

# Workplace Pressures in Pharmacy

Practical advice for New Zealand  
pharmacists, pharmacy staff and  
employers



2012

## Project Team

This guidance was prepared by a project team led by the Pharmacy Council of New Zealand. The project team consisted of representatives from the following pharmacy stakeholder organisations:

<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Team member</b>
Auckland University School of Pharmacy	Maree Jensen
Medicines Control, Ministry of Health	Sue Scott
NZ Hospital Pharmacists Association	Lorraine Welman
Pharmaceutical Society of NZ (Inc.)	Bob Buckham
Pharmacybrands Ltd.	Androulla Kotrotsos
Pharmacy Council of NZ	Barbara Moore
Pharmacy Defence Association	Carolyn Hooper Amanda Stanfield
Pharmacy Guild of NZ (Inc.)	Annabel Young Karen Crisp
Pharmacy Industry Training Organisation	Jill Watt
PharmacyPartners	Christine Mandeno

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## Introduction

Pharmacy practice can be profoundly satisfying, but it can also be extremely stressful. This may be more so in an environment of change, when there are often concerns that events are outside your control.

Feeling stressed at work can be a reasonably common experience and you probably know other pharmacists or pharmacy staff who experience stress too. This might occur only in the short term, for example unrealistic patient expectations, or it may build over a longer period of time.

A 2010 study of practising pharmacists in the United States found that more than 68% experienced job stress and role overload. Respondents cited role ambiguity as a serious concern — they felt they were often unable to provide ideal professional services because mundane tasks took priority. Among the functions they perceived as not getting sufficient attention was patient counselling, because they lacked confidence, time or the necessary skills<sup>1</sup>.

Many pharmacists believe that working 10 to 13-hour days under a constant barrage of prescription requests in a noisy environment is normal. Then they “beat themselves up” when errors occur. Stress, like laughter, is contagious. This means that stress reduction goals that fail to include managers and co-workers will be ineffective. Co-workers need to discuss workplace stress and resolve it.

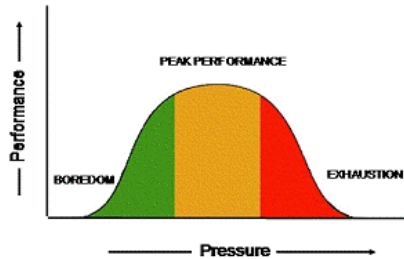
Mental health workers call this “de-escalating the situation”— and it relies on excellent communication. All employees need to be comfortable mentioning stressors, for example, and saying things such as, “Can we turn off the radio and lower the ringer on the phone during our rush period?”

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[www.pharmacytimes.com/publications/issue/2010/October2010/BearingJobStress-1010](http://www.pharmacytimes.com/publications/issue/2010/October2010/BearingJobStress-1010) (accessed July 2012)

## The Pressure / Performance curve



The diagram above clearly illustrates the relationship between performance and increasing pressure. Pharmacists, pharmacy staff and organisations can minimise the impact of work-related pressure and stress by addressing key areas.

- **Role:** Whether people understand their role within the organisation and whether the organisation ensures that the person does not have conflicting roles
- **Demands:** for example workload, work patterns, and the work environment
- **Control:** How much say a person has in the way they do their work
- **Support:** The encouragement, support and resources provided by the organisation, managers and colleagues
- **Relationships:** Promoting positive work environments to avoid conflict and dealing with unacceptable behaviour
- **Change:** How organisational change is managed and communicated

Although not specified as key areas in this guide, the suggested solutions can be applied to the areas described above.

In 2006, the Pharmacy Council consulted on draft guidelines for a healthy pharmacy workplace environment; however the guidelines were never ratified. In the current environment, with pharmacists and pharmacy staff facing increasing environmental work stress, the Pharmacy Council invited key pharmacy stakeholders to again discuss the need for guidelines.

It was not the intention of the project team to re-invent the wheel; rather it was to develop a practical tool for pharmacy<sup>2</sup> to identify the varied factors that can lead to workplace stress and to offer some solutions to put into place. It will also guide you to organisations and resources for further information and assistance where appropriate.

