Mental health and inclusivity in the diving industry

Amanda Sordes, Executive Director ADAS

We have made significant progress over the past 50 years…

Overview

1. What is meant by "mental health" and "mental wellbeing"?

2. Mental wellbeing and offshore work

3. Introduction to neurodiversity

4. Generational shifts and workplace expectations

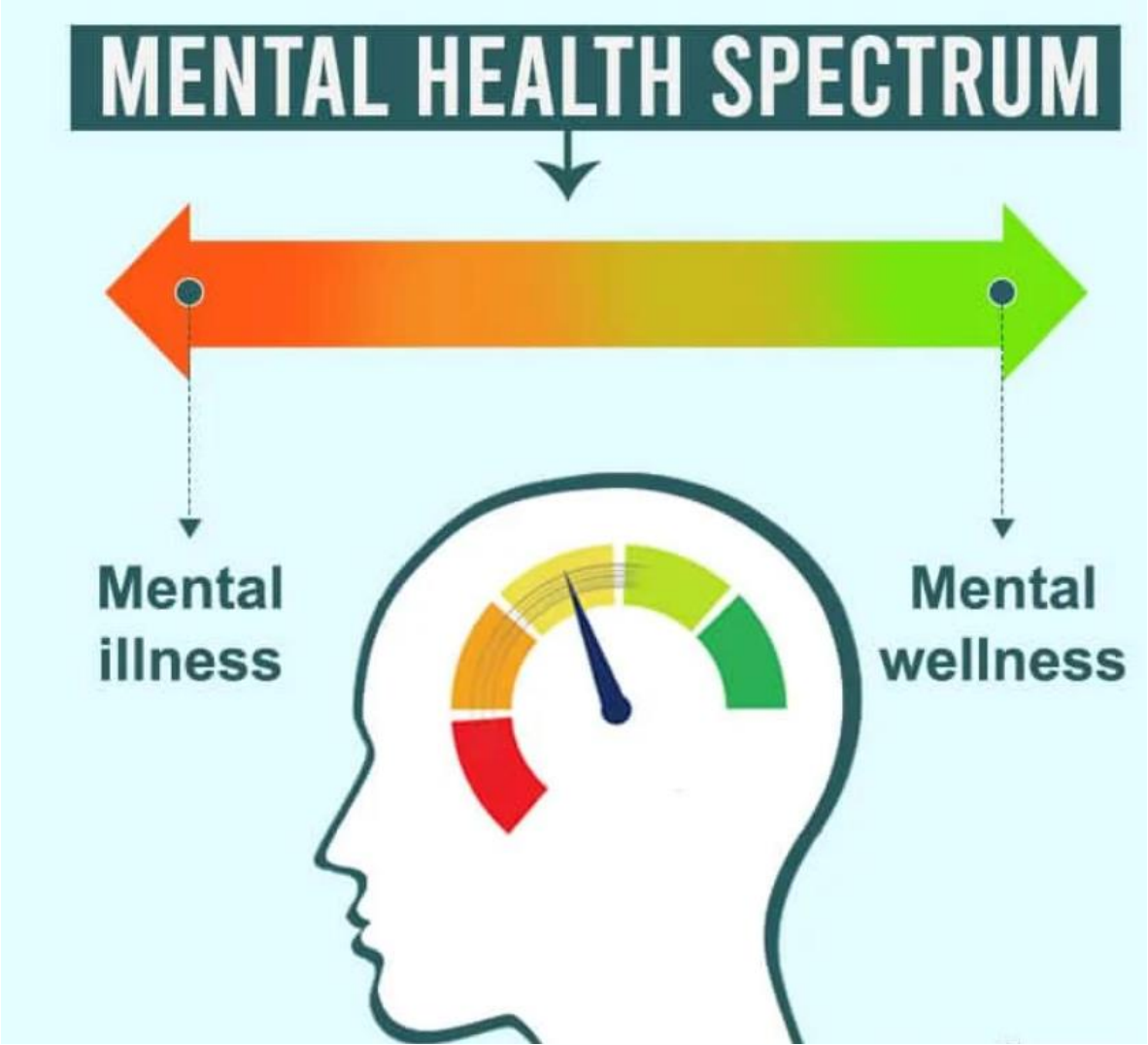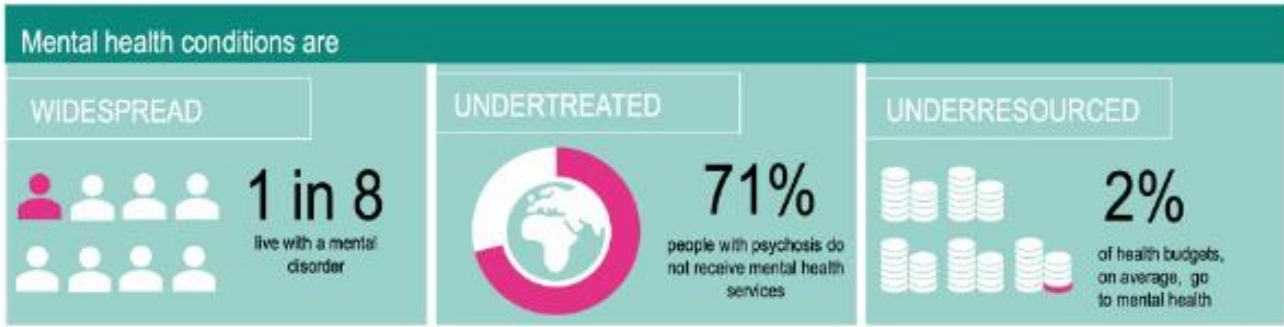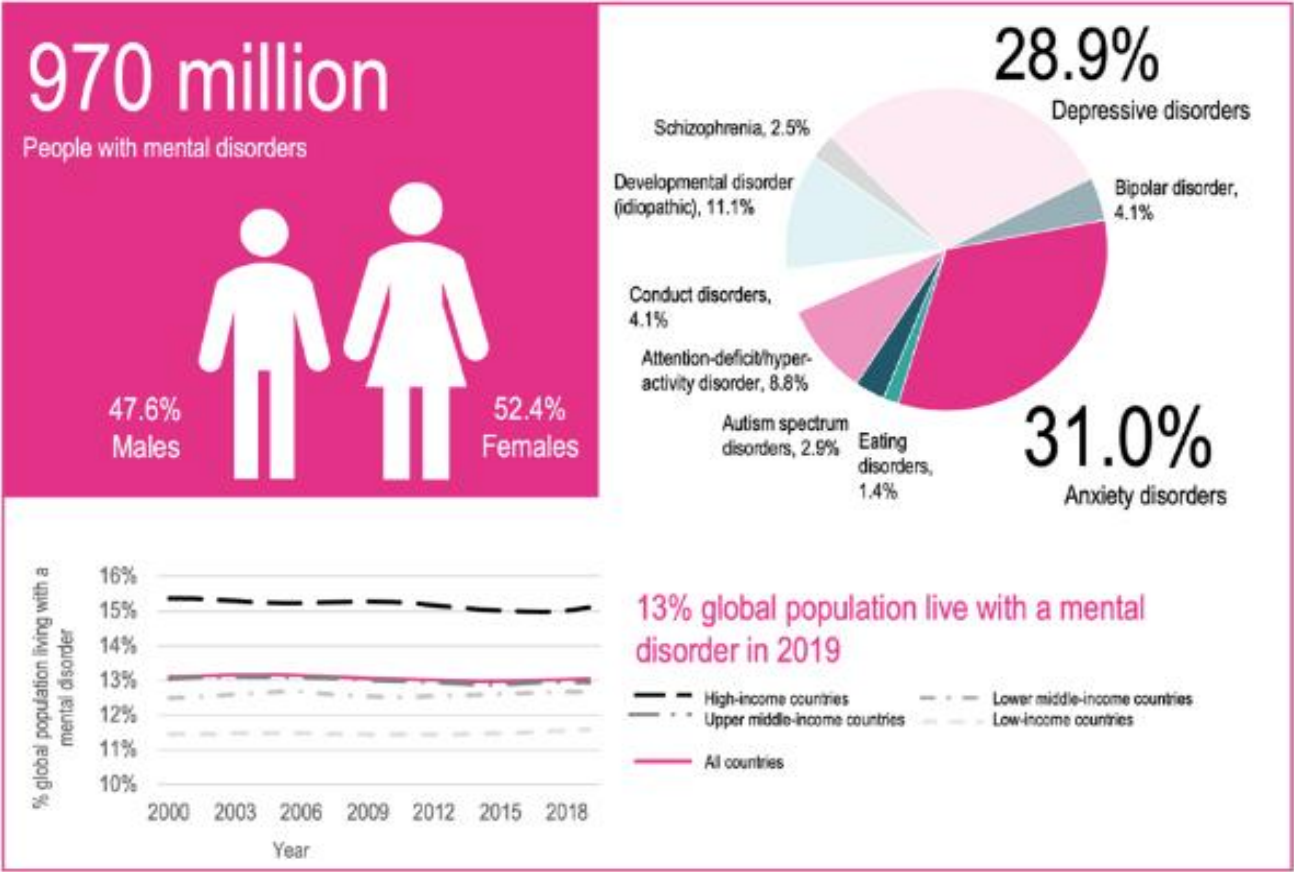5. Promoting more inclusivity and better mental health

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1. What is meant by 'mental health'

MENTAL HEALTH

Defined by The World Health Organization

A state of well-being in which every individual realises his or her own potential can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully and is able to make a contribution to her or his community.

