



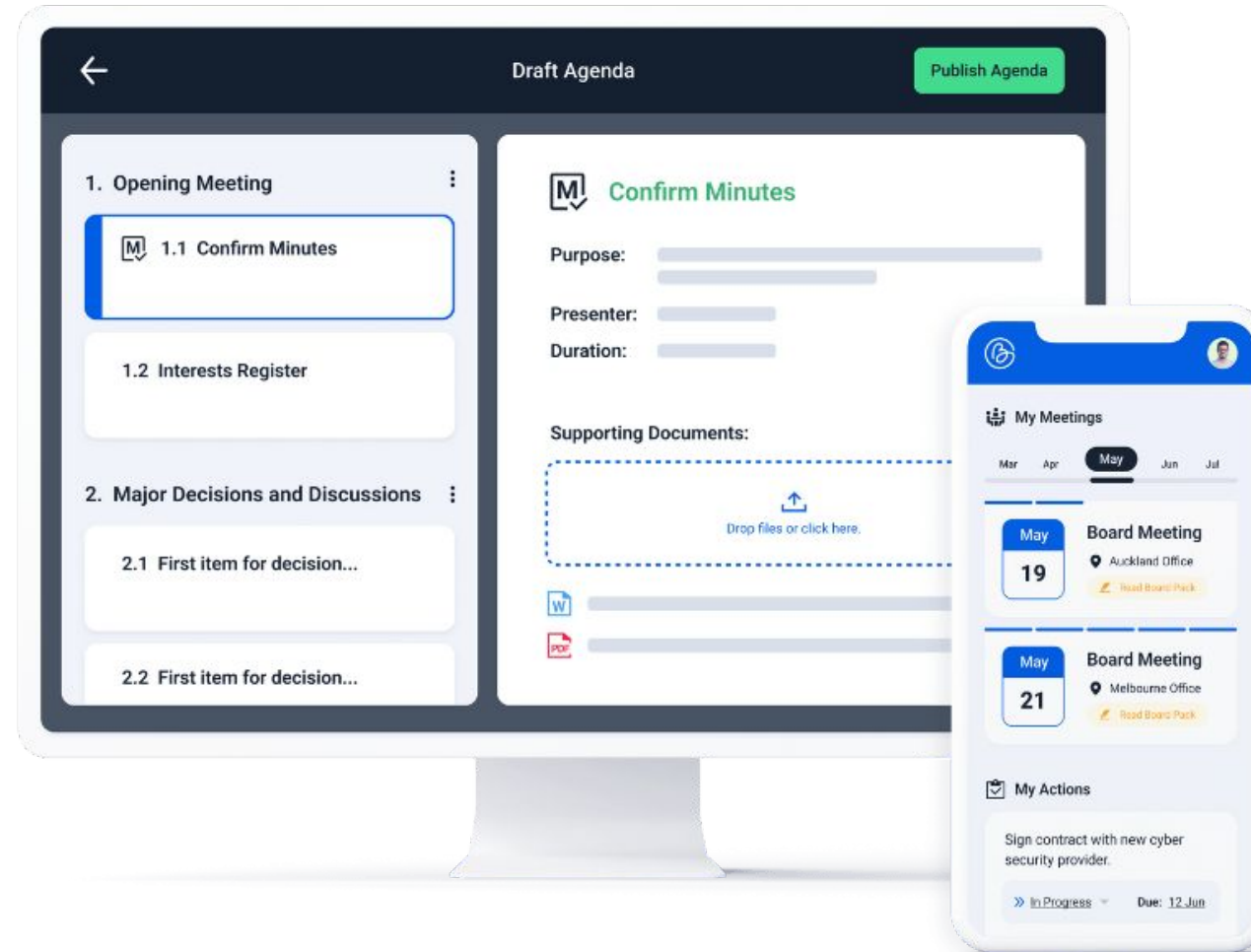
Webinar

More Than Safety Posters. Governing Psychosocial Risks in the Workplace

With Kathryn Ruge

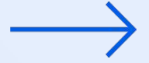








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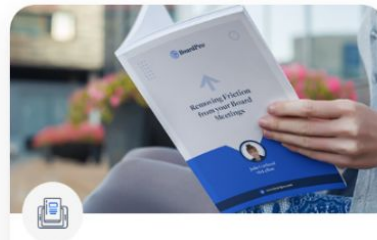
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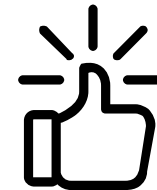
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Slides, webinar video, and transcript will be sent to you. Sit back, relax and enjoy the conversation





**Kathryn
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Framing the conversation



- 01 What are we talking about?