With that in mind, this tool should not be regarded as a complete solution or 'quick fix' to workplace pressure issues. Best practice takes time to implement. As noted in the Royal Pharmaceutical Society (RPS) document on empowering pharmacists<sup>3</sup>, addressing issues causing pharmacy workplace pressure is advantageous to ALL stakeholders as it will contribute to:

- Improved patient safety through a reduction in errors
- Improved health outcomes through more appropriate use of pharmacist's time
- Improved morale of pharmacists resulting in increased motivation across staff teams

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<sup>2</sup> 'Pharmacy' in this document includes all practice environments; all pharmacists and staff associated with the practice of pharmacy; and employers where appropriate, including pharmacist employers. By inference, it also incorporates relevant legislation, regulations, codes of practice, and standards impacting on the profession of pharmacy.

<sup>3</sup> [www.ghp.org.uk/ContentFiles/reducing-workplace-pressure-through-professional-empowerment.pdf](http://www.ghp.org.uk/ContentFiles/reducing-workplace-pressure-through-professional-empowerment.pdf)

- Improved customer service as a consequence of improved morale and motivation
- Improved productivity and performance
- Improved working relationships between employee and employer
- Enhanced health and wellbeing of employees
- A reduction in absence and sickness rates
- Reduced costs due to a lower turnover of staff
- Reduced disruption, wasted efforts and costs of managing grievance or litigation processes between employees and employers.

We are also mindful that a practical tool should be just that, rather than including categorical statements about issues such as the number of prescriptions dispensed per pharmacist in a given timeframe. Workloads vary hour by hour; day by day so uncompromising statements related to dispensing levels are of limited value.



# Stressors<sup>4</sup> and Solutions

## Workload Pressure

Pressure in the workplace is unavoidable due to the demands of the contemporary work environment. Pressure perceived as acceptable by an individual may even keep workers alert, motivated, able to work and learn, depending on the available resources and personal characteristics. However, when that pressure becomes excessive or otherwise unmanageable it leads to stress. Stress can damage an employees' health and the business' performance.

Work-related stress can be caused by poor work organisation (the way we design jobs and work systems, and the way we manage them), by poor work design (for example, lack of control over work processes), poor management, unsatisfactory working conditions, and lack of support from colleagues and employers. Research findings show that the most stressful type of work is that which values excessive demands and pressures that are not matched to workers' knowledge and abilities, where there is little opportunity to exercise any choice or control, and where there is little support from others.<sup>5</sup>

	Stressor	Solutions
	<b>Unpredictable or inconsistent workflow</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Effective communication between shop staff, dispensary staff and customers will resolve most situations ie safe effective service delivery is the key</li><li>• Prioritise prescriptions – target patients with greater need for example palliative care prescriptions</li></ul>

<sup>4</sup> The Department of Labour's Workinfo service ([www.osh.govt.nz/order/catalogue/stress/stressfatigue.pdf](http://www.osh.govt.nz/order/catalogue/stress/stressfatigue.pdf)) describes stressors as events or circumstances that generally lead to pressure, where someone may feel that physical or psychological demands are about to exceed his or her ability to cope.

<sup>5</sup> WHO: Occupational Health. Accessed at [www.who.int/occupational\\_health/topics/stressatwp/en/](http://www.who.int/occupational_health/topics/stressatwp/en/) July 2012.

## Workload Pressure

- Give realistic wait times (include in *Receiving and/or Dispensing Prescriptions SOP*<sup>6</sup>) and ensure everyone in the pharmacy knows what these are
- Use a peg/annotation or tray system to highlight priority scripts quickly and allow all staff to see “waiting Rx” at a glance
- Hand the message on
  - tell patients if there is a back-up and the wait is 20 minutes, or a realistic time-frame if potentially longer
  - warn counter/pharmacy support staff of potential delays or if you ‘mustn’t be interrupted’ and for how long
- Have in place suitable quality-assurance systems and procedures to manage workload
- Develop standard phrases for staff to use
  - When do you need your prescription by?
  - Can we deliver it later? (if there is a delivery service)
  - It will be 15 minutes – would you like to try our new perfume (or similar) while you wait?
  - Please take a seat in our waiting/information area
  - Here is a Self Care card (relevant to their condition) to read while you wait

<sup>6</sup> When prioritising scripts, give a realistic estimate of the dispensing time, taking into consideration the patient’s or caregiver’s needs, the availability of the medicine, whether it needs to be compounded and the prescription queue. It is important that the pharmacy’s procedures at this point do not put the dispensary staff under undue time pressure.

