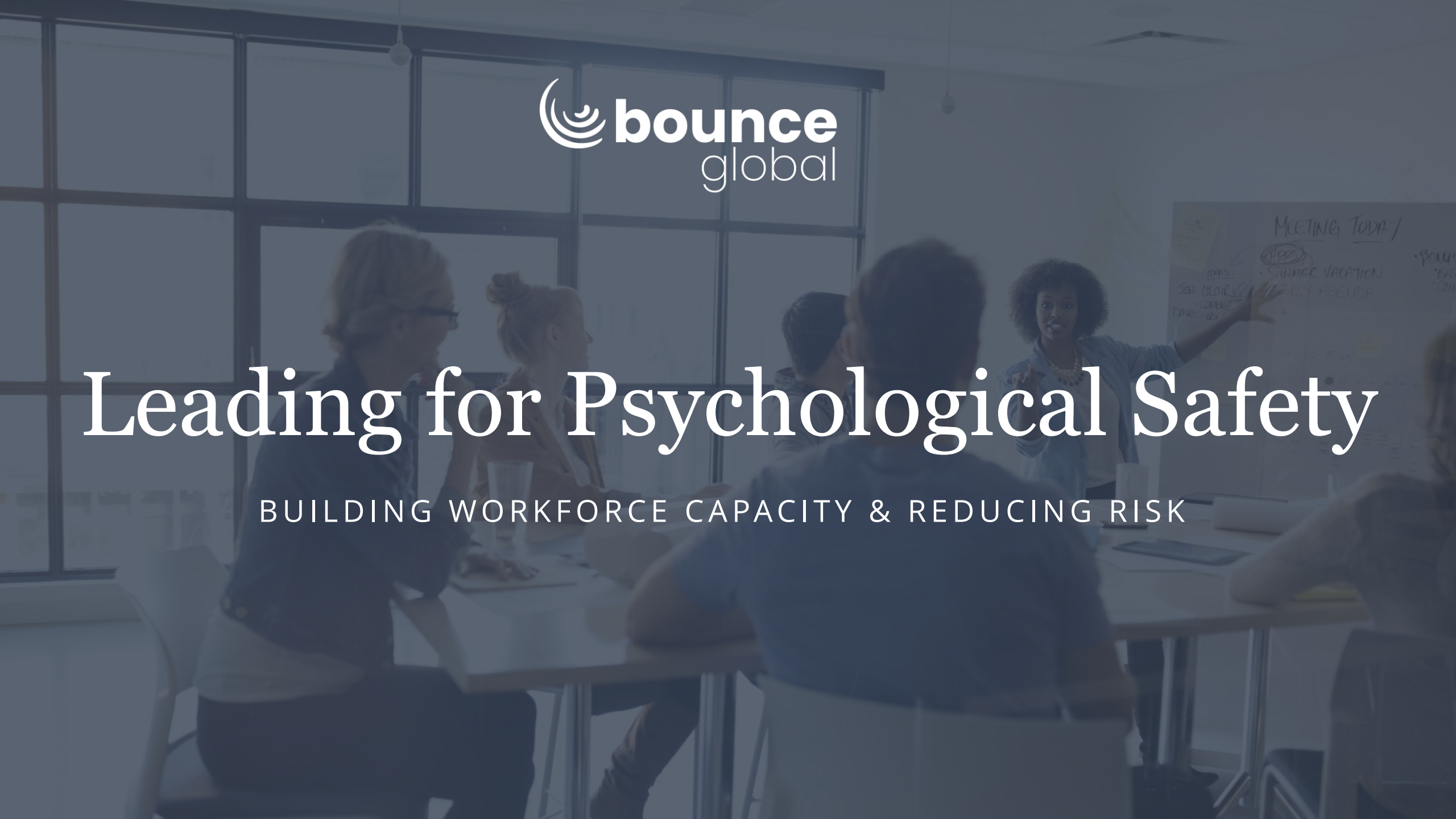


Leading for Psychological Safety

BUILDING WORKFORCE CAPACITY & REDUCING RISK



Bounce Global

Bounce is a group of people committed to making positive changes in people's lives. Since 2006, we've been teaching essential soft skills to help individuals and organisations find their way.