Mental health

970 million

People with mental disorders

47.6% Males

52.4% Females

28.9% Depressive disorders

Schizophrenia, 2.5%

Developmental disorder (idiopathic), 11.1%

Bipolar disorder, 4.1%

Conduct disorders, 4.1%

Attention-deficit/hyper-activity disorder, 8.8%

Autism spectrum disorders, 2.9%

Eating disorders, 1.4%

31.0% Anxiety disorders

13% global population live with a mental disorder in 2019

% global population living with a mental disorder

- High-income countries
- Upper middle-income countries
- Lower middle-income countries
- Low-income countries
- All countries

Year

Mental health conditions are

WIDESPREAD — 1 in 8 live with a mental disorder

UNDERTREATED — 71% people with psychosis do not receive mental health services

UNDERRESOURCED — 2% of health budgets, on average, go to mental health

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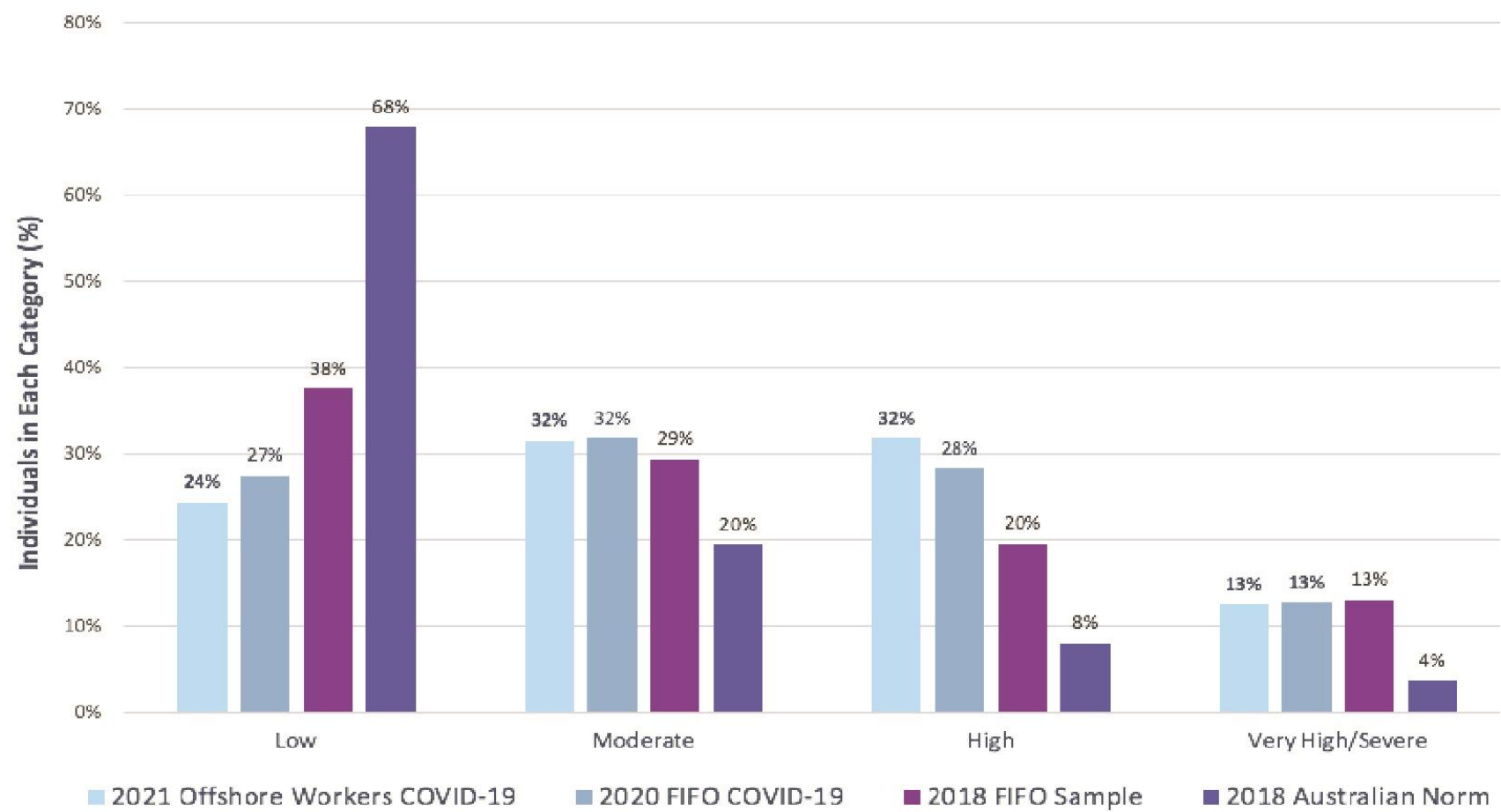# 2. Mental health and offshore work