<i>Workload Pressure</i>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure sole charge pharmacists take a step away from the prescription at the final check stage so that they come back with fresh eyes</li> <li>• Don't allow dispensary staff to be coerced into compromising accuracy and professionalism for speed; at the same time, work should be purposeful and efficient</li> </ul>
	<b>Lack of breaks or meal times</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage dispensing staff, including locum pharmacists to take adequate rest breaks and give them the opportunity to do so</li> <li>• Agree in good faith on rest break and meal break arrangements, and keep to them as much as possible</li> <li>• Allow time for breaks to be both a physical and mental break where possible (out of a busy dispensary if possible)</li> <li>• Ensure frequency and duration of breaks are appropriate to the working environment</li> <li>• If breaks can't be scheduled due to certain requirements or commitments, they should be taken 'where reasonable and practicable', and within legal boundaries<sup>7</sup> (for more details, see <a href="http://www.dol.govt.nz/er/minimumrights/breaks.asp">www.dol.govt.nz/er/minimumrights/breaks.asp</a>)</li> </ul>

<sup>7</sup> Employees are entitled to: one 10-minute paid rest break when they work between two and four hours; one 10-minute paid rest break and one unpaid 30-minute meal break when they work more than four and up to six hours; two 10-minute paid rest breaks and one unpaid 30-minute meal break when they work more than six and up to eight hours. These requirements begin over again if an employee works more than eight hours.

<i>Workload Pressure</i>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure counter staff understand the importance of allowing the pharmacist a break of at least a few minutes, and provide a standard phrase they can use with customers</li> <li>• Recognise if staff are fasting during Ramadan or other religious observances, and vary shifts to accommodate this where possible</li> <li>• Encourage all staff to eat breakfast before coming to work</li> </ul>
	<b>Differences in individual capacity to cope<sup>8</sup></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recognise that individuals have different tolerances or susceptibilities to workplace pressure and stress</li> <li>• Ensure everyone knows their own limitations, and that these can be communicated</li> <li>• Reduce workload pressure with smooth hand-over processes, either at the end of shifts or on a day to day basis. Use a communications book to record any information that may be needed by staff on the next shift</li> <li>• Take all reasonably practicable steps to identify/reduce/manage stressors <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ flexible staffing rosters to accommodate coping differences</li> <li>○ stress management course</li> <li>○ improve the fit between individuals and tasks</li> <li>○ appropriate training to improve performance</li> <li>○ solution-driven performance feedback and monitoring of problem areas</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

<sup>8</sup> Individuals have different tolerances or susceptibilities to workplace stress. These are not likely to be constant with time: as a person changes or has temporary difficulties, there will be times when resilience is less or greater.

<i>Workload Pressure</i>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recognise that coping mechanisms are different from inter- and intra-pharmacist perspectives</li> </ul> <p style="background-color: #d9e1f2; padding: 2px;"><b>Resources</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Employers and Manufacturers Association (EMA)</li> <li>Pharmacy Defence Association (PDA)</li> <li>Pharmacy Services Standard 2.5 Human Resource Management</li> <li>Pharmacy Guild (PGNZ) HR services</li> </ul>
	<b>Staffing levels</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure sufficient staff numbers are available to cope with variable workload <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>flexible staff rosters</li> <li>staff crisis plan to cover unplanned absenteeism</li> <li>temporarily withdraw non-urgent services</li> <li>arrange appointment times for non-urgent issues</li> <li>keep communication lines open with customers, DHB, health care team</li> </ul> </li> <li>Staffing levels should take into account <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Predictable spikes in activity during specific times, days or months</li> <li>Mix of prescription types for example repeats, compliance packaging, intravenous additives</li> <li>Staff experience and familiarity with systems</li> <li>Other dispensing responsibilities for example counselling, patient medication profiles, adherence reviews</li> <li>Use of auxiliary staff for example interns, technicians</li> </ul> </li> <li>Re-deploy staff, for example have technicians do technical aspects of dispensing while pharmacists attend to clinical aspects (clinical check, final check, counselling)</li> </ul>

