


LGMAQ Conference – March 2011 Capella
Strengthening Organisational and Staff Resiliency in the Face of Natural Disaster




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Business as Unusual?



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Overview

1. Work Stress and Trauma
1. Stress Claims: Current Trends in Local Government
3. Strategies – EAP, Early Intervention, & Leadership
4. Risk Assessment - Your Risks are.....

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Stress and Psychological Injury

- o The majority of psychological injury claims are not the result of a major traumatic event or critical incident. *Most such claims develop over periods of six months or more, often in response to the interaction of a number of work-related and other factors.*



Psych Injury Claims

- o Work pressure = 50%
- o Bullying/Harassment = 25%
- o Exposure to occupational violence = 10%
- o Exposure to TE >5%

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Building resilience in the face of the Queensland Floods: The Lockyer Valley Story

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Trauma and Stress – Strategic Considerations

- o The Floods – An ‘Abnormal Event’
 - Two separate flood events
- o Natural Disasters - continuing exposure
- o Acute reactions versus pre-existing conditions
- o Trauma conditions typically emerge after 3 to 6 months after exposure

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Trauma and Stress – Strategic Considerations

- o Level of Trauma has been associated with level of flood water exposure – i.e. higher the water level, higher the trauma
- o Amount and severity of exposure
- o Focus on Building Resiliency – Psych Skills 101
- o Overload, overload, overload


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Trauma and Stress – Strategic Considerations

The Total Package:


- The Strategic versus the Individual ...
- You service the community, they feel better with someone to blame, it's you!



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Early Intervention is the Key



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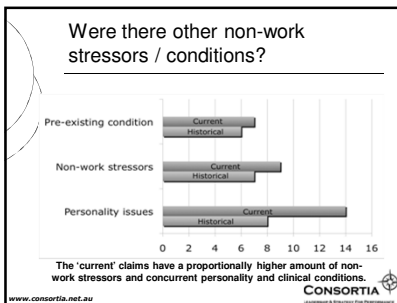
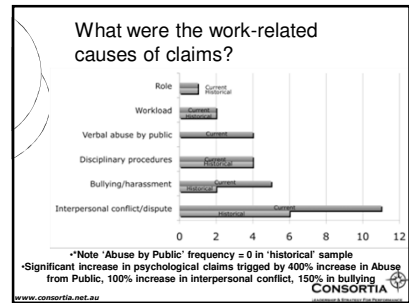
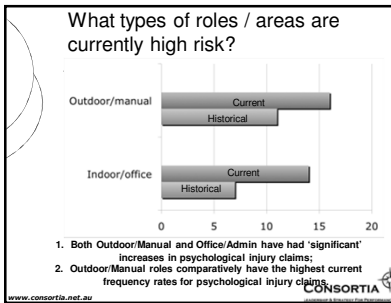
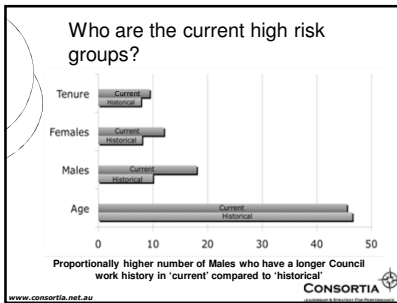
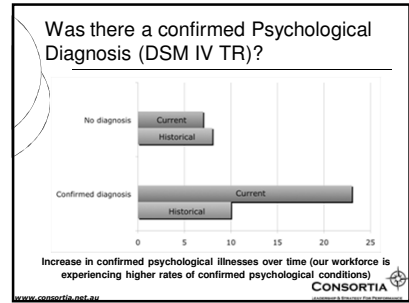
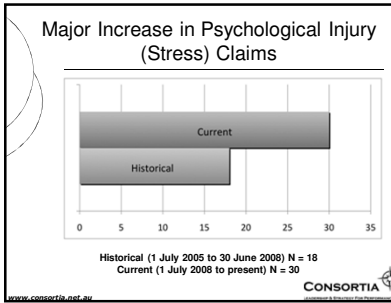
Current Trends in Stress Claims

A Local Government Case Study

Large Regional Council

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National OHS Codes of Practice

- Clayton Utz:
- Model codes of practice set a base line for compliance of:
 - managing risks, consulting on health and safety, managing the work environment and facilities, and specific areas of concern, such as confined spaces, falls and hazardous chemicals

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Mitigating Risk for Work Related Stress

- How do you mitigate risk?