Contributing or exacerbating factors

➢ Isolation (physical & cultural)

➢ Lack of privacy and confined work & living spaces

➢ Low job control

➢ Shift work

➢ Hazardous work

➢ 'Macho' culture

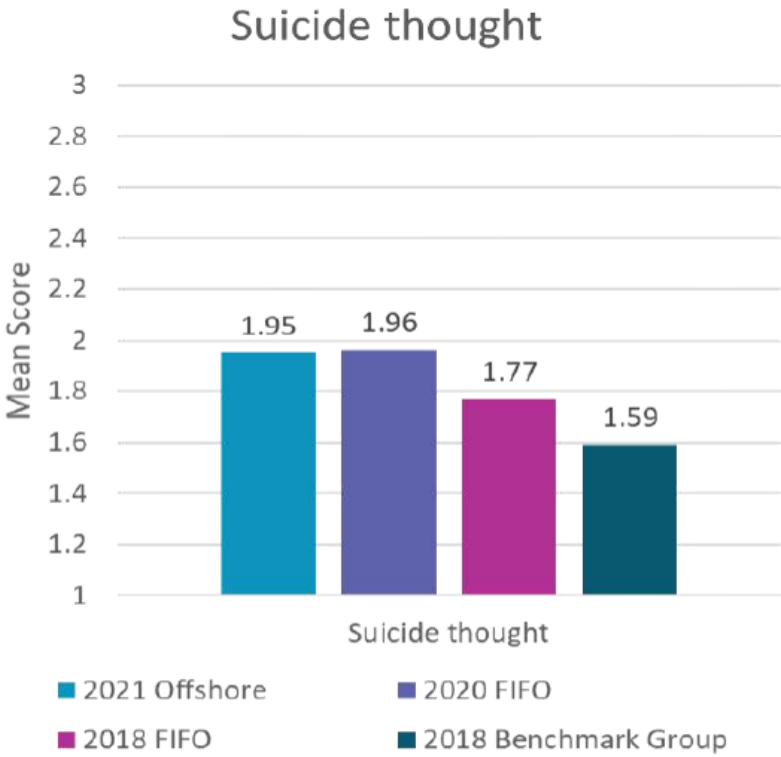➢ Environmental conditions

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Mental health and offshore work
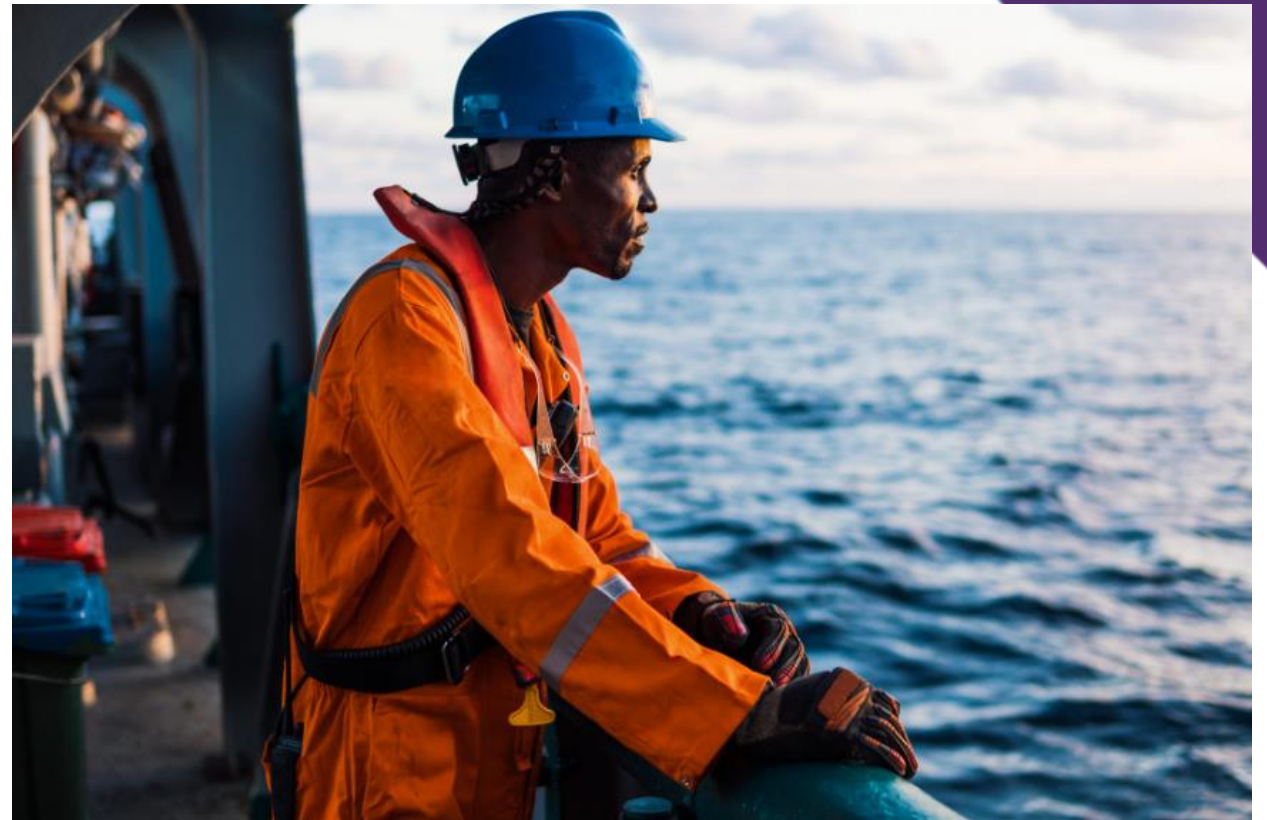
Psychological distress in offshore workers compared to other groups

(Australian data, 2021, courtesy of Dr Jess Gilbert, Curtin University WA).

Bar chart titled "Individuals in Each Category (%)" (y-axis, 0%–80%) by distress category (x-axis: Low, Moderate, High, Very High/Severe).

Category	2021 Offshore Workers COVID-19	2020 FIFO COVID-19	2018 FIFO Sample	2018 Australian Norm
Low	24%	27%	38%	68%
Moderate	32%	32%	29%	20%
High	32%	28%	20%	8%
Very High/Severe	13%	13%	13%	4%

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Mental health and offshore work

Offshore workers are **15 times more likely to suicide** than the general population.

Suicide thought

3. Introduction to neurodiversity

Neurodiversity is an umbrella term for neurological or developmental conditions.

Neurodivergent people experience the world differently to most of their peers.

- ➢ ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder)
    - ➢ ASD (Autism Spectrum Disorder)
        - ➢ BP (Bipolar Disorder)
            - ➢ Dyslexia
                - ➢ Dyspraxia
                    - ➢ OCD (Obsessive Compulsive Disorder)
                        - ➢ Personality Disorders
                            - ➢ Tourette Syndrome

Dyslexia – or "reading blindness"

May excel in other areas that don't involve reading

