Band-aids or advocates for worker health? The role of psychology in promoting liveable work

Professor Maureen Dollard
Director of Asia Pacific Centre for Work Health & Safety
A World Health Organization Collaborating Centre in Occupational Health

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A MENTALLY HEALTHY WORKPLACE STARTS HERE.
Open to change.

Pinnaroo store – Remote SA
What makes a city liveable—work liveable

- Affordability → wages, resources
- Crime rates → everyone is getting looked after
- Ease of travel → getting the job done, work is enjoyable
- Weather → climate of the organisation

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Changes and Challenge

- Maintaining a mentally healthy and productive workforce in a global competitive economy is a big challenge for Australia and other capitalist economies.

- Productivity improvement approaches emphasise reducing inefficiencies, increasing work pressure, reducing job security, and stabilising or reducing wages while bolstering CEO salaries and increasing profits and shareholder value.

- For workers these approaches are likely accompanied by reduced meaningfulness of work, decrements to worker health, increased psychological distress, increased workplace bullying, work-family conflict, and workers compensation costs.

- Yet these developments are at odds with health and safety as a fundamental human right, and the most basic ethic of “do no harm”.

- How critical has psychology been of these developments and in whose interests does the knowledge base and research of the discipline serve?
The nested nature of reality

• The focus in psychology has been largely on the individual
• My argument need to look at the context, person, nested in a job, in an organisation, in a society (one inside the other)
• Likely to have a more far reaching effect on worker health and productivity if look at sources further upstream than job design and individual factors
Work is important for health and well-being

Unemployment gaps are considerable for people with mental ill-health

Unemployment rates of working age people with & without mental health problems, latest year (percentage)

- Severe mental health problems
- Moderate mental health problems
- No mental health problems

Source: Fit Mind, Fit Job (OECD, 2015)
Status of Workplace Mental Health in Australia

• The dangers of work stress ruling by the Victorian WorkCover Authority that work stress was a major contributing factor in the suicide of a school principal.

• Mental health conditions at work cost Australian businesses $10.9 billion a year (PricewaterhouseCooper, 2014).

• Beyondblue, astonishing statistics in The State of Workplace Mental Health in Australia (beyondblue, 2014):
  • only 52% of Australian workers consider their workplace to be mentally healthy
  • only 56% believe that their most senior leaders value their mental health.
Cost of Work Stress in Australia

• Nationally the cost of mental health conditions to businesses is nearly $11 billion per year due to absenteeism, presenteeism and compensation claims (Pricewaterhouse Cooper, 2014).

• Australian rates of workplace bullying are among the highest in the world, having increased from 7% to nearly 10% from 2010 to 2014 (Potter, Dollard, & Tuckey, 2015).

• Australian Public Service significant work stress issue with intractable levels of bullying at 17% reported by staff in last 12 months,

• APS increasing lost productivity costs due to sickness absence of around $500 million per year (Australian Public Service Commission, 2014).
Cost of Work Stress

• Comcare (2015), the workers’ compensation insurer for the Australian Public Service, reported an 88% increase in mental stress claims from 2009 to 2014.
• Stress claims accounted for 13% of all claims but 43% of all costs
• Average cost of $291,000 (22% exceeded $500,000).
Cost of Work Stress

• ILO report, *Workplace Stress: A Collective Challenge* more than 40 million people are affected by work-related stress within the EU and that the estimated cost of work-related depression is €617 billion a year.

• Mental and physical health problems, cardiovascular disease, depression, suicide.
Executive Salaries Australia

Susan Lloyd-Hurwitz is now the best paid woman, with her salary of $3.77 million ...72nd on the overall list of 300.

Women in the top 300 list has increased from 11 last year to 15 in 2015.

