Work Health Safety and Risk Management Policy

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to promote and implement the principles and processes of work health and safety risk management in order to create and maintain a safe and healthy working environment for all that is clinician, clients, contractors and visitors. Sprout Psychology Centre services strongly believes that it has an ethical duty, in addition to its legislative responsibility, to effectively manage workplace risks in order to prevent injuries and incidents and improve safety in the workplace. It is also recognised that improving WHS performance plays a key role in improving overall services provided and deliver effective services and programs to its clients.

Who does this policy refer to?

This policy applies to all stakeholders and to all workplaces that Sprout Psychology Centre provide services to.

Why is risk management important?

Risk management is important because it plays a vital role in creating safer and healthier workplaces and helps to meet it legislative responsibilities. Under the Work Health and Safety Act (NSW) 2011, Sprout Psychology Centre has a responsibility to ensure that the workplace is free of hazards that can cause injury or illness to all such as visitors, clients and contractors.

Risk management involves a systematic process by which hazards are identified and the risk of injury or illness is eliminated or reduced. Risk Under the Work Health and Safety Regulation (NSW) 2011 risk management is a logical, step-by-step process of identifying hazards, assessing the risk associated with those hazards, eliminating or controlling those risks and monitoring and reviewing risk assessments and control measures. The objective of this process is to improve workplace health and safety by addressing problems before injuries and incidents occur.

Risk management is required at all stages of a work process including:

- Prior to establishing and using a workplace
- When planning and designing work processes
- Before selecting, purchasing, installing and using equipment
- Before changes are made to the workplace or systems of work
- Whenever there is new information about work processes.

Step 1 – Identify hazards

Identifying hazards is the first step in the risk management process. A hazard is a situation with the potential to cause harm to life, health or property and is the primary cause of health and safety problems in a workplace. Hazards can be identified in a number of ways including:

- Undertaking workplace inspections (including inspections of clients' homes where appropriate)
- Reviewing injury and incident data including near misses
- Investigating complaints and incidents
- Conducting safety audits
- Monitoring employee health and the work environment
- Observing work practices
- Consulting with staff (and in some cases clients and visitors)
- Responding to information contained on Hazard Report Forms and Client Risk Profiles

When a hazard is found, in the first instance a quick fix should be applied, where it is appropriate to do so. Examples of this would include removing an obstacle in a passageway and changing a work practice for one that is safer. A quick fix is a control measure that sorts the problem out there and then and may be a short or long-term solution.

Once a hazard has been identified it must be reported verbally and completion of a Hazard Report Form will also need to be completed (attached) within 24 hours of the hazard being identified. By reporting hazards, this increases the likelihood of creating a safer working environment.

Step 2 – Assess risks

Once a hazard has been reported, a risk assessment in consultation with the staff must be conducted. This should occur **within 7 days of the hazard being reported** although in some cases, risk assessments may need to be conducted urgently. A risk assessment is about working out how serious the problem is.

To do this the following activities need to occur:
- Evaluate the likelihood of an injury or illness occurring and the likely severity of that injury or illness, using a risk assessment matrix to assign a risk rating (see below)
- Identify the factors that may be contributing to the risk
- Where available, review health and safety information that is relevant to the particular hazard (such as Codes of Practice, Work Cover guidelines and Material Safety Data Sheets)
- Document outcomes relating to risk assessments undertaken and the control measures implemented on the Risk Assessment and Control Form.

Risk assessment looks at the likelihood of the hazard causing harm or injury and the severity of that harm or injury. The following risk assessment matrix is used to assign a risk category

Likelihood → Severity ↓	Very likely	Likely	Unlikely
High – life threatening or cause serious injury	Category 1	Category 1	Category 2
Med **– Could result in temporary incapacity**	Category 1	Category 2	Category 3
Low – Could result in inconvenience/first aid	Category 2	Category 3	Category 3

Category 1   Situation is serious. May need to stop work tasks or change work processes immediately. Must be fixed as soon as possible. Consider short- and long-term options.

Category 2   **Action needs to be taken in a timely manner, usually within a month, but if a quick and easy solution is available, the hazard should be fixed immediately.**

Category 3   Action is required within 3 months but if a quick and easy solution is available, the hazard should be fixed immediately.