About Kelly...

As the CEO of Bounce Global, Kelly Mason is highly experienced in strategy development, planning and project management. She is a trusted expert in career development and business relations and effectively manages the industry partnerships Bounce has with RTO's, employment service providers and corporate companies.

Kelly is also a skilled human resources manager, taking a pro-active and meaningful approach to building relationships and leading people to see potential, explore ideas and innovate for solutions.

Kelly's qualifications include a Bachelor of Commerce (BAComm), Master of Business Administration (MBA), is an Accredited Strengths Profile Practitioner, and holds a Cert IV in Employment Services and Cert IV in Disability.

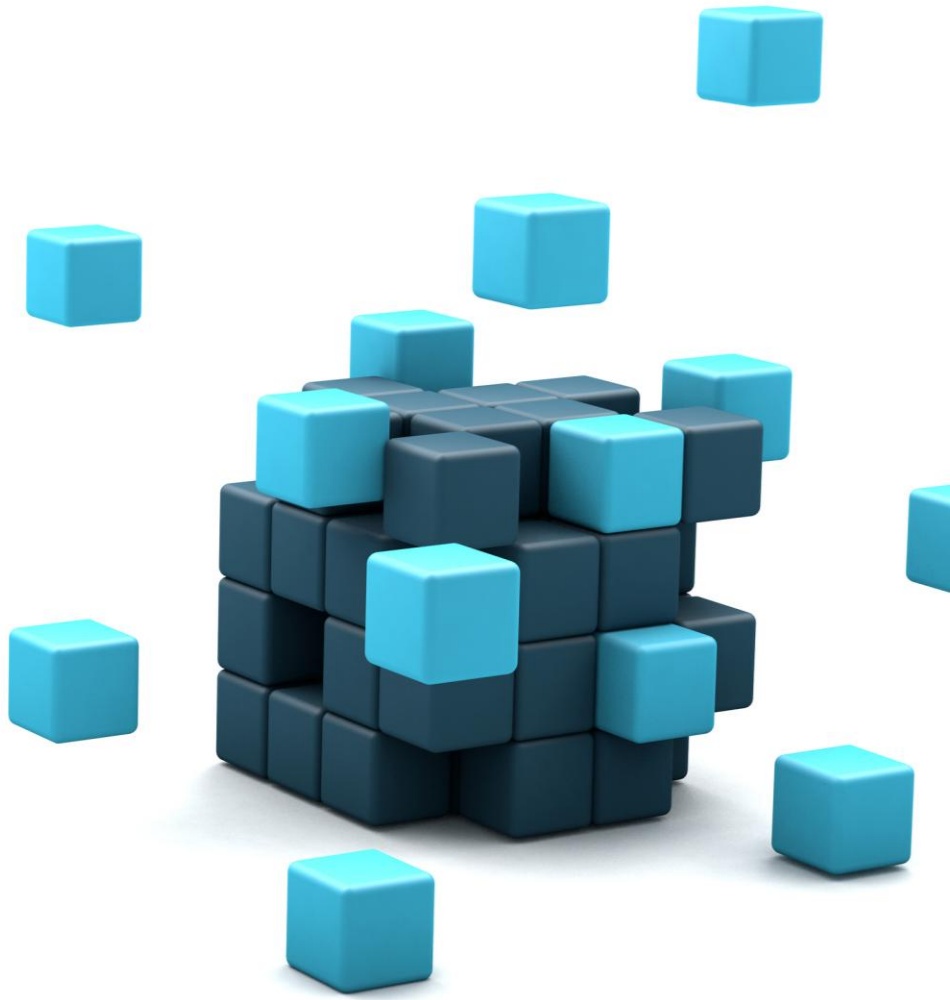


Psychological Safety

Psychological safety isn't just about protecting employees. In employment services, it directly influences the quality of support participants receive. When staff feel safe, valued and clear about expectations, they are better able to build trust, have meaningful coaching conversations and support people into sustainable employment.