Female CEOs out-performed the men in the top 300 for delivering shareholder value (despite small Ns)

More money $$-more power --Pay inequality

<table>
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<th>Country</th>
<th>Actual</th>
<th>Ideal*</th>
<th>CEO</th>
<th>Worker</th>
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<td>$4,183,419</td>
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<td>UK</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>5.3</td>
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<td>USA</td>
<td>354</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>$12,259,894</td>
<td>$34,645</td>
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*According to survey respondents from 40 different countries.

- Australians would like to see a ratio of 8.3 times.
- Actual rate is 93 X
- The average across the countries is nearly half at 4.6 times.
- Australia’s ratio is the highest in the 16 countries for which the authors’ have actual pay data.
- No specific relationship between Executive salary and company performance.
Figure 1. Share of income earned by top 1%, 1975-2014

Note: Data for all countries exclude capital gains.
### Australasian Journal of Organisational Psychology Vol. 1 No. 1 2008 - Vol. 9 No. 1 2016:
**EBSCOhost** E-Journals, complete sets of records (44) for this journal.

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<td>depression</td>
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<td>resistance</td>
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Barossa Valley, South Australia
CAUSES OF WORK STRESS

• An inevitable problem in a growth, competition economic model
“I’ve been nursing for nearly 40 years and I think that the pressure over those years outweighs the rewards, but it is still a rewarding career, and its very collegial. But there’s certainly one day out of ten that I would say; ‘jee, I feel really great today, I’ve had a lovely day, and my patients really loved me, and thanked me,’ and I’ll have nine days out of ten where I’ll say; ‘I felt pressured today, I felt unsafe at times, I felt overworked, and my patients were lashing out at me…’ and I’m the person that takes the brunt of that home at the end of the day..”
Forecast emerging organisational, social and human work related risks

- Unstable labour markets
  - Precarious contracts
- Globalisation
- Lean production, outsourcing
- Long working hours
- Ageing workforce
- Job insecurity
- Intensification of work, high work load, work pressure
- Changing work organisations
  - New forms of employment contracting practices
- Changing workforces
  - Poor work life balance
  - Older workers

Van den Bossche, S., Smulders, P., Houtman, I. Trends and risk groups in working conditions, TNO 2006

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What worker characteristics are required for these ‘dispossessed’ environments?

• According to a managing director of an Australian call centre there are two types of people who make successful cold callers
  1) extroverts because they thrive on interactions with others, and
  2) psychopaths because they are not emotionally hurt by constant rejection (Warne-Smith, 2006).
• Should we select for these characteristics?
• How are we to work in such environments?

Multi-level model of psychosocial factors at work (Dollard, 2013)

Fig. 1.3
Dollard, M.F., Shimazu, A., Nordin, R. Bin, Brough, P., Tuckey, M.R (Eds.), (2014). Psychosocial Factors at Work in the Asia Pacific Dordrecht; Springer International Publishing. 978-94-017-8974-5
Layers of influence on worker health

- Individual
- Job design
- Organisational
- External
The Cause of the Causes

Extended Health Erosion Path

Demands → Psychological Health

Resources → Engagement

Extended Motivational Path

Job Demands-Resources Model
Demerouti, Bakker et al., 2001
Psychosocial safety climate: a multilevel theory of work stress in the health and community service sector

M. F. Dollard* and W. McTernan
Psychosocial safety climate (PSC) refers to shared perceptions regarding policies, practices, and procedures for the protection of worker psychological health and safety.

Competing Values—worker health, a balance of productivity and worker health.
Management commitment
1. In my workplace senior management acts quickly to correct problems/issues that affect employees’ psychological health
2. Senior management acts decisively when a concern of an employees’ psychological status is raised
3. Senior management show support for stress prevention through involvement and commitment

Priority
4. Psychological well-being of staff is a priority for this organization
5. Senior management clearly considers the psychological health of employees to be of great importance
6. Senior management considers employee psychological health to be as important as productivity

Communication
7. There is good communication here about psychological safety issues which effect me
8. Information about workplace psychological well-being is always brought to my attention by my manager/supervisor
9. My contributions to resolving occupational health and safety concerns in the organization are listened to

