

CASE STUDY

Psychosocial Wellbeing in the Workplace: Supporting Healthcare Practitioners

Case Study

Background

Anna is a general practitioner working in a small clinic with three GPs, two nurses, and three administrative staff. The practice is privately run, with limited resources compared to larger healthcare organisations. Anna enjoys working closely with her patients but increasingly finds her workload and responsibilities difficult to manage.

Psychosocial hazards

Over the past 18 months, Anna has faced a series of stressors that have significantly impacted her wellbeing and professional confidence:

- Anna's mother died suddenly. She returned to work after a short period of bereavement leave, feeling a strong sense of duty to her patients and pressure not to burden her colleagues.
- The clinic has seen a surge in patient demand. The waiting list has grown, which frustrates patients and places extra pressure on clinicians.
- There has been a sharp rise in presentations related to mental health, including anxiety and depression. Anna frequently manages patients in acute distress, often without access to mental health clinicians or structured support.
- Several patients have disclosed histories of abuse and trauma. Anna feels emotionally overwhelmed and worries about missing subtle indicators of risk, especially when consultations are time-limited and follow-up is uncertain.
- Anna has been verbally abused and physically threatened by patients on multiple occasions. The clinic lacks a formal policy or training for managing occupational violence, leaving Anna feeling unsafe and unsupported.
- There are no regular team meetings or peer support structures. Anna often feels professionally isolated, with limited opportunities to reflect on complex cases or share concerns.
- Requests for professional development are rarely approved due to budget constraints. Anna feels undervalued and increasingly uncertain about her future in general practice.

Impact on Anna

Anna notices a change in her wellbeing, including difficulty sleeping, heightened stress levels, and irritability with colleagues. She has feelings of low morale and reduced job satisfaction. On several occasions, Anna has found herself experiencing fleeting thoughts of whether things would be easier if she were no longer around, an early sign of suicidal ideation that unsettles her. These thoughts prompt Anna to reflect on her mental health and consider seeking professional support, though she feels uncertain about how this might be perceived within her workplace.