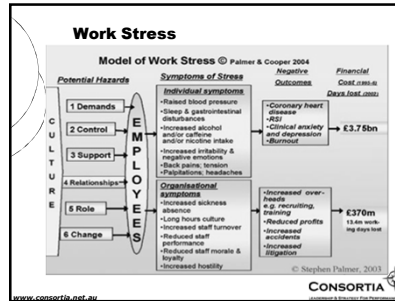
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Mitigating Risk for Work Related Stress

- You mitigate risk by....
- Addressing Organisational & Individual Risk Factors
- Reasonable Management Action
- Upstream Interventions to Injury (i.e. EI)
- Leadership Programs

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Psychological Injury Exclusions

- Worker's Compensation and Rehabilitation Regulation 2003
 - S32 (5) of the Act:
 - Injury excluded due to:
 - (a) reasonable management action take in a reasonable way by the employer in connection with the worker's employment;
 - (b) the worker's expectations or perceptions of reasonable management action being taken against the worker

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Reasonable Management Action

- Action taken in a reasonable way by an employer in connection with the worker's employment.

EXAMPLES OF REASONABLE MANAGEMENT ACTION

- Action taken to transfer, demote, discipline, redeploy, retrench or dismiss the worker
- A decision not to award or provide promotion, reclassification or transfer of, or leave or absence or benefit in connection with, the worker's employment.
- Issue is NOT injury being sustained – its removal of entitlement to compensation due to RMA

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Reasonable Management Action

RMA Critical Considerations:

- Reasonable in s.32(5)(a) means "reasonable in all the circumstances of the case (See *Workcover Queensland v Keh*) & reasonable person test
 - Common Law "reasonability of harm" test - subject a person to such inappropriate behaviour that a reasonable person, having regard to all circumstances, would experience harm to their health, wellbeing or ability to perform their job.
 - Reasonable person test - one who stands as a disinterested on-looker and seeks to assess whether the conduct in issue was reasonable, having regard to community standards and expectations as to what might be regarded as fair and proper (Andrew Williams, 2006)
- Vulnerability - RMA needs to be considered in light of pre-existing conditions being known by the employer
- Natural Justice and Fairness - the RMA & investigation must adhere to the principles of Natural Justice concerning hearing, bias and evidence
- Timeliness - consideration of implementation of policy and timing of management interventions consistent with policy and needs at the time

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Risk: Failure to Demonstrate Principles of Natural Justice

- Three basic principles of natural justice:
 - 15.1.1 The hearing rule - requiring that a person must be allowed an adequate opportunity to present their case where certain interests and rights may be adversely affected by a decision maker;
 - 15.1.2 The bias rule - that the decision making authority must be unbiased in the making of their decision;
 - 15.1.3 The evidence rule - that any administrative decision must be based upon logical proof and evidence in support and decisions should not be based upon mere speculation or suspicion
- Old Police Services v Q-Comp [2009] QIRComm 23; 190 QGIG 193 (5 March 2009)

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Work Stress Intervention Strategies

Table 1. Overview of Work Stress Interventions

Level	Primary prevention	Secondary prevention	Tertiary prevention
Organization	Improving work content, fitness programs, career development	Improving communication and decision making, conflict management	Vocational rehabilitation, outplacement
Individual-organization interface (e.g. team or group)	Time management, improving interpersonal skills, work/home balance	Peer support groups, coaching, career planning	Posttraumatic stress assistance programs, group psychotherapy
Individual	Preemployment medical examination, didactic stress management	Cognitive-behavioral techniques, relaxation	Rehabilitation after sick leave, disability management, case management, individual psychotherapy

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Risk Management Strategies

- Pre-employment Assessment Centres
 - Improves screening for non-work risks
- Frontline Leadership Development
 - Ineffective leadership is a critical factor in at least 80% of claims
- Early Intervention & Prevention
 - Every \$1 spent creates \$55 in claim related savings
- Rehabilitation / RTW/ WHS
 - Psychological injury claims (poorer prognosis, longer recovery and higher expense) - specialist rehabilitation skill sets

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Supportive Leadership & Staff Well-Being (Cotton et al., 2003)


Individual Morale	Individual Distress	Workplace Morale	Workplace Distress
Supportive Leadership 69		Supportive Leadership 88	Supportive Leadership 47
Goal Congruence 59		Professional Interaction 34	Excessive Work Demands 63
Participative Decision-Making 38	Emotionality 72	Goal Congruence 23	Goal Congruence 46
Role Clarity 27	Supportive Leadership -63	Quality Improvement 19	Emotionality 26
Professional Growth 15	Role Clarity 69	Participative Decision-Making 17	Role Clarity 24
Appraisal & Recognition 14	Excessive Work Demands 26	Information Sharing 11	Participative Decision-Making -23
Workplace Flexibility 4	Workplace Morale 11	Role Clarity 10	Family Work Conflict 18
Sociability 13		Sociability 10	Workplace Flexibility 15
Information Sharing 11			

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Assess the Risks:

Please use the worksheet provided to outline:

- A Local disaster situation,
- Identify the issues/hazards,
- Risks,
- Strategies,
- with your organisation in response, to mitigate risk & build resilience.



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Work Related Stress: Assess the Risks

Step 1 – Assess hazards

Step 2 – Who might be (was) harmed & how

Step 3 – Evaluate Risk & Control Strategies

Step 4 – Record findings

Step 5 – Monitor & review

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Summary and Wrap Up

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Thank you....



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