

Webinar Transcript

Governing psychosocial risks in the workplace

So hi everybody. Welcome, welcome. My name is Sean McDonald. We are here today for Governance Made Easy webinar titled More Than Safety Posters Governing Psychosocial Risks in the Workplace. And I'm joined with Catherine Rouge, Georgia Henry and Amy Kear. My name is Sean McDonald and I shall be your moderator in the background for the next forty five odd minutes.

Firstly, thank you for attending today. We always appreciate the effort you make to be here for our live events. During the session, if you have any questions, which of course we hope you will do, please try and use the Q and A button on your toolbar.

It enables us to keep a track of things as we're going through the webinar.

And finally, if you stay through till the end, which of course we hope you will do, and as is now very customary for our webinars, we have a special treat for you. By answering a really short one minute survey, and it really is a really short survey, the end of the webinar, you're going to the draw to win one of our beautiful Hampers worth over four hundred dollars. Now for those not too familiar with BoardPro, we are a board software provider, sometimes called a board portal. We serve about thirty odd thousand users around the globe across about thirty four different countries these days. We enable organizations to prepare for and run their board meetings super efficiently and effectively with you guess clever software with less time and deliver more impact and value for the organization.

And as much as we are a board software provider, part of our wider mission here at BoardPRO is to make the fundamentals of governance free and easy to implement for all organisations, but especially those organisations with resource constraints. And one of the ways in which we do this is by providing free access to hundreds of business and governance templates, guides and resources, which funnily enough, you'll find in the resources section of our website.

And these webinars that we host every week are also a great way of accessing key governance knowledge without the time commitment and costs typically associated with in person events.

So for the next forty five odd minutes, sit back and relax and add to the discussion by asking as many questions as you would like. A full recording of the webinar along with the slide deck and the transcript and other resources will be available to you tomorrow. They'll be posted on our website on the webinar page and they'll also be sent to you via email.

So let's crack on.

Let me have the team introduce themselves starting with you, Georgia.

Thanks, Sean. My name is Georgia Henry from Henry Reed. We're culture and leadership specialists based in Brisbane and we work all over Australia and around the Asia region. We work with organizations from a board level down to help them understand their current culture and the risks and opportunities that presents.

We redesigned culture to align, optimize strategic alignment and achievement of outcomes. We coach leaders around leading culture. And increasingly we're supporting organisations with matters of psychosocial safety in the organisation and in the boardroom. So I'm really looking forward to this discussion today.

Thanks, Georgia. Amy. Amy?

Thanks, Sean. Tena koutou katoa.

No Amy Kia Toko Ingoa. Hello, everyone. My name is Amy Kia. I'm based in Christchurch, New Zealand, and I work as a barrister in the employment and health and safety space.

My interest in psychosocial risk in the workplace is often as the ambulance at the bottom of the cliff. I advise both victims and employers, including at board level. And I conduct employment investigations, which is often sort of complex psychosocial problems, bullying, harassment, those sorts of things. Lovely to be here today.

Thank you for having me.

Thanks, Amy. And last but by no means least, Katherine, over to you.

Thanks, Sean, and hi, everyone. Well, I've previously begun my introductions on, board pro webinars by saying that I help people work with people, and my motivation for doing that is to reduce workplace harm caused by psychosocial factors. I've been involved in community governance since I was a teenager, which is more than thirty years ago now. I've long been fascinated by the behavioral science of leadership and how people work together to things done in any context.

My work experience spans sixteen years in aviation, ten years in senior comms and engagement roles managing reputational risk. And in that context, I found that the more senior roles I had, the more exposed I was to a range of psychological risks and harm. It's the cost of that which motivated me to double down on doing something about it. Today, I help leaders and teams create psychologically healthy workplaces with tools and approaches that are informed by psychology and neuroscience.

To begin with, I want to frame the conversation and manage expectations around what we can reasonably cover with the constraints of, what's now a thirty eight minute webinar. This is a massive topic which we could easily spend a full day exploring together and still probably only scratch the surface. It's complex, it's nuanced, and as Sean's mentioned, if you've got specific questions, put them in the q and a. We may not get to all of them, but really helpful to know if this is an area that there's an appetite for us to spend more time on.