- 02 Why does it matter?

- 03 Why is it so hard?!
 - Physical hazards vs Psychosocial hazards
 - Complicated vs Complex

- 04 What do boards need to do?
 - ISO45003
 - Lead, lag, and quality indicators

- 05 Where do we start?

1. What are we talking about?

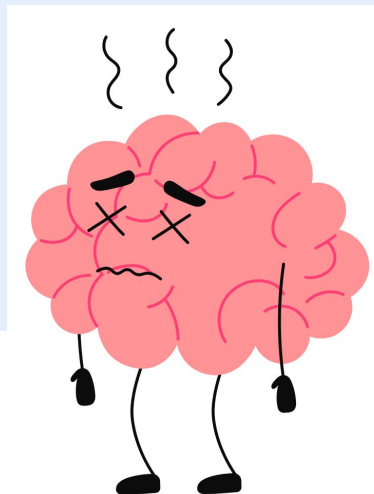
Psychosocial hazard

- a workplace condition or factor that **has the potential to cause harm**
- can arise in three areas:
 - work design
 - work environment
 - social factors



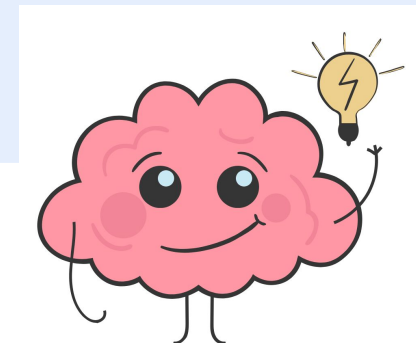
Psychosocial risk

- the **likelihood** and **severity of harm** arising **when people are exposed** to one or more psychosocial hazards



Psychological safety

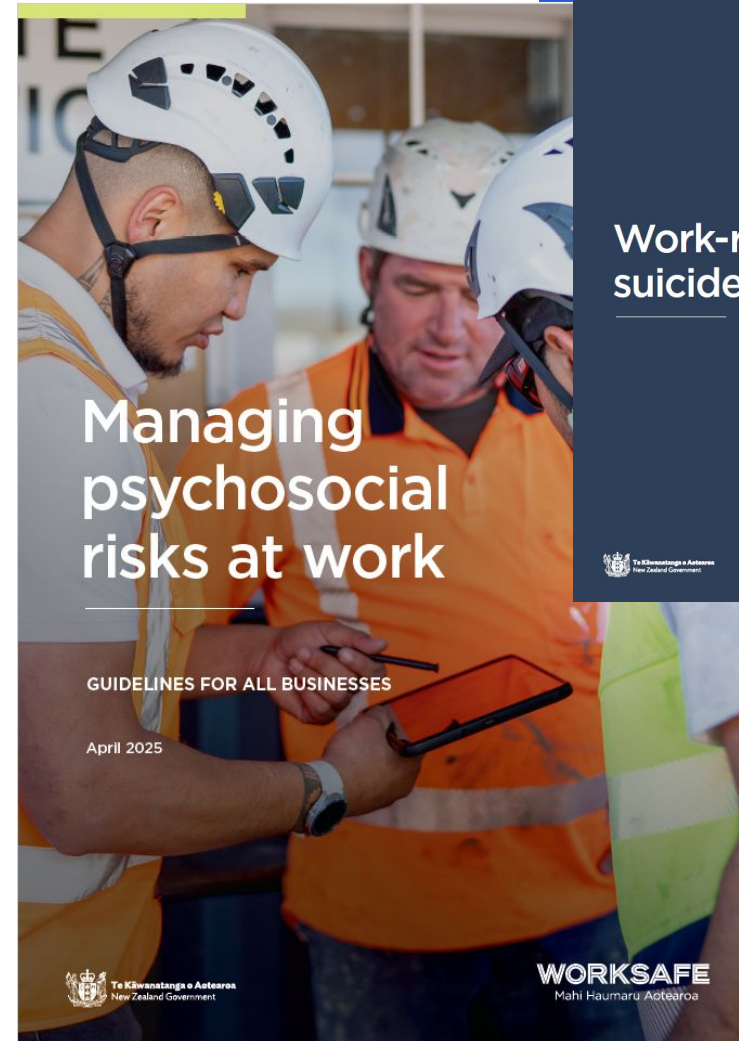
- **a team climate** where people feel they can speak up, admit mistakes, and challenge ideas without fear of humiliation or retaliation
- "the soil, not the seed" (Amy Edmondson)
- reduces the risk of harm





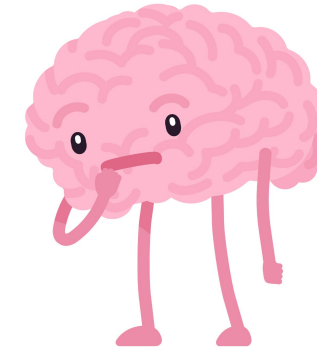
2. Why does it matter?

