

PREVENTING AND COMBATING UNDESIRABLE BEHAVIOUR



Practical checklist with tools and tips

Excessive work pressure over a prolonged period or undesirable behaviour – such as aggression, discrimination, (sexual) harassment and bullying – can lead to long-term absenteeism among employees. These forms of work-related psychosocial stress often have unfortunate consequences for your employees, but also for you as an employer.

Because work-related psychosocial stress has been one of the most significant occupational risks for years, the Working Conditions Act requires that you prevent it as far as possible. That starts by creating a socially safe work environment. But how do you do that? You can take these steps:

Draw up a work-related psychosocial stress policy

Make clear that you do not accept undesirable behaviour

Make sure all your employees know that undesirable behaviour is not tolerated.

Lay down what behaviour is and is not accepted and what the consequences of an infringement are in an undesirable behaviour protocol. That way, you are working to create a good work-related psychosocial stress policy.

Make sure the management and board support, enforce and adhere to the work-related psychosocial stress policy, and that they are aware of their modelling role.

Make sure the management and board facilitate the discussion of work-related psychosocial stress, now and in the future. Periodically put the subject on the agenda for management and other meetings.

Create a social feeling in the workplace

Promote social relationships in the workplace: that way, employees get to know each other better and support each other, and it makes it easier to raise issues with one another. For example, you could organise team outings or encourage staff to eat lunch together.

Talk to your employees about desirable behaviour: how do we want to behave towards one another?

Know your employees: show genuine interest, ask them how they are doing. And invite employees to talk to you if something is bothering you.

Create a culture in which employees actively challenge each other on signals of undesirable behaviour and reward signals of desirable behaviour with short, positive feedback.

Appoint a confidential counsellor

Appoint a confidential counsellor. This could be someone from within the company or it could be an external confidential counsellor. Having an internal confidential counsellor may be made a legal requirement in future.

Make sure your employees know the confidential counsellor for your company. The mere fact that your employees know that your company has a confidential counsellor can prevent undesirable behaviour.

Deal with reports of undesirable behaviour

Do not laugh off reports and do not downplay employees' feelings.

Take all reports seriously in order to prevent employees from feeling alone and calling in sick.

Investigate the current situation following previous reports in order to identify and tackle ongoing problems.

Develop skills to prevent undesirable behaviour

Have managers follow training in order to prevent and tackle undesirable behaviour.

If you appoint an employee as a confidential counsellor, they will need training in order to perform their role properly.