So this is our road map for where we're heading today. Some definitions to start with to make sure we've all got the same understanding of the terminology. We'll look at why this matters and the very real costs of inaction. The meat in the sandwich for today is understanding what makes this so hard, the core differences between physical and psychosocial hazards, and why those differences require us to approach them differently.

We'll take a brief look at what guidance is available for boards and, management to follow, and some indicators that are important for you to ask for and pay attention to. Finally, some simple steps, to take if you're not sure where to start. I'm also here today to learn from your questions and from Amy's and Georgia's contributions. So thank you all very much for being here.

So what are we talking about? Well, a psychosocial hazard is any workplace condition or factor that has the potential to cause psychological harm.

As you can imagine, that covers quite a lot of things. In New Zealand, WorkSafe published some guidelines in April of this year, which offers three areas where these hazards can arise.

And I've found these categories really helpful in thinking about this massive area. So firstly, there's work design. This is your job responsibilities and your workload, but also your working hours and conditions.

Secondly, your work environment. This includes everything in the physical environment, so your equipment, lighting, space. Also, the extent to which you're exposed to trauma or aggression in the course of your work. Ten years ago, this might have perhaps been the sole domain of certain occupations like first responders. But these days, anyone in a customer facing role, call centers and those who manage social media channels can receive a lot of harmful abuse, both in person and online.

Finally, social factors. Those are your interpersonal relationships, organizational culture, and, of course, leadership plays a huge role here.

If you're looking for somewhere to start, of the three, I would focus your energy on social factors because the extent to which people are prepared to raise or report issues relating to their job design or their work environment is gonna be directly influenced by their relationship with their leader and, of course, their team culture.

So from hazards to risks, we calculate risks based on the likelihood and severity of harm arising when people are exposed to one or more, psychosocial hazard. Not all hazards are equal. Some present greater risk of harm than others.

And when we're talking about social factors in particular, as you can imagine, the likelihood and severity of harm is really dynamic.

It's not nearly as simple as there's water on the stairs and we need to clean it up or someone might injure themselves.

Finally, psychological safety. This is a concept that, I don't think is particularly well understood in general, even though it is increasingly talked about.

It's not the absence of tension or stress or anxiety in the workplace.

Psychologically safe workplaces are not happy all the time. This is a team climate, which materially reduces the risk of both physical and psychological harm.

That's because it's a climate or environment where it's safe for people to take interpersonal risks. What that means is it's an environment where people feel they can speak up, admit mistakes, challenge ideas, and ask questions, particularly of leadership, without feeling like it's going to go badly for them if they say something.

If you've read anything on this subject, I hope it's the Fearless Organization by Amy Edmonson. She didn't invent or coin the term psychological safety, but she did, build on previous research and came up with the helpful descriptor.

Excuse me. The helpful descriptor that psychological safety is the soil, not the seed.

So the seed is whatever it is that you're in the business of producing. If you wanna grow a healthy plant, pay attention to the soil. If you want a healthy supply of products and services or innovation, learning, and growth, pay attention to the team climate.

I'll pause there and let, Georgia or Amy add anything or comment on those definitions before we move on.

Absolutely. I'm gonna jump in there because this for me, this is all about your organizational culture and what might be, you know, taking something from a psychosocial hazard into a risk definitely is exacerbated by your culture.

And the impact on individuals and how individuals respond and react depends on a lot of emotions, a lot of that team culture and leadership, on legacy issues, and they can change very quickly. It's very dynamic when we look at the risks from taking a psychosocial hazard into an area of risk and then causing harm. And so it is around creating the right culture.

I'll save my comments for later, Kathy.

Okay. That's all good. I was wondering if you were gonna gonna talk about, just the everyday stress inherent in in work, because it is probably important also for us to define harm. And in the context of of everyday stress, all jobs involve some form of stress, and stress can actually be helpful. It mobilizes us.

For me, it certainly helps me meet deadlines and and perform under pressure, but stress becomes harmful when it's chronic, when it's uncontrollable, and when it's importantly, it's unsupported.

A really good definition I came across the other day is that everyday stress becomes mental harm when it stops helping people perform, and they have to start protecting themselves from the organization.

So why does all this matter? There's plenty of solid legal, reputational, social, financial, and human reasons why it's important for anyone on a board or in a leadership role to pay attention to this.