Written compositions can lack cohesion and organization

May have a co-occuring disorder (dysgraphia, ADHD, language impairment)

May have low self-esteem and lack confidence

Has a slow reading rate and difficulty spelling certain words

May struggle when put on the spot in conversations or writing

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder - ADHD

Autism Spectrum Disorder - ASD

The 3 Levels of Autism

Level 1
Requiring support
- Trouble understanding and following social rules
- Rigid or inflexible behavior
- Some stress during transitions
- May benefit from therapy or life skills coaching

Level 2
Requiring substantial support
- Atypical social behavior, like walking away mid-conversation
- High interest in specific topics
- Noticeable distress when faced with change
- May need school accommodations like reading help or social skills support

Level 3
Requiring very substantial support
- Severe communication deficits, such as being nonspeaking
- Repetitive behaviors like rocking or spinning
- Extreme distress when asked to switch tasks
- May need one-on-one time with an education assistant and may use augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) tools, like picture symbols

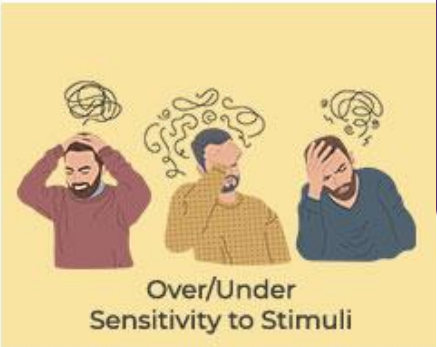Communication Difficulties

Social Anxiety

Relationship Challenges

Impaired Attention & Focus

SIGNS OF MILD AUTISM IN ADULTS

Over/Under Sensitivity to Stimuli

Need for Predictability & Structure

Limited Patterns of Interest

Physical Coordination Problems

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1 in 4 Construction workers consider themselves to have a neurodiverse condition.