The reality for Providers

- Psychosocial Safety is often compliance-led, not culture-led
- Leaders are underprepared
- High-pressure environments are still the norm
- Wellbeing is mistaken for psychosocial safety
- Reporting doesn't feel safe
- Data exists – but is not used well
- There is genuine intent – but fragmented execution



Why do we need to manage psychosocial hazards in our workplaces?

Work Health and Safety (WHS) regulations require all workplaces to manage psychosocial (emotional and social) hazards.

Psychosocial hazards are defined as a hazard that may cause psychological harm (e.g. harm someone's mental health).

Psychological safety is a leadership issue.

Impacts performance, retention and culture.
Leaders shape the daily work experience.
Wellbeing is behavioural, not program-based.

The Psychosocial Hazards

- High job demands
- Low job control
- Poor support
- Role conflict / ambiguity
- Inadequate reward & recognition
- Poorly managed change
- Organisational injustice / fairness
- Poor workplace relationships
- Poor communication
- Low psychological safety / poor culture
- Remote / isolated work
- Exposure to traumatic content
- Violence / aggression exposure
- Poor physical / environmental conditions
- Low organisational support during stress
- Job insecurity / career uncertainty
- Low meaning / purpose in work

Most frequent workplace psychosocial hazards

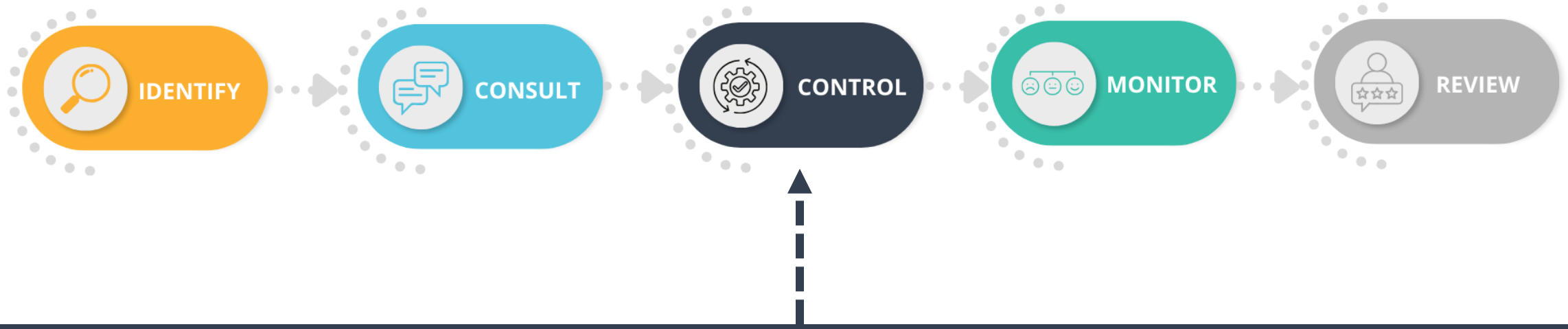
High Job Demands
Many workers report excessive workloads, time pressure, and emotional demands in their roles. Leading to fatigue and burnout.

Lack of role clarity
This suggests that many workers are unclear about their role and responsibilities, and this is causing confusion and frustration.

Poor leadership and low support
A large proportion of workers experience inconsistent or insufficient support from leaders. This includes lack of guidance, limited feedback, avoidance of difficult conversations.

Low job control
Little control over one's work or lack of decision-making power is leaving workers feeling powerless and frustrated.

A simple risk lens leaders can use



Leadership behaviour is a control measure

Behaviours matter more than policies

Leaders influence clarity, capacity, fairness and voice

Culture itself is a risk system.



Practical Examples

Policy/system says:
"We encourage people to raise concerns."

Culture shows:
Leaders get defensive
Issues are minimised
People who speak up are labelled "difficult"

Result:
Psychological safety risk increases.
Not because the policy is missing, but because the *culture teaches silence*.

Policy/system says:
"We manage workload sustainably."

Culture shows:
Urgency is rewarded
Reprioritisation never happens
Saying "I'm at capacity" is seen as weakness

Result:
High job demands become normalised, increasing burnout risk.

