Safe Space Leadership

LEADERSHIP TOOLKIT

The leadership behaviours behind psychosocial hazards

A practical guide for people and culture leaders, and the leaders they support

Use it in a leadership meeting, a one-to-one or your own reflection.

Many of the most common psychosocial hazards sit in everyday leadership: in how work is allocated, how clear roles are, how conflict is handled and how much support people receive.

Every Australian jurisdiction now explicitly requires employers to identify and manage these hazards, alongside physical ones, and regulators are looking more closely at the management practices behind them. That puts leaders at the centre of the work.

23%
of employers reported complaints or claims related to job demands

22%
related to conflict or poor workplace relationships

19%
related to a lack of role clarity

28%
of employers invest in leadership and management training for psychosocial safety

AHRI, QUARTERLY AUSTRALIAN WORK OUTLOOK, JUNE QUARTER 2026 / COMPLAINTS OR CLAIMS OVER THE LAST TWO FINANCIAL YEARS

Six of the hazards leaders most directly influence

HAZARD	WHAT IT CAN LOOK LIKE IN EVERYDAY LEADERSHIP	A QUESTION FOR LEADERS
Job demands	Work allocated without checking capacity. New priorities added without anything coming off.	*What have I added to my team's load this month, and what have I taken away?*
Poor workplace relationships and conflict	Tension left to settle on its own. Difficult conversations delayed.	*Which conversation am I avoiding, and what is it costing the team?*
Lack of role clarity	Expectations assumed rather than agreed. Responsibilities that overlap.	*Could each person describe what good looks like in their role the way I would?*
Poor support	Leaders who are hard to reach, or present only when something goes wrong.	*When did each person last have my full attention for something other than a problem?*
Low job control	Decisions made for people that they could make themselves.	*Where could my team have more say in how their work gets done?*
Inadequate reward and recognition	Effort noticed only when something fails.	*What did someone do well this week that I haven't acknowledged?*

ONE MORE QUESTION

Who in my team is least likely to raise a concern, and how would I know if something was wrong?

Quiet doesn't always mean safe. Few concerns can mean people have learned that speaking up costs more than it gets them. Speak-up lines and support services rely on people being willing to use them.

Leaders make many of the decisions that shape how work is designed, from how it's allocated to who has a say. That's why building their capability can help reduce risk, alongside the organisation's broader approach to managing psychosocial hazards.

Want to know where your leaders stand?

The free Retention Scorecard takes about 10 minutes and shows the leadership area that needs attention most.

safespaceleadership.com.au/scorecard

SSL builds leaders people choose to stay for.

General information about leadership practice, not legal or WHS advice. For your obligations, refer to the codes of practice and your state or territory regulator. Sources: Australian HR Institute, Quarterly Australian Work Outlook, June Quarter 2026; Safe Work Australia, Model Code of Practice: Managing psychosocial hazards at work, 2022; WorkSafe Victoria, Compliance Code: Psychological health, 2025; E. Priday, "Your psychosocial safety measures likely aren't working for your entire workforce", AHRI, November 2026. Updated November 2026. © Safe Space Leadership 2026