Participation and involvement
10. Participation and consultation in psychological health and safety occurs with employees’, unions and health and safety representatives in my workplace
11. Employees are encouraged to become involved in psychological safety and health matters
12. In my organization, the prevention of stress involves all levels of the organization

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Controls for Time 1 Dependent measures

N = 262 Time1; N = 196, Time 2
18 schools

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Psychosocial safety climate as an antecedent of work characteristics and psychological strain: A multilevel model

Maureen F. Dollard, Tessa Opie, Sue Lenthal, John Wakerman, Sabina Knight, Sandra Dunn, Greg Rickard and Martha MacLeod

Psychosocial Safety Climate T1

- Workload T2
- Job control T2
- Supervisor support T2
- Emotional exhaustion T2
- Psychological distress T2

Sample T1 (N = 202)
Sample T2 (N = 163)

Independent samples matched by work unit (N = 48)
Time 1 → Time 2 24 months

Main effects and mediation model
Conservation of Resources Theory

- **COR theory** emphasizes “objective realities, clear stressors and common appraisals rather than focusing on personal appraisal in understanding stress and health” (Hobfoll, 2011)
The relationship between environmental demands at T1 and perceptions of workgroup morale at high and low levels of unit personnel resources.
THE VALUE OF PSC
Outcomes include:
- Advances in theoretical knowledge
- Peer reviewed publications
- Book and book chapters
- Reports and presentations
- Workshops and seminars
- Stresscafé website
- PSC Benchmarks
- PSC Hierarchy of control
- Collaboration with academics and industry partners

Acknowledgements: supported by funding from Safe Work Australia, SafeWork SA, ARC Discovery Grant, ARC Linkage Grant
A National Standard for Psychosocial Safety Climate (PSC): PSC 41 as the Benchmark for Low Risk of Job Strain and Depressive Symptoms

Tessa S. Bailey, Maureen F. Dollard, and Penny A. M. Richards
University of South Australia

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PSC Standards</th>
<th>Range 12 ― 60</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low risk PSC</td>
<td>41 or above</td>
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<tr>
<td>Medium risk PSC</td>
<td>38 – 40</td>
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<tr>
<td>High risk PSC</td>
<td>37 or below</td>
<td>(35% of respondents)</td>
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Elimination of low PSC – 14% reduction in job strain
16% reduction in depression
Using PSC to estimate productivity loss

(Becher & Dollard)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Workers PSC</th>
<th>Annual sickness absence (hours)</th>
<th>Cost via sickness absence</th>
<th>Productivity Loss</th>
<th>Cost via presenteeism</th>
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<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>60.3</td>
<td>$2,109</td>
<td>5.5%</td>
<td>$3,113</td>
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<tr>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>59.1</td>
<td>$2,067</td>
<td>5.4%</td>
<td>$3,042</td>
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<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>42.3</td>
<td>$1,479</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
<td>$1,856</td>
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Using PSC to estimate productivity loss

(Becher & Dollard)
A Pro-Social Approach to Productivity using the Australian Workplace Barometer

Cost of low PSC via sickness absence: AUD 2.4 billion p.a.
Cost of low PSC via presenteeism: AUD 3.6 billion p.a.
Total cost of low PSC to employers: AUD 6 billion p.a.
Predicting Happiness in Australian Workers Over 5 years, 2014-2015 (National Sample)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2009-2010</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>SE</th>
<th>Beta</th>
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<th>p</th>
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<td>(Constant)</td>
<td>5.99</td>
<td>0.36</td>
<td>16.61</td>
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<tr>
<td>Age</td>
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<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>.949</td>
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<tr>
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<td>0.00</td>
<td>4.78***</td>
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<td>-0.06</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>-3.51***</td>
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<tr>
<td>Skill Discretion (Control)</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>2.28*</td>
<td>.023</td>
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Gender, 1 = Males, 2 = Females