<i>Workload Pressure</i>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recognise that a sole charge pharmacist may not be able to “dispense” at the same rate as if s/he had other dispensary staff to help, as s/he may be called away frequently (ie the number of staff does impact on productivity/dispensing rate)</li> <li>• If introducing new services, ensure appropriate level of resources (staff, IT tools and space)</li> <li>• If working alone, and to minimise interruptions by patients, consider having a sign that says: “Thank you for your patience. I will be with you in just a moment. I am currently completing my work on another patient’s prescription”.</li> <li>• Accept that unexpected absentee staff will result in busy periods – some services may not be completed on time for example deliveries / blister packing may need to be completed out of hours of business</li> </ul>
	Lack of ‘private’ counselling area <sup>9</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pharmacy Services Standard 1.3 requires that: <i>Consumers receive services in a manner that has regard for their dignity, privacy and independence</i></li> <li>• Separate prescription-in and prescription-out areas to allow for more confidential counselling</li> <li>• Ask patient where they would feel comfortable being counselled – there may be issues a patient wants to discuss confidentially</li> <li>• Take patient to quiet area of pharmacy for counselling</li> </ul>

<sup>9</sup> The HDC Code of Health and Disability Services Consumers’ Rights: Right 1: the right to be treated with respect; Right 3: the right to dignity and independence

<i>Workload Pressure</i>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Know which services require consultation room, for example vaccinations. Plan to eliminate traffic jams if they are used for different purposes, for example methadone observed doses as well as vaccinations</li> </ul>
	<b>Prescription 'non-payers'</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Set and communicate boundaries to staff for accepting debt</li> <li>• Notify customers of acceptable ceiling for patient debt</li> <li>• Re-direct to local WINZ office if necessary and appropriate</li> <li>• Ensure ethical vs. legislative boundaries are clear and that all staff know what they are for example, supply of antibiotics for children</li> </ul> <p><b>Resources</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ EMA 'Bad Debts' Guide</li> <li>○ <a href="http://www.thelawyers.co.nz/uploaded_images/Publications/Minimising-Debts-in-your-Business---Article-220512.pdf">www.thelawyers.co.nz/uploaded_images/Publications/Minimising-Debts-in-your-Business---Article-220512.pdf</a></li> <li>○ <a href="http://www.businessadvisor.co.nz/afawcs0132621/CATID=1/SUBID=122/page=1/articles.html">www.businessadvisor.co.nz/afawcs0132621/CATID=1/SUBID=122/page=1/articles.html</a></li> </ul>
	<b>Workflow design and dispensary layout</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Re-plan or redesign work space where possible to ensure an organised, logical workflow</li> <li>• Re-evaluate workspace and workflow regularly (at least every 6 - 12 months especially in changing environment)</li> <li>• Ensure good lighting (daylight bulbs) wherever possible in the dispensary</li> <li>• Keep background noise to a minimum</li> </ul>

<i>Workload Pressure</i>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Put the telephone where it will cause minimal disruption to the dispensing process, and will allow confidential conversations to be held without being overheard</li> <li>• No personal cell-phones should be used by any staff in the dispensary. Keep texting to that which is work-related.</li> <li>• Private emails must be reserved for established 'break period' and out of the dispensary as they are distractors</li> <li>• Where a focused checking process is in progress (for example compliance packing), provide mechanisms to ensure there is minimal disturbance ie "do not disturb: checking in progress" signs</li> <li>• Move compliance packing away from main dispensing desk</li> </ul> <p><b>Resources</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ UK National Patient Safety Agency (NPSA) "<i>Design for patient safety dispensing environment</i>" guidance 2007</li> </ul>
	<b>Non-dispensing workload</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Share the workload - delegate tasks where possible and appropriate</li> <li>• Up-skill staff to manage some administration tasks for example writing SOPs; preparing prescription batches</li> <li>• Improve time management skills</li> </ul> <p><b>Resources</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <a href="http://mindtools.com">mindtools.com</a></li> <li>○ <a href="http://effective.time.management.tips.com">effective time management tips.com</a></li> </ul>