When assessing the risks associated with a hazard, Sprout Psychology Centre will consult with the staff affected by that hazard. Consultation with clients especially if the hazard is located in a client's home may need to occur. Clients may have insights into the nature of the hazard and how dangerous it is. When the risk assessment is completed it will be documented on the outcomes on the Risk Assessment and Control Form.

Step 3 – Eliminate/control risks

Once risks have been assessed action must be taken in consultation with staff, and in some cases, clients to eliminate or control risks. Whilst the most effective action is to eliminate risks, this is not always possible, so control measures must be implemented according to the hierarchy of control contained in the Work Health and Safety Regulation (NSW) 2011.

Control measure	Examples
Elimination	• Redesigning a job to remove an unsafe work practice
Substitution	• Substituting a heavy piece of equipment for a lighter piece of equipment
Isolation	• Using electronic swipe cards to restrict access to work areas
Engineering means	• Installing ramps to provide safer access to buildings
Administrative means	• Providing training on the use of equipment or work practices
Personal Protective Equipment	• Providing gloves etc. to prevent exposure to blood and body substances

When using the hierarchy of control, consider the most effective means of control first (i.e. elimination) and work down the list. In many cases a combination of measures may be needed in order to properly control the risk. Consultation with staff on the implementation of control measures must be documented on the Risk Assessment and Control Form.

Step 4 – Monitor and review risk assessments and control measures
Once risk assessments are in place, the legislation requires that the assessments be monitored and reviewed in order to maintain the currency of that assessment. Changes to work practices, work environment or equipment may change the level of risk. The control measures used must also be monitored and reviewed to ensure that they are effective and do not create additional risks.
Sprout Psychology Centre are responsible for monitoring and reviewing risk assessments and control measures in consultation with relevant stakeholders. They are also responsible for documenting the monitoring and review processes using the Risk Assessment and Control Form. Assessments and control measures will need to be re-evaluated if:

- there is evidence that the risk assessment or control measure is no longer valid
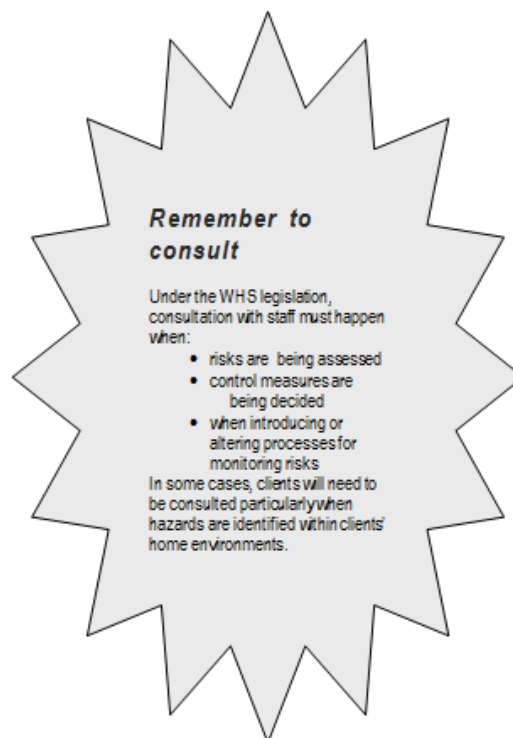- an injury or incident resulting from exposure to the hazard occurs

- there are changes to the work environment, equipment or work practices which may make the assessment or control measure ineffective or out-of-date

Monitoring should occur on a regular basis such as weekly, monthly or quarterly whereas a review should occur at the end of a specified time period by which point a risk assessment or a control measure would be expected to have demonstrated whether or not it was effective. Remember – any 'quick fixes' that are implemented to control hazards, also need to be monitored and reviewed.

Under the Work Health and Safety Regulation (NSW) 2011 risk management is a logical, step-by-step process of identifying hazards, assessing the risk associated with those hazards, eliminating or controlling those risks and monitoring and reviewing risk assessments and control measures. The objective of this process is to improve workplace health and safety by addressing problems before injuries and incidents occur.

Remember to consult

Under the WHS legislation, consultation with staff must happen when:

- risks are being assessed
- control measures are being decided
- when introducing or altering processes for monitoring risks

In some cases, clients will need to be consulted particularly when hazards are identified within clients' home environments.

Overview of risk management procedures

Sprout

It's a simple 4-step process!