N = 1139

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Predicting Happiness in Australian Workers Over 4 years, 2014-2015 (National Sample)

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<tr>
<td>(Constant)</td>
<td>4.58</td>
<td>0.38</td>
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<tr>
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<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.13</td>
<td>4.34***</td>
<td>0.000</td>
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<td>Decision Authority (Control)</td>
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<td>0.03</td>
<td>-0.08</td>
<td>-2.98**</td>
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<td>Organisational Rewards</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td>2.72**</td>
<td>0.007</td>
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Gender, 1 = Males, 2 = Females  N = 1437
PSC and workers’ compensation in South Australia

Harry Becher and Maureen Dollard

- Australian Workplace Barometer linked to workers’ compensation claim data from Safework SA.

- Data were aggregated to the organisational level in both datasets.

- Matched data for 135 organisations.

- PSC has been dichotomized between low to moderate PSC (PSC < 41) and high PSC (PSC ≥ 41).
- PSC was measured in 2010, workers compensation claims include those made between 2010 and 2015.
- Days lost was log transformed to meet the assumption of normality for inferential testing.
- Only includes claims with lost days.
- Organisations with low or moderate PSC significantly more average days lost per workers compensation claim than high PSC \( t(133) = 2.05, p = .042 \). Cohen’s \( d = 0.35 \).

Average days lost per workers compensation claim between SA companies

- Low - Moderate PSC
  - N = 65
  - 170 days
- High PSC
  - N = 70
  - 102 days
workgroups about what constitutes appropriate leave behaviour, and timely support for managers from corporate areas on managing attendance in the workplace are also important factors.

**Interactive Chart: Sick leave and Psychosocial Safety Climate score**

Learn more about this chart: view data for Figure 4.

This is an interactive chart: hover over the coloured diamonds to view data.

A correlation exists between the PSC score for an agency and the number of sick leave days taken by their
Outstanding is the question
Where does PSC come from?
Psychosocial safety climate-Across Countries

Using the ESENER data 28 000 establishments > 10 employees—most senior OSH managers. Questions were:

“Does your establishment have a procedure to deal with,

1. work-related stress;
2. bullying or harassment;
3. work-related violence?”;
4. “What about the role of employees: Have they been consulted regarding measures to deal with psychosocial risks?” and
5. “Are employees encouraged to participate actively in the implementation and evaluation of the measures?”

Alpha was .87.
23 per cent of variance in PSC is due to country.
Worker health is good for the economy: Union density and psychosocial safety climate as determinants of country differences in worker health and productivity in 31 European countries

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Social Science & Medicine
Journal homepage: www.elsevier.com/locate/socscimed

Contents lists available at ScienceDirect
Social Science & Medicine

Solid boxes reflect the final model, different shades reflect different data sources

*/**/*** Beta values significant in final model, P < .05; P < .001

--- proposed by Benach et al., 2007
tested empirically

--- proposed by Benach et al., 2007
tested empirically
Corruption is an abuse of public power for personal gain
Taking bribes, favours

Figure 1. Effects of Corruption of Public Values at Work (Between-country effects)
Corrupt public values and PSC

• Corruption—corrupt public values, accounted for 17% of the country-variance in PSC leadership
• A sizeable co-relation between corruption and the operations of most senior OSH managers
• In a large public sector organisation (N > 100,000) in the Asia-Pacific region, a small to medium negative effect between perceptions of PSC and whether or not an individual had observed potentially corrupt behaviour.

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Shell is the sixth biggest lobbyist in Brussels, spending between €4.25-4.5m a year lobbying the EU institutions, according to the bloc’s transparency register.
30,000 lobbyists and counting: is Brussels under corporate sway?

From mobile phone charges to nations' interests, these shadowy agitators are estimated to influence 75% of European legislation.