4. Generational shifts in the workplace

The Age Spectrum:
Navigating Multigenerational Workplaces

Baby Boomers (Born 1946 - 1964)

Born during a period of post-WWII optimism and prosperity, Baby Boomers are typically associated with a strong work ethic, resourcefulness, and competitive nature.

Gen Y or Millenials (1981-1996)

The first generation to come of age in the new millennium, they're often tech-savvy, value work-life balance, prioritize experiences over possessions, and tend to be supportive of equal rights.
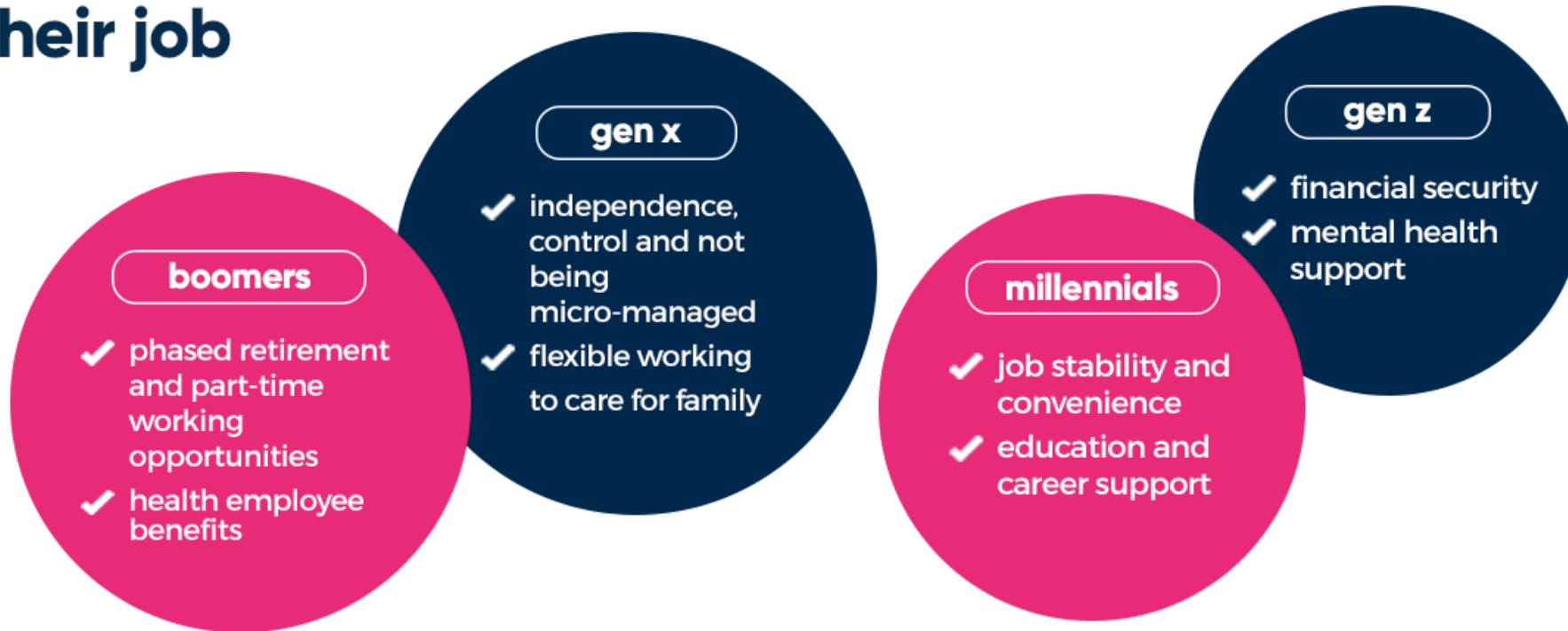
Gen X (1965 - 1980)

They came of age during a time of shifting societal values and economic change, often characterized by their adaptability, independent thinking, skepticism towards authority, and a balanced focus on work and life.