- ▶ NZ + AU – PCBUs must **manage mental as well as physical** harm
- ▶ Worksafe 2024 Report – sobering statistics
- ▶ Costs of inaction – business performance, human costs, legal, reputational

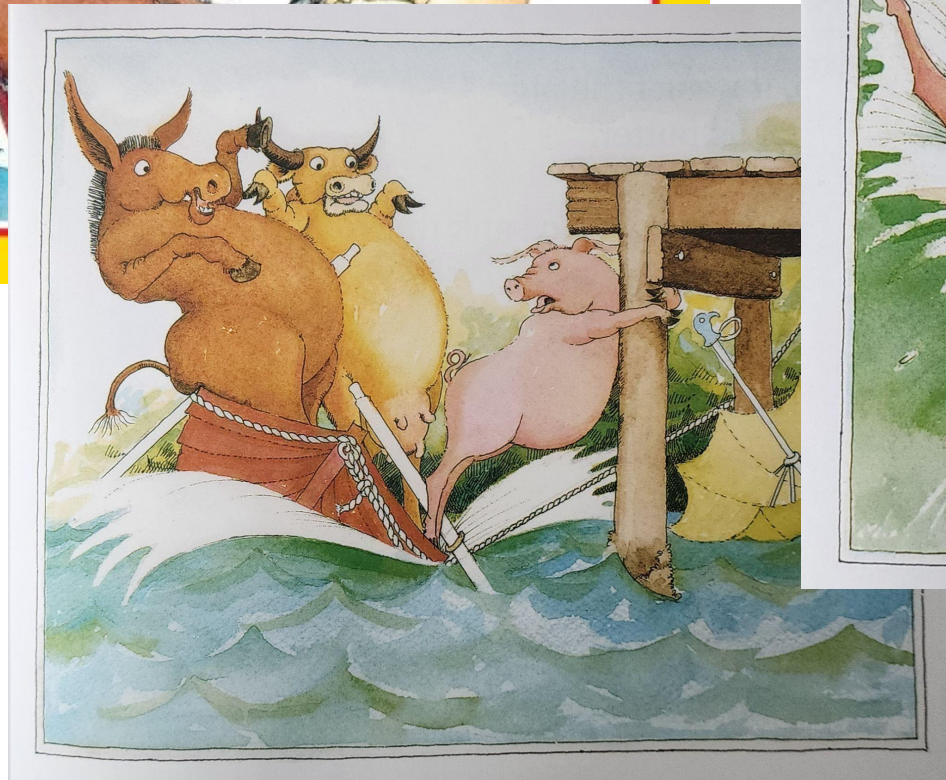
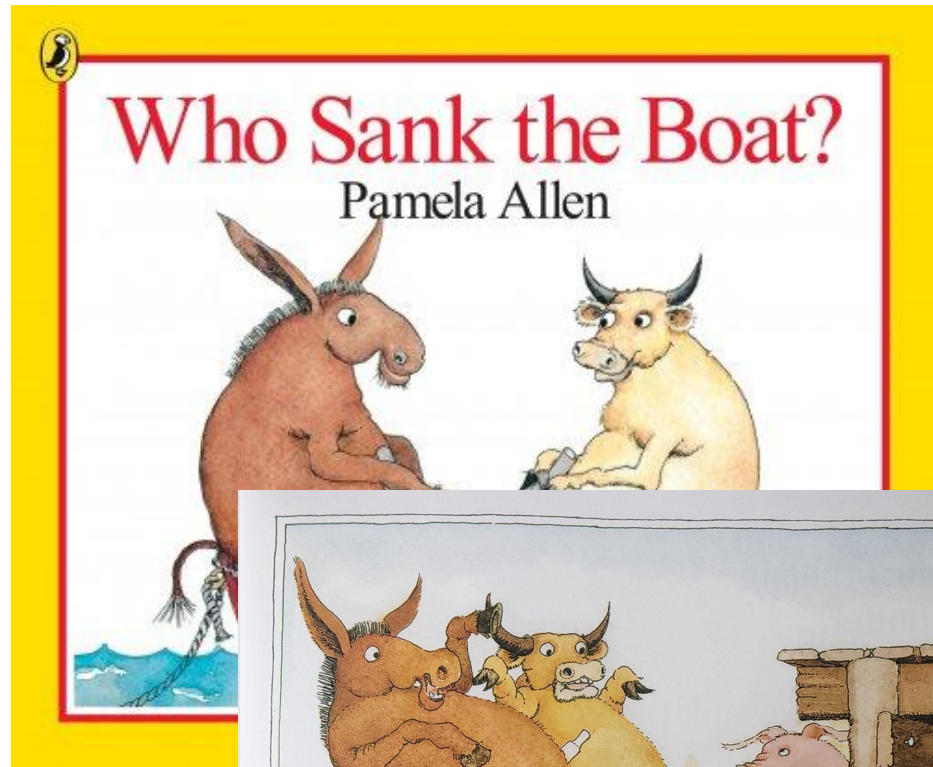