<i>Workload Pressure</i>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <a href="http://tips-for-boomers.com">tips-for-boomers.com</a></li> <li>○ New Zealand Institute of Management courses</li> <li>○ <a href="http://www.business.govt.nz">www.business.govt.nz</a></li> </ul>
	<b>Dealing with challenging customers<sup>10</sup></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Don't let them get to you - stay out of it emotionally and concentrate on listening non-defensively and actively. Customers may make disparaging and emotional remarks - don't rise to the bait.</li> <li>● Listen - listen - listen - look and sound like your listening. The customer wants to know that you care and that you're interested in their problem.</li> <li>● Apologising and saying sorry helps reassure the customer that you are listening. It is important to apologise for any inconvenience or distress caused, even if you are not responsible. When you say sorry, include it as part of a full sentence. "I'm sorry you haven't received that information as promised Mr Smith". (It's also good practise to use the customer's name in a difficult situation).</li> <li>● Empathise - using empathy is an effective way to deal with the customer's feelings. Empathy isn't about agreement, only acceptance of what the customer is saying and feeling. The message is - "I understand how you feel" but it has to be a genuine response. For example <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ "I can understand that you're angry"</li> <li>○ "I see what you mean".</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Build rapport - sometimes it's useful to add another phrase to the empathy response, including yourself in the picture. - "I can understand how you feel, I don't like it either when I'm kept waiting". This has the effect of getting on the</li> </ul>

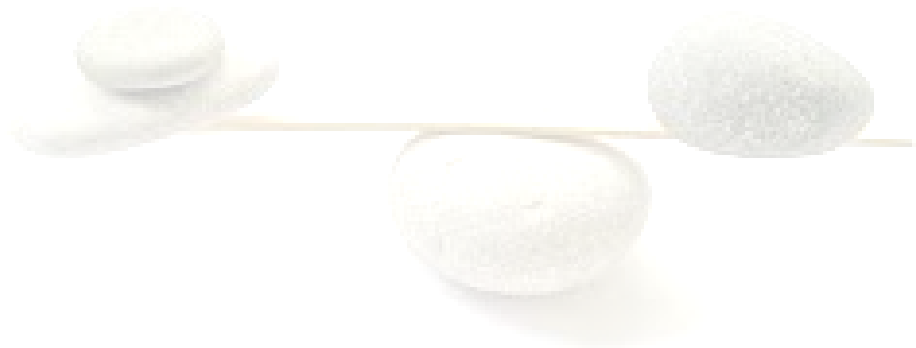
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<sup>10</sup> The HDC Code of Health and Disability Services Consumers' Rights - Right 5: the right to effective communication

customer's side and builds rapport.

### Resources

- KiwiHost course – Dealing with Difficult Customers
- <http://www.tuf.co.nz/> Learning to deal with difficult customers



## Psychosocial Elements

The ability to manage workload pressures involves not just task factors, but subjective components such as psychosocial factors. Many of these, such as those associated with cognitive functioning, perceptions of the task and physical environment of the pharmacy, personal qualities of people, interpersonal relationships, organisational dynamics, and extra-organisational factors, play a role in job satisfaction.

	Stressor	Solutions
<i>Psychosocial Elements</i>	<p><b>Professional safety worries when raising concerns</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop agreed processes for raising concerns that work for all parties – see Appendix 1</li> <li>• Review processes for raising concerns regularly to ensure they fit the existing workplace conditions and staffing levels</li> <li>• Discuss and develop professional empowerment guidelines that might include:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Mechanisms for raising concerns (not telling tales, but reporting issues through the correct channels/people)</li> <li>○ Increasing confidence through improved management skills for the entire pharmacy team</li> <li>○ Increasing job satisfaction, encouraging feedback about what is good and bad, helpful or hindrance</li> <li>○ Balancing professionalism with commercial pressure</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Provide fair mechanisms to identify and reconcile workplace relationship difficulties and conflict, and ensure everyone knows these</li> <li>• Ensure the influencing skills and personal assertiveness of all staff are good enough to raise concerns</li> </ul>