By LAURENS CERULUS 5/20/15, 5:30 AM CET / Updated 7/14/15, 5:32 PM CET
Indulgence versus Restraint (IND)

Indulgence stands for a society that allows relatively free gratification of basic and natural human drives related to enjoying life and having fun.

Restraint stands for a society that suppresses gratification of needs and regulates it by means of strict social norms.

PSC Relates to National Values (Hofstede)
TRENDS IN PSYCHOSOCIAL RISKS IN AUSTRALIA
Australian and European Bullying Rates

Europe (European Working Conditions Survey 2010)
q71b. Over the past 12 months, during the course of your work have you been subjected to bullying /harassment?
N = 41,034, Employed only

Bullying is a problem at some work-places and for some workers. To label something, as bullying, the offensive behaviour has to occur repeatedly over a period of time, and the person confronted has to experience difficulties defending him or herself. The behaviour is not bullying if two parties of approximate equal “strength” are in conflict or the incident is an isolated event.

Have you been subjected to bullying at the workplace during the last six months?
N = 5919, Employed only 2009-2011
N = 4242, Employed only 2014/2015

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Bullying Rate (%)</th>
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<td>France</td>
<td>9.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>9.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>7.4</td>
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<td>Austria</td>
<td>6.9</td>
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<td>Luxembourg</td>
<td>6.0</td>
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<td>Finland</td>
<td>5.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>5.3</td>
</tr>
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<td>Latvia</td>
<td>5.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovenia</td>
<td>5.0</td>
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<td>Norway</td>
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<td>FYROM</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bulgaria</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
• Job Strain has increased for men
• 20% reporting job strain

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Psychological Demands</th>
<th>Job Control</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low-Strain</td>
<td>Active</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015 27.1%</td>
<td>2015 27.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passive</td>
<td>High-Strain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009/2011 29.7%</td>
<td>2009/2011 17.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015 24.6%</td>
<td>2015 21.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 2.**
Distribution across the four JD-C model job types for men.

Mikaela Owen, PhD candidate at the Asia Pacific Centre for Work Health and Safety, collaborating centre for the World Health Organisation.

• Job Strain has increased for women
• Nearly 27% reporting job strain
• Higher than men by 6%

![Diagram showing distribution across four JD-C model job types for women.](image)

PSYCHOSOCIAL SAFETY CLIMATE

PSC BY STATE: 2009 - 2015

Global Financial Crisis 2009

Harmonisation 2012

New South Wales (H)
Western Australia (NH)
South Australia (H)
Australian Capital Territory (H)
Victoria (NH)
Tasmania (H)
Northerm Territory (H)
Queensland (H)

High PSC
Moderate PSC

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National
Return on Investment

• Building human capital through PSC will assist the national productivity and innovation agenda by reducing lost productivity due to sickness absence, presenteeism and injury costs.

• The return on investment for mental health interventions is estimated at 2.3; for each dollar spent there is $2.3 in benefits for the organisation (PWC, 2014).
Sustainable workplace interventions/ change

• Top management support
• Build on current systems
• Involve all levels
• Participation and Participatory approaches
• Social dialogue with all stakeholders
• Communication up and down
• Risk assessment

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Although current evidence suggests that organisational interventions are not as effective as individual level interventions in reducing psychosocial risks and psychological health of workers this runs counter to substantial theory and non-experimental research.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organizational Factors</th>
<th>Groups</th>
<th>High PSC Intervention</th>
<th>Low PSC Intervention</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>k</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Job Demands</strong></td>
<td>Intervention</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1498</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Control</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1872</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Job Resources</strong></td>
<td>Intervention</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>4870</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Control</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>9697</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Psychological Health</strong></td>
<td>Intervention</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>4602</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Control</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>5883</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. * Significant difference between intervention and control groups <.05.

