - Tackle toxic behaviour
 - Ensure fairness

Know the difference

- Psychological safety
- Psychosocial hazards
- Emotional regulation

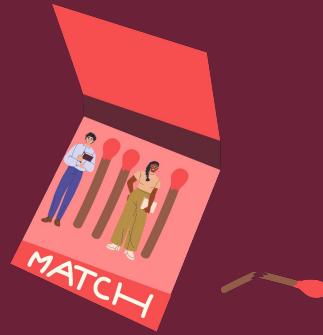


- **Psychological safety** → **between us**
- **Emotional regulation** → **within us**
- **Psychosocial hazards** → **around us.**

Psychologically safe workplaces are structured to support wellbeing and high performance.



The connection between psychological safety and burnout



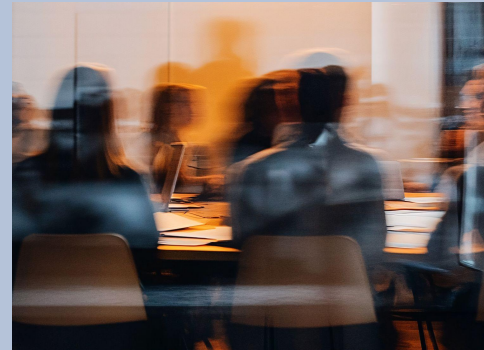
What is burnout?

“...a prolonged response to chronic emotional and interpersonal stressors on the job”.

—**Christina Maslach**, Pioneering researcher on burnout

“Chronic workplace stress that has not been successfully managed”.

—**World Health Organisation**



Signs of stress

Behavioural

- Taking frequent leave
- Attending work but not actually achieving much
- Procrastination
- Performing below the usual standard
- Eating too much or too little

Psychological

- Heightened emotions, irritability, mood swings
- Feelings of helplessness or worthlessness
- Disconnecting or withdrawing from colleagues and others
- Difficulties concentrating or making decisions

Physical

- Headaches
- Fatigue
- Elevated heart rate
- Sleep difficulties



Burnout is chronic stress

- **Emotional exhaustion:** High physical, cognitive and emotional fatigue that gets in the way of someone's ability to work.
- **Cynicism or detachment:** Impacts work, study, relationships and other parts of life, and can include thinking negatively or feeling hopeless.
- **Reduced professional efficacy:** Loss of confidence, concentration difficulties, and reduced performance.

—World Health Organisation

Do you know the risk factors for burnout?

- High workload or too many tasks
- Lack of clarity, constantly changing goals
- Feeling out of control or a lack of independence at work
- Low reward or recognition compared to your expectations or productivity
- Little to no managerial or social support
- Unfair and/or disrespectful treatment at work
- A mismatch between personal values and those of the workplace.





Stepping in and stepping up

Stepping in: As leaders

1. Take a structural approach

2. Personal steps

- Arrange a low-pressure check-in
- Listen 'actively' and with empathy
- Work together to uncover root cause

3 Practical steps:

- Stop the spiral (first step)
- Provide clarity about task
- Check-in 'casually'
- Own and explain unexpected changes, validate the frustration
- Conduct a workload audit
- What can be re-prioritised or reassigned?
- Protect 'recovery time'

Stepping in: As colleagues



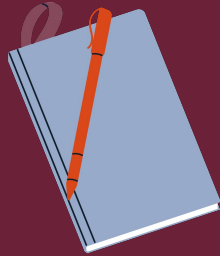
Stepping in: As colleagues

- ★ Check in .
- ★ If offering practical support, be gentle and specific
- ★ Be a cheerleader (shout-out and often)
 - in shared channels
 - in formal reports



STEPPING UP:

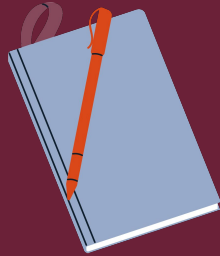
Red flagging burnout to management



- ★ Speak to your manager
- ★ Approach your Workplace Health and Safety team

STEPPING UP:

Red flagging burnout to management



Instead of (plain language):

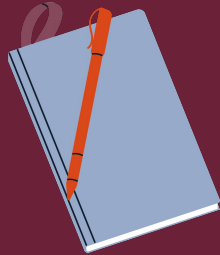
"The team is really stressed and unhappy."

Say (WHS language):

"I've some concerns around psychosocial hazards, specifically related to high job demands and low role clarity, which is impacting our team's sustainability."

STEPPING UP:

Red flagging burnout to management



Instead of (plain language):

"Everyone's exhausted. People seem to have switched off. We need to do something about it."

Say (WHS language):

"I've noticed more than half of the team in our recent project meetings is showing signs of exhaustion. This suggests our resourcing isn't matching our workload. Let's investigate."

Healthy work(place) habits and self care





Tackling burnout: Healthy workplace habits:

- Demystify burnout
 - Capacity check-ins
 - Talk about Mental Health
 - Cultivate community
 - Blame-free post-mortems
 - Encourage boundary setting
- 

The importance of boundaries for self-care

- Communicate your boundaries
- Define your priorities
- Be consistent
- Learn to say no