In the New Zealand and Australian context, our health and safety legislation requires a person conducting a business or undertaking, PCBU, to manage mental as well as physical harm. And I think, Amy, you can correct me here. I think the term PCBU is particular to our contexts. In the UK and elsewhere, this is probably simply referred to as the employer.

Different concepts internationally, but same meaning.

Great.

To illustrate the human cost in New Zealand, I want to just briefly mention an eighty four page report that WorkSafe New Zealand, Mahi Haumaru Aotearoa, published in April last year, which examined work related suicide.

This obviously sits at the extreme end of mental harm. This is a broad ranging report, and one section involved a qualitative of all available coroner's findings for death by suicide that occurred in New Zealand from twenty seventeen to twenty twenty one.

They determined that over that four to five year period, one hundred and ninety seven lives, which represents just under twelve percent of the total, which is actually an indictment on our country's mental health, one hundred and ninety seven of those losses were work related.

So that is, I think, the most devastating cost of ignoring these hazards, and and that's real.

Georgia and Amy, that's a difficult segue, but I would love to hear about why this matters in the context that you've worked in.

Well, I can I can address that one, and and I hope that the audience knows this, but any any officer of an organization can be personally liable for failure to manage harm, in the workplace? In in the New Zealand context and and I apologize for for sticking to my, to my own jurisdiction. But there's quite a clear definition of what a director is expected to do, and that includes building and maintaining the knowledge of the risk in the workplaces, performing in our legislation that's described as a due diligence. So knowing about the the relevant risks in the workplace, knowing about the relevant best practices, and monitoring the systems and the processes for addressing those risks. It's not good enough to sit as a director and leave it to management. So that's why it particularly matters in this context.

Yeah. And very much under the Australian legislation as well. The boards of directors retain that responsibility. They do have personal liability.

I worked with an organization earlier this year where a CEO lodged a claim and was suffering, found to be suffering from psychological damage.

The legal advice was that the directors were personally facing a one hundred thousand dollars liability each. So while a board can delegate and assign tasks for managing, psychosocial risks in the workplace, they cannot delegate their responsibility and their overall responsibility for managing this. And so that places a huge responsibility on boards that directors may not be aware of and understanding how they need to have oversight and govern this area effectively.

So plenty of motivation, I hope, for people, to pay attention to this.

So why is this so hard? Why are organizations and leaders and boards often failing people, in this area? Well, I think part of the problem is honestly that we don't actually understand the problem very well. We're so used to dealing with physical hazards that we struggle to know how to deal with something that can still cause harm to a person, but it's actually a completely different beast. This table is by no means exhaustive, but I wanted to highlight some of the key differences between these two types of hazards.

Physical hazards are visible. They usually exist in an easily identified location. It's usually pretty safe and straightforward to report them, and depending on your safety culture, it's typically low risk for someone to report this type of hazard. I know there are exceptions to that, but I'm talking in general terms.

Psychosocial hazards on the other hand are invisible. They are relational, behavioral, social. These are abstract things. They are hard to pinpoint and hard to pin down. Not unlike an intermittent IT error that's always there when no one's around, but the minute you bring it to the attention of someone who can fix it, the problem fails to replicate.

It's very subjective.

In his book, *Psychosocial Hazards Are Real*, doctor I David Daniels writes, identifying psychosocial hazard needs only one form of identification, and that's the perception of the person exposed.

I think that's part of what makes this so tricky for leaders responding to it. The onus for reporting is also often on that person, the person who is experiencing the harm, and there can be a lot of stigma involved in that. It can feel very high risk.

Can I jump in there, Catherine?

Yeah.

Because quite often, there's power dynamics at play as well, which makes it very difficult for people to actually raise or escalate these issues because that can be a part of the issue, part of the problem. And I love that you mentioned that it is the person who's experiencing it, that it is their perception of the situation that is actually their response.

Because quite often I've talked to leaders in this situation who say, well, that wasn't our intention or that's not what has happened. And I'm like, well, that's your perspective. But when we look at the other side, it has actually caused harm. And so it is really difficult sometimes for leaders to understand the impact of change or how it has been perceived by others and how it has created the hazard when that was not an intention or they anticipate that level of risk.