Gen Z (1997 - 2012)

Digitally immersed and socially conscious, they champion diversity and social justice, embracing authenticity and seeking meaningful experiences in a rapidly changing world.

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Generational shifts in the workplace

what different generations want from their job

boomers
- phased retirement and part-time working opportunities
- health employee benefits

gen x
- independence, control and not being micro-managed
- flexible working to care for family

millennials
- job stability and convenience
- education and career support

gen z
- financial security
- mental health support

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5. Practical implications for the training and management of our workforce

THE CHARTER

The purpose of the charter is to create a shared framework that organisations can adopt throughout the industry, forming a universal, joined up approach using key learnings and sharing them with our peers. This is not about competitive advantages. It's about coming together as human beings to allow us to do business better by creating improved working environments for our people.

The Mental Health and Well-being Charter

We believe the industry can and should:

1 **Initiate a company and industry-wide cultural change.** This will be driven by an industry-wide mental health and well-being task force made up of mental health experts and signatories at senior management level. Each company should have a mental health and well-being lead at board or senior leadership level with defined roles and responsibilities. Companies should produce, implement, and communicate a mental health and well-being at work plan that promotes the well-being of all employees and the support available to them. This should be embedded in employee inductions and handbooks.

2 **Demonstrate transparency and accountability through internal and external reporting.** Key performance benchmarks should include an audit of current mental health practices, absence rates, ongoing mental health and well-being specific training and a review of mental health and well-being check-in touch points. The task force will work with industry to develop a common framework for KPIs and reporting.

3 **Build mental health and well-being awareness among employees.** Companies must ensure all employees understand the basics of mental health and well-being, how to check in on someone, and how to recognise their own feelings. The task force will share information about organisations that provide recommended courses. Active monitoring and refresher training will support knowledge cascading.

4 **Foster effective people management.** Management should have regular one-to-one sessions with direct reports. As a first step, each company should audit and assess its mental health and well-being processes and practices and identify any gaps. The task force will share an audit template with companies. Every company should publish the charter on its website or equivalent public space.

5 **Encourage open conversations about mental health and well-being and provide employees with good working conditions, including a safe psychological space.** People must be able to openly express their vulnerability. The task force will provide guidelines for onshore and offshore senior management (including OIMs and CEOs) with clarity and definition of their responsibilities. Each company should create a multi-touch-point support system for employees. This might include signposting to a confidential 24/7 mental health hotline, a mental health app, mental health first aiders, and a specialist mental health partner that supports the signatory organisation (arranged independently of this charter).

6 **Provide comprehensive training.** It is recommended that training should be mandatory for all employees, including senior executives, mental health first aiders/champions, and everyone so they can recognise symptoms in themselves and others. Mental health and well-being first aiders must be chosen based on their aptitude. They must receive industry-recognised training and certification, reviewed annually, and receive mental health and well-being support.

7 **Give mental health and well-being the same high priority as physical health.** This includes advising employees of company-recommended mental health self-assessment tools. The task force will review how mental health and well-being assessments can be included in onshore and offshore inductions, medicals, and pre-flight checks. Mental health and well-being should be considered among the human factors in pre-job meetings.

8 **Offer customised mental health support and guidance.** Companies should assess all approaches to mental health and well-being, including new technology. Those that demonstrate employee benefits should be collated with existing tools and best practices. Employees should be regularly updated on the internal and external support services available to them.

9 **Routinely monitor mental health and well-being.** The mental health and well-being of all employees should be assessed regularly and measured. As part of its work scope, the task force will consider defining the assessment process and may suggest companies consider annually reviewing their progress against the charter's objectives.

10 **Sharing best practices.** Companies will be encouraged to share examples of their best mental health and well-being practices so they can be collated with existing, industry-wide, best practices and adopted more widely across the sector.

Signed:

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https://www.mentalhealthinenergy.com/charter

MENTAL HEALTH IN ENERGY

Change starts with education

➤ What industry culture are we

promoting during training?

➤ What support is given to

students?

Interpersonal skills assessment

of all students: an ADAS initiative

4.1 INTERPERSONAL SKILLS

Assessment title:	Interpersonal Skills
Student name:	
ATE:	

Performance Rating Scale:
2. Competent
1. Competent after discussion *(decision to be justified in the "comments on performance" section)*
0. Not yet competent

Note: The *Assessor Guidance* stipulates that competence must be demonstrated consistently throughout the course. If student's performance falls short of stated expectations, the assessor must record it, along with the date, and any action taken as a result.
The assessment rating column will only need to be completed if the performance rating for any of the assessment criteria is below the appropriate standards.