<i>Psychosocial Elements</i>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pharmacy Council Code of Ethics obligation 7.9: <i>Raise concerns and take appropriate steps if policies, systems, working conditions or the actions of others may compromise patient care or public safety</i></li> <li>• Develop guidelines for recognising the signs of a stressed employee. These could include issues such as lowered productivity and efficiency, increased absenteeism, impaired personal and interpersonal skills and changes in physical appearance.</li> </ul> <div style="background-color: #f4a460; padding: 5px; margin: 10px 0;"><b>Resources</b></div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Royal Pharmaceutical Society (RPS) <i>Reducing workplace pressure through professional empowerment</i></li> <li>○ Department of Labour booklet: <i>Healthy Work: Managing Stress in the Workplace</i></li> <li>○ RPS <i>Raising concerns, whistleblowing and speaking-up safely in pharmacy</i></li> <li>○ <a href="http://www.ktc.co.nz/File/WHISTLE.PDF">www.ktc.co.nz/File/WHISTLE.PDF</a></li> <li>○ <a href="http://www.whistleblowingethics.info/Customers/DialogicalEthics/website.nsf/In dex?ReadForm">www.whistleblowingethics.info/Customers/DialogicalEthics/website.nsf/In dex?ReadForm</a></li> <li>○ <a href="http://www.dol.govt.nz/er/solvingproblems/Solving%20problems.pdf">www.dol.govt.nz/er/solvingproblems/Solving%20problems.pdf</a></li> <li>○ <a href="http://www.interaction.org/document/recognizing-and-responding-stress-employees">http://www.interaction.org/document/recognizing-and-responding-stress-employees</a></li> <li>○ <a href="http://education.qld.gov.au/health/docs/identifying-stress.pdf">http://education.qld.gov.au/health/docs/identifying-stress.pdf</a></li> </ul>
	<b>Working in isolation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access peer support with advice from member organisations for example Pharmaceutical Society (PSNZ), PDA, PGNZ, PharmacyPartners, Pharmacybrands, Pharmacy Industry Training Organisation (PITO)</li> <li>• Build awareness around boundaries – what is OK/not OK; safe/unsafe;</li> </ul>

<i>Psychosocial Elements</i>		<p>appropriate/not appropriate, given the environment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be aware of changes within the environment and review boundaries to reflect them in a timely fashion</li> <li>• If taking a position as a locum pharmacist, working alone, ensure you establish what resources are available before accepting a booking in a pharmacy you are unfamiliar with</li> <li>• Familiarise yourself with practice standards and competence standards relevant to the profession <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Pharmacy Services Standard NZS8134.7:2010</li> <li>○ Competence Standards for the Pharmacy Profession</li> <li>○ Code of Ethics 2011</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
	<b>Not recognising / learning from mistakes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Document, discuss and evaluate all 'near misses' detected as learning opportunities (identify trends, patterns and possible contributing factors)</li> <li>• Document, discuss and evaluate all 'dispensing errors' and take steps to minimise the possibility of reoccurrence</li> <li>• Encourage pharmacists to focus on safe effective service delivery. If they are struggling to cope, allow them to say so. Act on the disclosure if at all possible to resolve the problem/issue</li> <li>• Develop agreed processes for raising and addressing concerns that work for all parties</li> </ul>

<i>Psychosocial Elements</i>	<b>Culture of blame</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote environment that encourages and ensures open communication</li> <li>• Maintain an open door policy and make it 'safe' to discuss issues that the senior staff, for example proprietors, may be causing</li> <li>• Hold regular staff meetings to discuss issues in a timely and appropriate manner, then act on the discussion</li> <li>• Ensure transparent complaints procedure in place (see PDA guidance) for staff as well as patients/customers<sup>11</sup></li> <li>• Support pharmacists to recognise their legal, ethical and professional responsibility to take action if health or competence concerns are not adequately addressed             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Health Practitioner's Competence Assurance Act Part 3</li> <li>○ Pharmacy Council (PCNZ) Code of Ethics obligation 6.5</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Encourage culture of openness - acknowledge mistakes will occur and identify these as learning opportunities</li> <li>• Respect the employer's position when there is no latitude available</li> <li>• Praise success of others at work</li> <li>• Work on maintaining healthy personal relationships; understand the difference between giving way and giving in, and that all can do both when appropriate</li> </ul>
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<sup>11</sup> The HDC Code of Health and Disability Services Consumers' Rights: Right 10 – the right to complain

<i>Psychosocial Elements</i>		<b>Resources</b>
	<b>Workplace bullying</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>How Full is Your Bucket: Positive Strategies for Work and Life</i> (Tom Rath)</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recognise that workplace bullying can take many forms, for example, spreading rumours or insulting someone; copying emails about someone to others who don't need to know; making threats about job security</li> <li>• Employers should make it clear that bullying is not acceptable</li> <li>• Employees should seek advice from member organisations eg Pharmaceutical Society (PSNZ), PDA, PGNZ, PharmacyPartners, Pharmacybrands, Pharmacy Industry Training Organisation (PITO) if uncomfortable about approaching your employer over bullying</li> <li>• Establish a neutral representative who staff can consult on a confidential basis</li> </ul> <div style="background-color: #f4a460; text-align: center; padding: 5px;"><b>Resources</b></div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <a href="http://www.osh.govt.nz/publications/factsheets/bullying.html">http://www.osh.govt.nz/publications/factsheets/bullying.html</a></li> <li>○ <a href="http://www.leadershipchallenge.co.nz/beyondbullying/">http://www.leadershipchallenge.co.nz/beyondbullying/</a></li> <li>○ <a href="http://www.neon.org.nz/newsarchive/dealbullying/">http://www.neon.org.nz/newsarchive/dealbullying/</a></li> </ul>