3. Why is it so hard?!



Characteristic	Physical Hazard	Psychosocial Hazard
Visibility	Seen	Felt
Isolated vs Systemic	Usually exist in an easily identified location	Exist in relationships and culture, hard to isolate
Reporting	Safe, straightforward and encouraged, low risk + stigma for the person reporting	Can feel career-limiting, higher risk + stigma for the person reporting
Objective vs Subjective	Easy for third parties to confirm and validate harm	Depends on the person experiencing it
Stable vs Dynamic	More predictable	Very dynamic – changes with context, workload, people



3. A complex system

The Cynefin framework

The Complex domain requires a **different leadership approach**

- no linear relationship between cause and effect
- there are 'unknown unknowns'
- actions inside the system can change the situation in unpredictable ways
- experiment, observe, adapt
- if ignored, things will migrate to the Chaotic domain (investigations, public exposure, crisis response)



4. What do boards need to do?

- ▶ Ensure that psychosocial risks are managed **with the same rigour** as physical health and safety risks and that the organisation is meeting its **legal and ethical obligations** to **protect the psychological health and safety of its workers**.
 - **ISO45003** – guidance for the *management* of psychosocial risks and promoting wellbeing at work as part of an occupational health and safety management system
- ▶ Make sure you're not part of the problem!
 - Check your Board culture – is it psychologically healthy?
 - Are you overly reliant on filtered information?
 - Do you avoid uncomfortable questions?
 - Are you setting unreasonable expectations?





4. What do boards need to do?

Data	What it tells you	Purpose	Example
Lead Indicator	Predictive and proactive – what’s happening <i>before</i> harm occurs	Reduces likelihood of harm	• Fearless Scan (psychological safety measure) and other culture data • ‘Worker voice’ forums • Leadership empathy training
Lag indicator	Reactive and diagnostic – evidence that harm has occurred (outcome of exposure to hazard)	Reveals where psychosocial risks have materialised	• Bullying or stress-related complaints • Absenteeism, turnover • EAP usage spikes • Exit interviews
Quality indicator	How much you can trust either of the above	Measures the integrity and usefulness of your data and processes	• Independent reviews • Exit interviews • Survey participation rates

5. Where do we start?

- ▶ Add it to your risk register, with suitable indicators, controls, and ownership
 - Board – oversight
 - Executive – system-level controls
 - People leaders – daily climate and relational conduct
 - **Everyone** – interpersonal responsibility (a civil workplace)

- ▶ Start anywhere, but make a start
 - Cultivate a healthy board culture
 - Develop emotionally skilled leaders
 - Interrogate numbers, ask better questions
 - Look for qualitative insights
 - Offer independent exit interviews





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Webinar Schedule

Nov 25 - Feb 2026

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256.	Psychosocial hazards in the workplace	Nov 13
257.	Board remuneration in 2026	Nov 20
258	Identifying and Managing Conflict of Interest	Nov 27
259.	Negotiation and Influence: Increasing Your Impact	Dec 4
260.	Ending Micromanagement around the Boardroom	Dec 11
261.	Setting your strategic board agenda	Feb 5
262	How to continually refresh your annual board strategy	Feb 12
263.	Tension Tolerance: fostering healthy debate around the board table	Feb 19



Thank you