Step 1

Identify hazard

Who does this?
Clinician, visitor or client who sees a hazard.

How are hazards identified?
Hazards can be identified through inspections, incident investigations, safety audits, consulting with staff, examining injury/incident records, complaints, health and environmental monitoring, near misses and observation.

What needs to be done?
- Implement a quick fix if possible
- Report hazard to the line manager/director as soon as possible
- Complete the Hazard Report Form and forward this to the manager within **24 hours** of the hazard being identified

Tools available
Hazard Report Form (attached)
Line manager/director (for advice)

Step 2

Assess risk

Who does this?
Clinician in consultation with staff.

How are risks assessed?
Risks are assessed using risk management matrix to determine a risk category based on likelihood of the hazard causing harm and the severity of that harm.

What needs to be done?
- Identify factors causing the risk
- Use the risk assessment matrix to determine the risk rating in consultation with the affected staff
- Document outcomes on the Risk Assessment and Control Form
- Risk assessments must be completed and documented within **7 days** of the hazard being reported

Tools available
Risk Assessment and Control Form (attached)
Risk Assessment Matrix

Step 3

Eliminate/control risk
Who does this?
Line manager/directors in consultation with staff.

How are risks controlled?
Risks must be eliminated where possible. If this cannot be done, control measures are implemented using the hierarchy of control.

What needs to be done?
- Apply the hierarchy of control to work out the best control measure/s
- Document control measures on the Risk Assessment and Control Form
- Implement control measures within the timeframes determined by the risk category
- Provide information, instruction,
- training and supervision in relation to the control measure/s being used
- Tools available
- Risk Assessment and Control Form
- Hierarchy of Control

Step 4
Monitor and Review
Who does this?
Line manager/directors in consultation with staff

How is this done?
This is done by re-visiting the control measures to ensure that they are effective. It will involve observation and examining injury and incident records.

What needs to be done?
- Determine timeframes for monitoring and reviewing control measures e.g. weekly, monthly, quarterly
- Determine how well the control measure is working and whether the risk category is current
- If there are problems, re-visit the assessment and control measures
- Document outcomes on a Risk Assessment and Control Form and provide updated information, instruction, training and supervision

Who is responsible for risk management?

Director is responsible for

- Developing an organisational approach to meet the legislative requirements of risk management
- Ensuring that processes are in place for identifying hazards, assessing risks, documenting risk management controls and monitoring/reviewing risk assessments and control measures
- Providing information, instruction, training and supervision to enable staff to implement risk management processes
- Monitoring and reviewing the overall effectiveness of risk management processes
- Ensuring sufficient resources are available to effectively manage risks in the workplace
- Ensuring risk management processes are implemented in their work area
- Ensuring that training, information and instruction to enable them to participate in risk management processes and to enable them to perform work tasks safely
- Following up on reported hazards by undertaking risk assessments and implementing control measures (in consultation with the relevant staff, and in some cases, clients)
- Monitoring and reviewing risk assessments and control measures
- Reviewing measures taken to ensure the health, safety and welfare of all concerned.
- Investigating WHS matters and providing assistance in resolving those matters
- Assisting in the recording of workplace hazards and incidents
- Developing and reviewing policies, guidelines and
- protocols in relation to risk management processes to ensure that the department's needs are met
- Monitoring organisational trends, addressing emerging issues and reporting on performance

The cost of getting things wrong

Failure to identify hazards and assess and control the risks from those hazards will mean that a safe workplace cannot be maintained. This not only increases the likelihood of injury and illness to, but also increases the likelihood of dissatisfaction and low morale.

If obligations under the occupational health and safety legislation are not met, it risks incurring financial penalties as well as creating a perception of poor performance in the area of staff health, safety and welfare. Similarly, director, can be fined under the legislation for failing to meet their obligations in relation to occupational health and safety.

Risk management provides a proven methodology to eliminate or reduce workplace hazards that can cause injury, illness and disease. Although managing WHS risks is required by law, it also makes sound business sense to do this. If unable to provide a safe workplace for its employees, this will affect its ability to deliver effective services and programs to its clients.

Associated policies and legislation

Work Health and Safety Act (NSW) 2011
Work Health and Safety Regulation (NSW) 2011

WorkCover First aid in the workplace code of practice 2015.

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