Practical Examples

Policy/system says:
"We have clear roles and responsibilities."

Culture shows:
Priorities change without explanation
Multiple leaders give conflicting direction
Saying "that's not my role" is discouraged

Result:
Role ambiguity increases, creating confusion, overload and anxiety.
Not because roles aren't documented, but because **clarity is not reinforced in practice**.

Policy/system says:
"We communicate openly during change."

Culture shows:
- Decisions are shared late
- Impact on workload isn't acknowledged
- Questions are framed as resistance

Result:
Uncertainty and stress increase during change.
Not because change is unavoidable, but because emotional and operational impacts are not actively managed.

Practical Examples

Organisational Injustice / Fairness
Policy/system says:
"We treat everyone fairly."

Culture shows:
Decisions are made without explanation
Exceptions are granted inconsistently
Some voices carry more weight than others

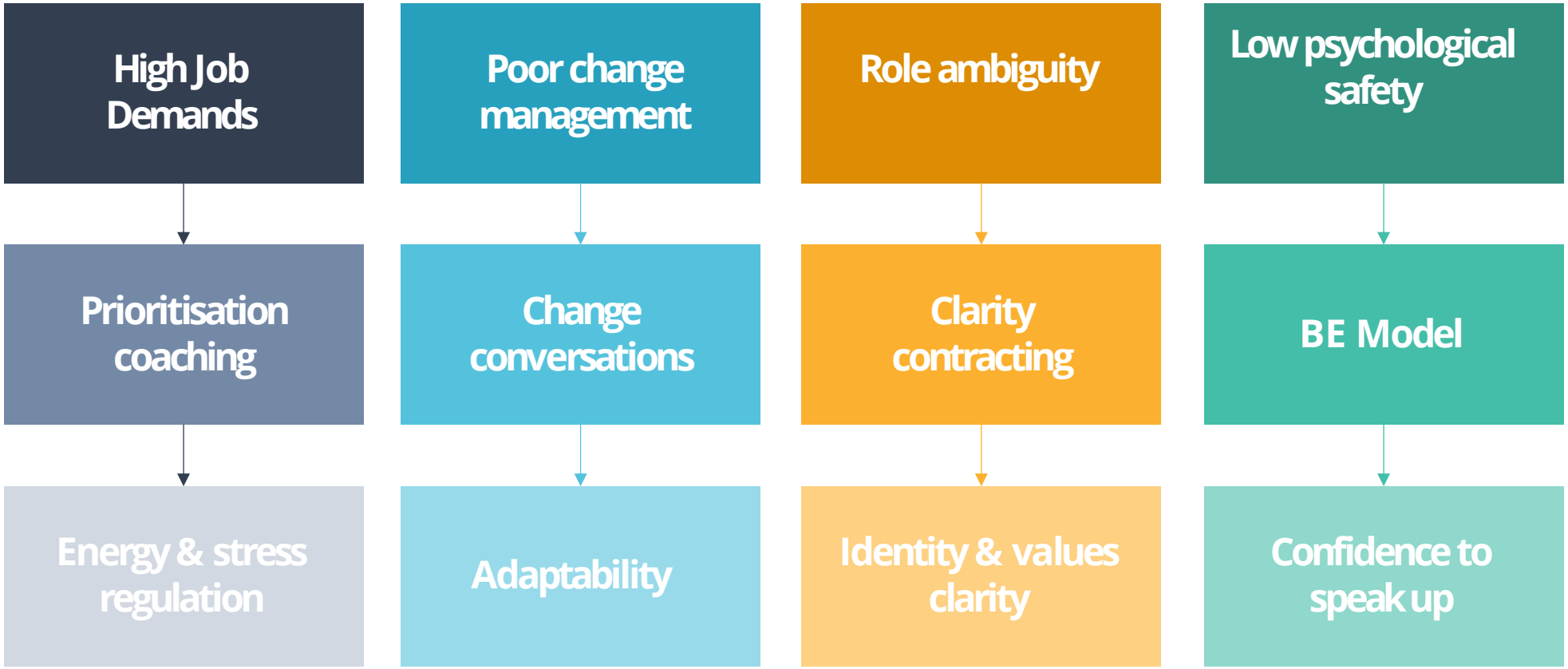
Result:
Perceived unfairness increases, undermining trust and engagement.
Not because fairness isn't valued, but because **transparency and consistency are missing**.