Observation performance requirement: During the demonstration of skills, did the student satisfactorily:

U / E / PC	Competence – to be demonstrated consistently over the entire duration of the course	Date: Rating	Date: Rating	Date: Rating	Date: Rating
	Give an overall rating for the entire course → OR give a rating for each criterion ↓				
6002(1-3)	1. Use appropriate language at all times (refrain from offensive, aggressive, threatening and intimidating language)				
	2. Treat everyone with respect regardless of gender, race, religion, sexual orientation, culture, or ability (refrain from slurs, hate speech, inappropriate jokes or comments)				
	3. Provide support to colleagues to meet identified needs				
	4. Maintain supportive attitude and offer assistance to other team members when required				
	5. Resolve interpersonal conflict in such a way that maintains respect				
	6. Do not engage in, or support, behaviours that intend to cause harm or upset in other team members				
	7. Ensure behaviour does not create, contribute to, or condone workplace bullying				
	8. Contribute to team activities and environment in a productive and beneficial manner				
	9. Work to support, not impede, another team member's development or understanding				

The candidates demonstration was:

Competent ☐   Not yet competent ☐   Date: /   /

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ADAS Women Divers Mentoring Program

ADAS acknowledges that minority groups can benefit from additional support and guidance both during training and the first stages of their careers in the hyperbaric industry. In 2021, the ADAS Board elected to initiate a mentoring program to support new ADAS divers from minority groups.

The first stage of the mentoring program is focused on women divers. New divers can access support from mentors with established careers in the hyperbaric industry who have experienced similar obstacles or difficulties.

Women are a minority in the Australian hyperbaric industry, as they make up under 5% of ADAS license holders

If you are a female student currently enrolled in an ADAS diver course and would like to be connected to a female mentor, please email Amanda Sordes, ADAS Executive Director using the subject line *Mentorship request*

Amanda Sordes: amanda@adas.org.au

Scan the QR code to join the private Facebook group:

Female occupational divers in Australia and NZ - mentoring and support

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adas.org.au/student-support/

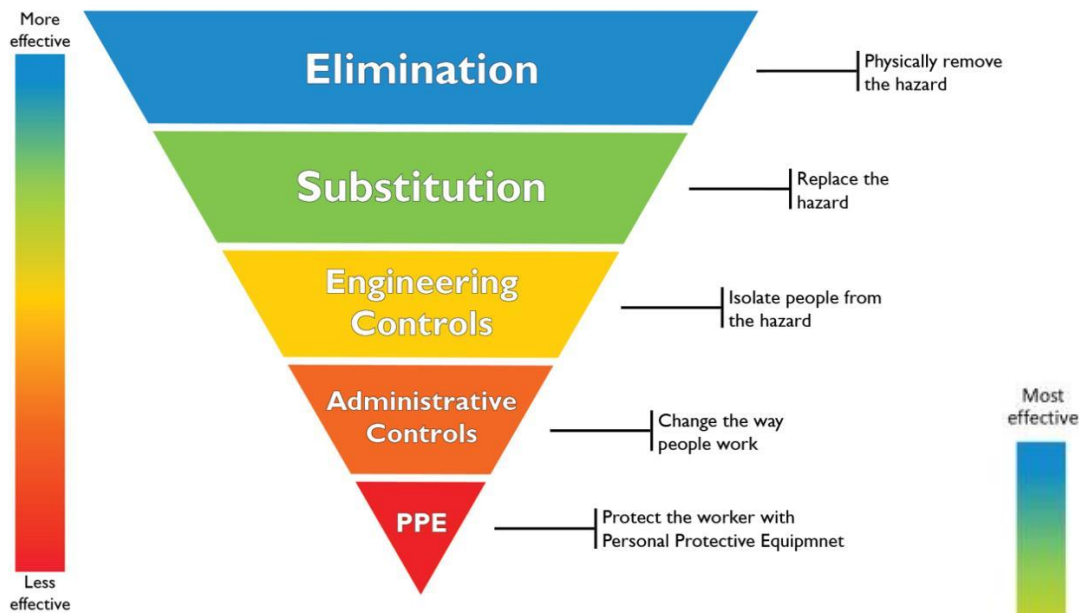**Inclusivity training for trainers**

To be pro-active: Neurodiversity training for trainers

To be reactive: Mental Health First Aiders in each ADAS school

Conclusion

The traditional hierarchy of controls

The Mental Health hierarchy of control (presently)

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Thank you for your attention.

Any questions?