I'd add to that that one of the challenges when we talk about psychosocial harm is physical harm is sort of binary, in the sense that this machine is safe or this process is clear, and then we have clear markers of how to manage it. You know? We've all seen the red, orange, green kind of scales. Psychosocial risk is interpersonal and shifting, and we don't yet have a good language for measuring interpersonal risk on a red, green red orange green scale. There are we tend to think of this risk as being either she's okay or she's not okay. But there is something in between and we need to develop a language to have good conversation about that.

Yeah. We've got a couple of questions that have come in. I might just throw those out at this point because they're quite relevant. So one is, as a recipient of moral distress, which escalated to psychosocial distress and very poor management of my reporting, How does a worker manage this effectively?

Goodness, there's a lot in that question, and it's diff without knowing more about your context, Sally, it's difficult to give you any concrete advice other than for me, everything starts with conversations, and, of course, it's it's difficult if you have escalated and reported and brought things to the attention of of leaders, people responsible.

There, in terms of escalation and and again, I don't know what what your context is in terms of the procedures in in your environment.

But really, yeah, it's it's a series of con conversations and escalations.

Ultimately, if in in any environment, as difficult as it is, if you have raised issues and people who have the power to do something about it aren't addressing them, often the difficult option left as to are you going to stay in the environment or not. And I've made the difficult decision to leave environments in context like that.

Do either of you, Georgia or Amy, have anything to add to I I was gonna say there's also generally, there's always avenues external to the organization.

If you've escalated and you are not getting an appropriate response to the level of support that you need, you can take it to external agencies. So Human Rights Commission in Australia or contact Fair Work Australia, contact the WorkSafe Safe Work Australia or the safety organization in your state. So you can seek external support as well.

There's a really tricky question at the at the top of the list there. I don't know, Georgia and Amy, if you can see it, and I'm pleased that somebody's asked this because it's so it is so difficult.

The context is if there's a team member causing tension raising the risk of a psychosocial claim from the rest of the team and however that person is claiming. So you have a reverse reverse claim situation. And it is easy with this the subjective nature of psychosocial harm for it to be weaponized. Yeah.

I'd I'd love to tackle that one.

Yeah. Absolutely.

Because if we've got a team member that's causing that tension in the workplace, however that team member is claiming that they're being bullied by the team, for me it's very much around as the leader of that team, where is the evidence? So we're dealing a lot with emotions and emotions that are driving behaviours and are driving the psychosocial claims.

But you're needing to look at the situation. So within the legislation, it talks about And one of the other questions there talks about, because this is so subjective, how do you look at this under the legislation? And it's around looking at the reasonableness and what is actually happening in the workplace. And it is having conversations and addressing this with all the team members and the employee that may be causing the issues. It is around identifying the root causes for the emotions that are driving behaviours, what the current situation is, and then addressing some of those other contributing factors which might be some of those other hazards, which might be about workplace stress, job design, interactions, environment, and really working through. So it is tricky, but it needs to be addressed and it needs to be addressed in a proactive way to be able to have some honest conversations in a caring, empathetic way to get to some root causes.

You can't Without wanting to sound glib, the answer to that question, and in fact all of the other questions that have been asked, is that the organization should think about this and have a process for it. So you're right to say that team dynamic can be a really challenging area to manage. You know person A says that person B is being terrible to me but person B says person A is the is the aggressor.

As an organisation what can you do to manage that situation where there is potential for harm? So so do you as an organisation need to have a sort of an anonymous helpline with with some external perhaps support to address concerns when they're raised? Do you as an organization need to have a process that you adopt for reconciling tricky relationships? Is that using an external facilitator to help people figure out how to get along like grown ups? I know this sounds like really, sort of basic stuff, But but the problem actually arises when an employee comes to whoever they report to, and and that person says, I don't really know what to do. It's yucky because you're two grown ups who aren't getting along and don't have the skills to help you through it.

Yeah. And Amy, I'd add to that to say that when we work with organisations on culture and defining values for an organisation, we define the behaviours that represent those values and the behaviours that are not aligned or not appropriate. And having those two elements of this is what we expect from behaviours and this is what we don't expect, it actually gives leaders an

opportunity to address issues much easier because it's not my opinion that you're doing this or behaving in the wrong way. This is very clearly our expectations for behaviors. So it actually helps enable some of those conversations that you need to have and set expectations.