Policy/system says:
"We stay connected as a team."

Culture shows:
Check-ins are task-focused only
Isolation goes unnoticed
Connection is optional, not intentional

Result:
Disconnection and loneliness increase.
Not because flexibility is harmful, but because **connection isn't deliberately led**.

How leadership behaviour reduces risk



Mitigation of the 17 Psycho-Social Hazards



Mitigation of the 17 Pyschosocial Hazards

WHS Psychosocial Hazard	Leader Behaviour Mitigation	Workforce Capability Mitigation
1. High Job Demands	Coaching prioritisation, workload reframing, expectation setting	Stress regulation, energy management, cognitive load management, recovery strategies
2. Low Job Control	Empowerment coaching, shared decision making, autonomy conversations	Self-efficacy building, growth mindset, control re-framing, agency development
3. Poor Support	Active listening, psychological validation, structured support conversations	Help-seeking confidence, emotional literacy, building personal support ecosystems
4. Role Conflict / Ambiguity	Contracting conversations, clarity coaching, expectation alignment	Values clarity, identity confidence, managing competing demands
5. Inadequate Reward & Recognition	Strengths-based feedback, intrinsic motivation coaching	Self-worth stabilisation, internal validation, strengths awareness
6. Poorly Managed Change	Change coaching conversations, future focus, emotional transition support	Change resilience, uncertainty tolerance, adaptability training
7. Organisational Injustice / Fairnes	Bias awareness coaching, transparent decision communication	Emotional processing of fairness experiences, perspective reframing
8. Poor Workplace Relationships	Conflict coaching, difficult conversations, social awareness	Emotional regulation, empathy development, relational resilience
9. Poor Communication	Structured coaching conversations, curiosity-led leadership	Confidence to speak up, rejection resilience, belonging and identity safety

Mitigation of the 17 Pyschosocial Hazards

WHS Psychosocial Hazard	Leader Behaviour Mitigation	Workforce Capability Mitigation
10. Low Psychological Safety / Poor Culture	Voice activation, vulnerability modelling, BE Model leadership	Confidence to speak up, rejection resilience, belonging and identity safety
11. Remote / Isolated Work	Intentional connection rituals, structured check-ins	Self-connection skills, loneliness buffering, proactive connection behaviours
12. Exposure to Traumatic Content / Event	Emotionally intelligent response, holding space, confidence	Psychological PPE, emotional processing tools, nervous system regulation
13. Violence / Aggression Exposure (where relevant)	De-escalation communication, calm leadership modelling	Threat response regulation, recovery techniques, confidence rebuilding
14. Poor Physical / Environmental Conditions	Advocacy conversations, influencing for safe conditions	Personal adaptation strategies, environmental trigger awareness
15. Low Organisational Support During Stress	Support pathway coaching, escalation confidence	Self-care systems, burnout early warning recognition, recovery planning
16. Job Insecurity / Career Uncertainty	Future pathway coaching, development conversations	Hope activation, future orientation, confidence in capability growth
17. Low Meaning / Purpose in Work	Purpose coaching, strengths alignment, contribution conversations	Personal purpose clarity, meaning making, identity resilience

BOUNCE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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Scan the QR Code to download the Quick-Reference Guide