Revolutionary! The research suggests a paradigm shift in the evaluation of work stress interventions away from traditional models, (JDC, JDR, ERI) to the PSC framework/ template.
Facilitated workgroup—
1st meeting (volunteers)

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GHQ-12 and Emotional Exhaustion

Estimated Marginal Means of MEASURE_1
FACTOR1
3 2 1

Estimated Marginal Means
15.0 14.5 14.0 13.5 13.0 12.5 12.0 11.5

Group
Facilitated
Control

Estimated Marginal Means of EE
TIME
3 2 1

Estimated Marginal Means
4.8 4.6 4.4 4.2 4.0 3.8 3.6

Group
Facilitated
Control

GHQ-12 and Emotional Exhaustion

Psychological Distress

Emotional Exhaustion

Time 1                  Time 2               Time 3
Oct 04                    Dec 04               Sept 05

Time 1                  Time 2               Time 3
Oct 04                    Dec 04               Sept 05

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Work Stress Intervention Vic DET
Starting PSC Levels affects Interventions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Psychosocial safety climate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>T2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sessions attended T2</td>
<td>.63**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workshop quality T2</td>
<td>.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intervention quality T3</td>
<td>.68**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intervention progress T3</td>
<td>.60**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Work Stress Prevention: Risk Assessment

Used increasingly in the EU and Aus
• Supported by legislative frameworks
  1. Evidence based-problem solving process
  2. Problem identification and risk-assessment
  3. Choice of measures and planning of intervention (controls)
  4. Implementation of interventions
  5. Review of information needs and training needs of employees exposed to hazards (Cox & Griffiths).
  6. Change culture, leadership competency (ILO report)
  7. Australian Workplace Barometer risk assessment tool

Useful reference
Parker, S. (2015). Does the evidence and theory support the good work design principles. Canberra: Safe Work Australia, website maureen.dollard@unisa.edu.au
Bandaids or advocates for worker health? The role of psychology in promoting liveable work

Bandaids

- Where there is a clinic that does not link to the workforce
- Where there is a focus on resilience not voice and/or resistance

Advocacy

Trying to influence national policy, workplace culture, national culture (e.g. working hours) for happy productive cooperative work
State of the Art

• The World Health Organization’s “Healthy Workplaces” a global framework for business and community stakeholders.
• PRIMA-EF
• National frameworks for Worker Mental health in Australia (guidance)

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Presented by the College of Organisational Psychologists, the Workplace Excellence Awards celebrates outstanding achievement and innovation in the application of psychological principles in the workplace. Winners will be announced at the Gala Dinner for the following categories:

- Assessment (Individual, Team or Organisation)
- Coaching: Leadership, Career and Performance
- Learning and Development
- Organisational Change
- Organisational Design
- Recruitment & Selection
- Workplace Health & Wellbeing
Victorian Workplace Mental Wellbeing Collaboration

PROMOTING POSITIVE MENTAL WELLBEING IN VICTORIAN WORKPLACES

Resource Centre
Values that underlie occupational stress perspective:
(a) a humanistic-idealistic desire for a good society and a good working life;
(b) a drive for health and well-being;
(c) a belief in worker participation, influence, and control at the individual level; and
(d) economic interest in competitiveness and profits of the business organisation and the economic system" (Levi, 1990, p. 1144).
Six main points

• Work stressors are preventable – competition for resources, high demands

• Psychosocial safety climate is a leading risk factor, best target for intervention

• A form of ethical values based leadership

• Important role for national values and societal power actors including unions and management, WHS, and PSC development for liveable work

• Psychology is a power based discipline that could do more to change the status quo
Thank You for Listening!

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Published Papers on PSC

Books/ Book Chapters
Dollard, M.F., Shimazu, A., Nordin, R. Bin, Brough, P., Tuckey, M.R (Eds.), (2014). *Psychosocial Factors at Work in the Asia Pacific*. Dordrecht; Springer International Publishing. 978-94-017-8974-5
Edward Elgar Publishing Ltd

Refereed Journal Articles

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