

Advice for QTU members

To help minimise the impact of workplace issues that might be contributing to a psychological injury, the QTU recommends:

- meeting with your manager and HR to discuss the issues and develop reduction strategies to prevent injury
- contacting your Employee Assistance provider
TAFE Queensland EAS:
Optum 1800 604 640
CQU EAP:
Davidson Trahaire Corpsych 1300 360 364
- contacting Teachers Union Health (TUH)
Supportline on 1800 655 302 (only for TUH members)
- reporting specific workplace incidents as WHS incidents and recording them as such
- referring issues and incidents to the WHS committee and/or local consultative committee for action through your QTU Reps
- contact the QTU to discuss risk mitigation strategies using the Work Health and Safety legislative framework.

For further information regarding managing stress and related injuries in the workplace, please contact the QTU.

David Terauds (QTU TAFE Organiser) or Jeff Backen (Assistant Secretary) are available by email at tafe@qtu.asn.au

Queensland Teachers' Union TAFE Division

Ph 07 3512 9000

Email tafe@qtu.asn.au

Web www.qtu.asn.au

Queensland Teachers' Assist Desk

Ph 1300 117 823

This document is issued for general guidance only. It does not constitute professional advice. The issues with which it deals are complex and the document necessarily deals only with general principles. No reader should rely on this document for the purpose of making a decision as to action but should seek the appropriate advice from the Union on the particular circumstances of that reader. The Union accepts no responsibility for the consequences should any person act in reliance on this document without obtaining the appropriate advice from the Union.

Authorised by Graham Moloney, General Secretary,
Queensland Teachers Union, 21 Graham St, Milton Q 4064

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& related injuries



QUEENSLAND
TEACHERS' UNION
OF EMPLOYEES



A psychological injury is a real injury.

Continual and excessive pressure, unreasonable expectations or fractured relationships can give rise to stress-related psychological injuries.

We react to the pressures we are under through complex interactions of the physical, biochemical and psychological systems. The body's stress response is designed for short bursts of activity with a quick return to a 'non-stressed' state. The stress response is not meant to be prolonged.

If you are experiencing these symptoms, you should consult your doctor.

Chronic stress can cause or worsen a range of ill health problems, severely affecting quality of life.

There are a number of potential causes for psychological injuries in the workplace.

Every employee has the right to a safe working environment, including a reasonable and manageable workload (subject to reasonable management expectations). Living with prolonged high levels of stress can cause mental and physical ill health.

The Disability Safe website states: "Health and safety problems arise when we are continually exposed to stressors at work and feel that we cannot escape or avoid them."

"What happens to the body affects how we feel and think and our mental state can directly affect the way our body functions."

The physical and psychological symptoms which can be experienced include:

- headaches
- feeling anxious, helpless or afraid
- backaches and muscular aches and pains
- apathy and hopelessness
- cramps in the neck, shoulders or arms
- changes in appetite and weight
- poor memory and difficulty in concentrating
- sleep difficulties
- feeling frustrated, irritable or angry
- generally feeling worn out or run down
- feeling weepy or tearful
- loss of energy and motivation.

Additional information for members:

- Workplace Health and Safety Queensland
www.deir.qld.gov.au/workplace/hazards/bullying-fatigue-stress-violence/index.htm
- Safe Work Australia
www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/sites/swa/pages/default
- Victorian WorkCover Authority
www.vwa.vic.gov.au/safety-and-prevention/health-and-safety-topics/stress
- Helpguide.Org
www.helpguide.org/articles/stress/stress-at-work.htm
- Comcare
www.comcare.gov.au/preventing/hazards/psychosocial_hazards/work-related_mental_stress