The BE Model for Psychologically Safe Leadership



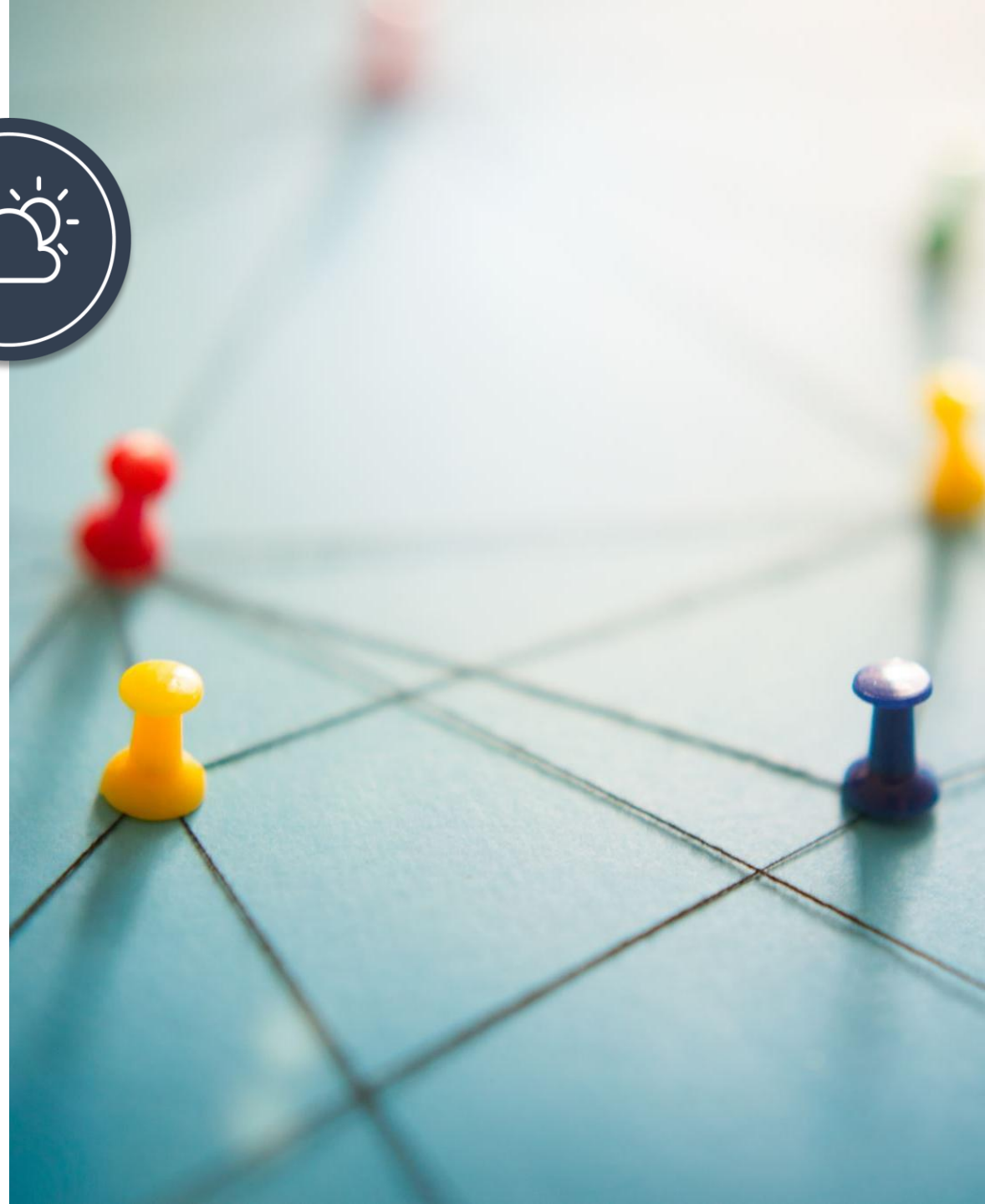
The BE Model in practice

- Coaching check-ins
- Capacity and prioritisation conversations
- Clarity and expectation setting
- Support + challenge
- Energy and stress regulation



What can businesses embed?

- Leadership capability uplift
- Role clarity and change conversations
- Safe escalation pathways
- Culture and leadership metrics



Psychological safety is built daily



It’s behavioural

Psychosocial safety is created through actions, not policies or programs.



Leaders are the system

Leadership behaviours shape systems, culture, and experiences for teams daily.



Small shifts matter

Consistent small behaviour changes compound into meaningful improvements in safety.



What leadership behaviour could you change tomorrow to make your team feel clearer, safer or more supported?



THANKS

HOW DID WE DO? WE WANT TO KNOW WHAT YOU THINK.
CALL OR EMAIL US – SERIOUSLY!

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