## Professional versus Commercial

It is a necessary fact of life that budgets and targets are common place in business. They can be useful to manage and help predict the resource requirements within a pharmacy. However, the act of producing a target is often the point at which the commercial driver to run a pharmacy economically comes into conflict with the professional autonomy of the pharmacist. The implementation of targets determined by Head Office or absentee owners without local “buy in” can become a battle ground. This may impact detrimentally upon patient safety, staff morale, or the wider reputation of the profession.

It is the right of employers to set targets for people to achieve, but this should be done sensitively. In the same way that pharmacy as an industry often argues that medicines are not an ordinary item of trade, pharmacy services that have patients well being at the end of them, should not be treated in the same manner as telephone or utility costs.<sup>12</sup>

	Stressor	Solutions
	<p><b>Management and business skills requirements</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Determine the management and business skills training required, and realistic timeframe/s to complete</li> <li>• Provide a clear training structure and career progression pathway, especially for pharmacists in first 5 years post registration, and supported by peers</li> <li>• Ensure all pharmacists have the appropriate managerial competencies needed to do the role they have been employed for</li> <li>• Build or refresh knowledge of employment law to deal with staff situations for example repeated absences</li> <li>• Select professional role models and champions for advice and support</li> </ul>

<sup>12</sup> Royal Pharmaceutical Society: reducing workplace pressure through professional empowerment.



- Choose a mentor to help build management skills and competencies, and professional wisdom
  - Employers and Manufacturer's Association (EMA) networking services
  - PGNZ
  - PharmacyPartners
  - Pharmacybrands
  - Ngā Kaitiaki o Te Puna Rongoā o Aotearoa (Māori Pharmacists' Association (MPA))
  - Employers (previous or current), peers, older experienced pharmacists
- Utilise the skills and knowledge of organisations' practice pharmacists for example Pharmacybrands, Pharmaceutical Society, Pharmacy Guild, PharmacyPartners

#### Resources

- NZIM– Small Business Management
- PGNZ business tools
- EMA – Management, Strategy & Leadership guide
- [www.business.govt.nz](http://www.business.govt.nz)
- [www.capabilitynewzealand.org](http://www.capabilitynewzealand.org)
- [www.dale.carnfor exampleie.com](http://www.dale.carnfor.exampleie.com)

**Managing business viability / organisational expectations versus safe effective service delivery**

- Ensure that public safety rather than commercialism, is at the heart of pharmacy service delivery
- Set performance targets that maximise professionalism and that impact positively on patient safety and health outcomes
- Incentivise innovation but not at expense of patient safety and service delivery
- Allow staff to move job boundaries along the continuum and thus shift roles upwards, ensuring there are no gaps at the bottom of the scope
- Match shift in job boundaries and roles with commercial imperatives
- Ensure that non-pharmacist managers, and non-pharmacist senior staff understand the pharmacy environment and the obligations of pharmacists as professionals
- Disseminate policies and procedures to staff, and allow for their input and judgement in the delivery of patient care
- Agree guidelines for managing 'deals' offered by sponsor companies
- Ensure that business expectations for example, Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) that involve sales targets, are not used as tools for dismissal

**Resources**

- Code of Ethics 2011
- Member organisations' guidelines

## **Employment contracts**

- Seek advice on reasonable expectations
  - Hourly rates
  - Hours of work
  - Dress/uniform codes
  - Expenses eg clothing allowance; Continuing Professional Development (CPD) costs;
- Clarify professional responsibilities if the role changes, for example not employed as Charge Pharmacist, but is expected to act as Charge Pharmacist on occasion
- Support employees in their role by ensuring that skills and performance identified as needing improvement are addressed in planned development.<sup>13</sup>

### **Resources**

- [www.dol.govt.nz/infozone/businessessentials/employ/employment-agreements/](http://www.dol.govt.nz/infozone/businessessentials/employ/employment-agreements/)
- [businessblogs.co.nz/2009/08/why-you-must-choose-the-right-employment-agreements-for-your-staff-2/](http://businessblogs.co.nz/2009/08/why-you-must-choose-the-right-employment-agreements-for-your-staff-2/)
- [www.together.org.nz/helpfulresources](http://www.together.org.nz/helpfulresources)
- PDA
- PGNZ
- PharmacyPartners

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<sup>13</sup> Planned development should include identifying professional development activities that match needs rather than the desire of employees.