Okay. Sean's given us the indicator that it's that it's time to move on. One of our favorite books when my kids were little was Pamela Anderson Pamela Allen's classic, *Who Sank the Boat*.

This is going to contain spoiler alerts if you don't know the story. Picture a quiet farm by the sea. Five animals decide to go for a row. We've got a cow, a donkey, too soon, Sean. Back on.

Cow, a donkey, a sheep, a pig, and a tiny mouse. They all want to enjoy the boat. So, they get in one by one. The cow climbs in first.

She's the heaviest but the boat stays afloat. Then comes the donkey, then the sheep, all good. The pig scrambles aboard. The boat starts to sink, but it's still afloat.

And finally, the mouse steps into the boat with great care, and that's when it sinks.

The truth is no single animal caused the sinking. It was the combination of all of them in that specific moment. The mouse just happened to be the last and smallest addition to an already overloaded system. The boat was already at that tipping point. So systems often fail because of accumulation and interactions rather than one dramatic trigger.

We can blame the mouse and many workplaces do, but that ignores a lot of can you just go back a slide, Sean?

That ignores a lot of insight and learning that's available if you look at the whole system, which involves the total load, the sequence of events, shared responsibility, the environment. Was the boat big enough to start with, and the warning signs that were ignored because the goal mattered more than anything else. So the invitation in this story is to look beyond the final straw because the boat didn't sink because of just one animal, And the essence of psychosocial risk is that the system matters more than one single event. And when cause and effect become less obvious, as in this story, we're no longer in a simple problem solving space. We are squarely in what David Snowden calls the complex domain in his Carnevon framework. Now we can move to the next slide.

Can I jump just quickly in on this because I love And it's often legacy issues that we have accepted and put up with for a long time that when something is a catalyst, those are the things that do it? I just wanted to quickly refer to the Gallup State of the Global Workforce Report for twenty twenty five and talk about engagement and the who sank the boat sort of analogy. In Australia and New Zealand for our region, have twenty three percent of our workforce are actively engaged, sixty five percent are not engaged, and twelve percent are actively disengaged. So if we think of our workplace of one hundred people, there's people in our boat, we've got twenty three percent rowing hard, sixty five percent along for the ride, and twelve percent trying to sink the boat.

So when you look at those types of stats, it becomes really important to look at all of these elements, only from a psychosocial risk, it's that potential. You've got risk about seventy five percent of your employees at risk of actually experiencing psychosocial risk because of their environment, because of the culture, because of the boat that they're in. So I just wanted to add some stats to that one because I think I love that analogy.

Thank you. So the Carnevon framework. You did hear that right, and though it's not spelled wrong. Carnevon is a Welsh word with many layers of meaning, and it doesn't have a direct English equivalent, but it relates to a sense of place and familiarity.

And when you're trying to make sense of any situation, you first need to understand where you are. Because when you're making leadership decisions, if you misunderstand your context, your solution isn't gonna be fit for purpose. Now, there's an entire book on this framework and numerous resources online, and please wait till the end of the webinar to look them up because I assure you the Internet rabbit hole is deep and wide, and you may not come out till week. But very simply, on the right hand side, we have the predictable world, and on the left is the unpredictable world.

In the bottom right hand corner, cause and effect is obvious and uncontested. So it's the realm of best practice.

And above that, in the complicated domain, the relationship between cause and effect is less clear, and you need a lot of experience to know which approach to take. Experts might disagree on what the single best move is, so we have good practice instead of one single obvious solution. These two domains are the realm of physical hazards. When you cross to the unpredictable world on the left, you can't tell what's going to happen next just because it's happened before.

This is the realm of things like parenting, leading people, and culture change.

And if you think these things aren't rocket science, you're right because rocket science is actually in the complicated domain. It's not in the complex domain. I've included this framework because it helps to demonstrate the different leadership response needed for this very different set of hazards, where cause and effect is not always obvious or linear.

There are unknown unknowns that often only become clear in retrospect, and small actions can create unpredictable changes in the environment. And those might be changes that you want or don't want, which is why observation is really key.

The leadership approach here is that's needed as one of experimenting, observing, and importantly, adapting.