## Professional Satisfaction

Poor job satisfaction is a contributing factor towards the stress an individual may experience. However, when workplace stress is minimised, it will increase job satisfaction. Various factors that are amenable to action by employers can positively affect the job satisfaction of pharmacists and pharmacy staff. These include: the opportunity for career development; feeling valued by the employer, patients and other healthcare professionals; fair remuneration; opportunity for professional development; support structures; morale and self-esteem.

<i>Professional Satisfaction</i>	Stressor	Solutions
	<p><b>Lack of professional empowerment</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop agreed job description and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) that are positive and affirming</li> <li>• Develop formal mentoring processes, but ensure that an informal mentor is also available to support staff</li> <li>• Discuss and develop professional empowerment guidelines that include, but are not limited to:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Increasing confidence through improved management skills</li> <li>○ Increasing job satisfaction</li> <li>○ Balancing professionalism with commercial pressure</li> <li>○ Encouraging realistic expectations of remuneration</li> <li>○ Mechanisms for raising and resolving concerns</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

<i>Professional Satisfaction</i>	<b>Mundane tasks</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build clinical knowledge through CPD and create opportunities to apply it</li> <li>• Rotate tasks for example pharmacist moves through dispensary, front of shop, management tasks, manufacturing where possible</li> <li>• Have technicians do technical aspects of dispensing while pharmacists attend to clinical aspects (clinical check, final check, counselling)</li> <li>• Match tasks and people where possible. Consider skill set, suitability, training, level of engagement</li> <li>• Consider additional clinical services if appropriate</li> <li>• Where practicable share less interesting tasks with other employees</li> </ul>
	<b>Limited professional acknowledgement from GPs, patients, allied health professionals</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take opportunities to build trust and relationships with other health care professionals and patients</li> <li>• Discuss expanded roles and on-going collaborative opportunities with local GPs and practice nurses</li> <li>• Talk about the other members of the health care team when engaging in clinically focussed conversations</li> <li>• Consider additional clinical services if appropriate</li> <li>• Offer update sessions to local GP practices for example monthly Schedule changes</li> </ul>

## Conclusion

Well managed workplaces are proactive about working through issues as they arise, and are prepared to resolve or minimise the impact these issues may have on staff and health consumers.

All pharmacists and pharmacy staff are encouraged to use this guide as a personal resource and to share it with employers, where appropriate.

## Useful Websites

[www.pharmacytimes.com/publications/issue/2010/October2010/BeatingJobStress-1010](http://www.pharmacytimes.com/publications/issue/2010/October2010/BeatingJobStress-1010)

[www.ucl.ac.uk/hr/occ\\_health/health\\_advice/managing\\_pressure.php](http://www.ucl.ac.uk/hr/occ_health/health_advice/managing_pressure.php)

[www.osh.govt.nz/order/catalogue/stress/managestress.pdf](http://www.osh.govt.nz/order/catalogue/stress/managestress.pdf)

[www.osh.govt.nz/publications/booklets/health-tools-09/pg6.shtml](http://www.osh.govt.nz/publications/booklets/health-tools-09/pg6.shtml)

[workplacestress.co.nz/hwac-national-guideline-summary%5B472kb%5D.pdf](http://workplacestress.co.nz/hwac-national-guideline-summary%5B472kb%5D.pdf)

[www.ghp.org.uk/ContentFiles/reducing-workplace-pressure-through-professional-empowerment.pdf.pdf](http://www.ghp.org.uk/ContentFiles/reducing-workplace-pressure-through-professional-empowerment.pdf.pdf)

[www.hrinz.org.nz/archive/conference03/PDF/hillary%20bennett.pdf](http://www.hrinz.org.nz/archive/conference03/PDF/hillary%20bennett.pdf)

All websites and hyperlinks are correct at the time of publication. The authors do not take responsibility for legislative changes that may make some information in this booklet obsolete.

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## Appendix 1: “Raising Concerns” Flowchart