So we know how hard and how complex it is.

What do boards need to do?

Well, firstly, we need to treat psychosocial risk with the same rigor as physical safety.

Recognize recognizing that it's relational, dynamic, and cultural.

Iso standard four five double o three provides solid guidance for management, and several countries, including New Zealand, Australia, the UK, and Canada, have based local standards and guidance on this.

When it comes to oversight and monitoring, however, in terms of the board's role, I think boards, first of all, have to make sure they understand this area. So well done, everyone, for tuning up today. But also, that they're not part of the problem.

And that involves, firstly, looking at your own board culture. Is it psychologically healthy?

Do you avoid uncomfortable questions either with yourselves or with your senior leaders?

We're setting unreasonable expectations of our CEO when an unintended side effect of that might be that they adopt harmful leadership behaviors because they're hugely incentivized to meet certain targets. Are we so obsessed with data as boards that we're swimming in it, but we forget to take the time to look more deeply at what's missing or perhaps alternative interpretations of the numbers in front of us.

There's a great question here. Actually, I'll just jump in. Yeah. Yeah. But from from Rich, How could a CEO raise psychosocial issues to the board when the issues originate from some board members? So this is a situation I've come across quite a few times, but I'm gonna throw it open to you guys. What do you think about that, and how does the CEO raise the issues?

Amy, any thoughts?

My self interested answer is he should get some advice on that. Sometimes it does require someone external to the organization. Sometimes there is a safe person on the board. Sometimes the CEO might use it not a not a representative or an advocate but a trusted external person if the CEO has a a mentor or a business supervisor or even even a mutual contact. There are ways to raise those issues. I I think the the more tricky thing once the once the CEO has, has gathered the courage to to put the issue out there is how do we keep momentum on having that dealt with, especially when the issue relates to the the board CEO relationship.

Yeah. And and it's particularly difficult when it's the chair who might be the one who is is putting the pressure on. So I agree, Amy. It's it's who else on the board can you raise this with? Because your opportunities for escalation are more limited than they are further down in the organisation.

But it's also worth sort of getting that external advice and advising the board members or raising it with the board because the board is subjected to the same legislation around their

requirements for psychosocial risk and hazards. So it is important to address. Often it is very difficult because again, you've got that power imbalance.

And as I said earlier, I've worked with an organisation this year where it did result in a legal action and directors were personally responsible, personally liable. So, it is something that directors need to be able to build a strong relationship with the CEO to be able to raise those issues and address issues because CEOs are under a lot of stress.

Yeah. Absolutely.

We did an earlier, or pre a previous webinar on, that that touched on board culture and the difficult dynamics. One of the questions raised was it was a dynamic with the chair, and I think, around the board table, everyone understanding their role, if they're not the chair, in terms of the relationship with management as well, who holds that relationship, who's the who's the conduit. So, yeah, clarifying roles and really examining board culture in terms of people behaving constructively is key.

And and it's not just CEOs to the board, it's other directors, feeling this pressure as well with bad behaviors within the boardroom. And it can be very difficult to raise issues and to try and resolve them.

So one of the, things I wanna encourage us to do on boards is is look differently at data. And in this table, I won't talk through the whole thing, but I think it's helpful to consider three different types of indicators.

Often with physical hazards, we get lots of reports that give us lag indicators, and that's telling us when harm has occurred.

So that's that information is reactive and diagnostic. We can, again, draw draw cause and effect and make changes to prevent those things happening.

For psychosocial risk, lead indicators, can be really important. They are really important. And again, that we have a legislated, requirement to be proactive here. So it's your lead indicators that help you to reduce the likelihood of something happening. Some examples of things you can do here.

There's a a tool called a fearless scan, which is a psychological safety measure. You can use culture data, worker voice, forums, focus groups, and it is possible to train your leaders to be more empathetic. And I think with the rise of AI, an AI driven world with many organizations, rushing to adopt that in the name of efficiency in different areas, and it's a fabulous tool. I was reading an interesting report the other day wherein, I think, unintended side effect of that was a reduction in empathy, as we're interacting more with more with machines and less with people. So lead indicators tell you what's happening before harm occurs.

Lag indicators show you where harm has already occurred or it might be in the mix. And, again, careful observation, interrogation of data is needed.

Turnover is not always an indicator that there's psychosocial harm in play. And similarly, low turnover, which is often seen as sort of the holy grail of a really healthy organization. Low turnover can end up being equally an indicator of a really unhealthy environment. You know, your if no one's leaving, your organization might not have a pulse.

People might have given up. They might not be motivated or growing, to seek different roles. And finally, quality indicators tell you how much you can trust either of the other two. And that can be useful if you are just not sure of the data that you're looking at.

And there's lots of ways you can verify the integrity of that. Again, independent reviews. The board it's possible for a board to engage in exit interviews, perhaps of senior leaders.

Again, stories will always tell you things that data will not.

Any Yeah. Just something to add there. I think on that, the storytelling and the data, we tend to look at reports a lot at the quantitative data and not the qualitative. And understanding what's driving, what's behind the numbers.

An organisation I've been recently working with, where we look back on engagement surveys, had really positive data, positive scores. But when you read through the comments, you can see the legacy issues and the underlying issues which ended up creating a really big problem when there was a significant organizational change. Everything everything blew up. So it is around understanding what sits behind the data because quite often, data can hide, the real story, and it can be filtered as it comes up through to the boardroom.

So where to start? Well, you don't need a perfect plan. You just need some movement. If you haven't already got psychosocial risk on your risk register, add it. Even if the details are rough, assign some ownership, create visibility, and build more discussion into your oversight and monitoring.

Pick a place to begin that's most relevant for your organization. In complex systems, progress comes from small deliberate movement that reveals what's gonna work in your context. And each small step that you take will help you see and understand more of the system, and it's that level of visibility, I think, and understanding that will help you to make any real change.

Maybe if I add to that, and I Yeah. Commented on one of the questions that was asked online.

A lot of the tools that are available, people or organizations seem to use once and forget about. So culture surveys or, you know, workplace pulse, it's no good if you only do it once.

What a board can do and can do effectively is monitor the trends. So is this, people finding the workplace more difficult at the end of the year? Are they finding it more difficult around certain events? Are the people who are finding the place difficult clustered around certain leaders? Those are the trends that should be easy to identify if you adopt these tools over a period of time.

Yeah. And I'm gonna add to that, Amy, and say it's also looking at the trends in the things that you report that aren't necessarily directly aligned to employee engagement or culture or pulse checks. So if you are seeing a shift in your business data, the reason that sits behind that is generally people related. And so it's about asking the questions around what's impacting our achievement of results, our increase in risks or a change in our ability to achieve our strategic goals. And generally, you start to ask the right questions from a board level, you keep in mind, you keep a culture lens on and you think about the people that are impacting on these outcomes, and that's where you'll start to dig down into where there might be risks associated.

So to wrap up, we're suddenly at time.

I think my key message, governance must look beyond the surface to see what loads are accumulating, and more importantly, what's normalizing in terms of behavior. Because when behaviors, are harmful behaviors become the norm, it can be harder to notice the harm itself. I wanted to also leave people with a little bit of hope because it's a pretty heavy topic. It can feel overwhelming because of its complexity. But the fact that it's relational, I think, is also good news. Because if harm happens between healing, sorry, between people, then so does healing. And you might be surprised at how small consistent acts of courage, curiosity, and care can actually change any system.

Sean.

Fantastic. Right on the money. Thanks, Catherine. Right on time, I should say.

So everybody please feel free to connect with our presenters on LinkedIn. I'm sure they'll look forward to your connection. If you'd like to be put in touch with any of the team, please indicate your interest on the survey at the end of the webinar as you exit.

We have some great webinar topics on the horizon through till about February.

Most of these you'll find on our website. So please check that out.

You'll receive an email from me. It will be tomorrow morning now, which will include a full copy of the recording today along with the transcript and the presentation slides.

So as you leave the webinar, don't forget to complete our one minute survey. Go into the draw for our hamper.

And I will announce the winner of that tomorrow as well. So thanks again everybody for your attendance today. I'm sorry we didn't get through all of the questions.

I hope you enjoyed the session though. Thanks again, Catherine, Georgia and Amy for your conversation today. I really enjoyed it. I look forward to seeing you all everybody at our next webinar. Have a great day.