

Selection into certain types of jobs and exposure to poor psychosocial working environments



CRE-DH
Centre of Research Excellence in Disability and Health

While part-time work was beneficial for mental health compared to not working, underemployment was common among people with disability and associated with poor mental health. Exposure to psychosocial job stressors was associated with increased sickness absence and discrimination in the workplace was common.

This fact sheet is the third in a series of five reporting on a research review of the Centre of Research Excellence in Disability and Health research program on employment and mental health among people with disability. This fact sheet summarises findings from our research program, which used diverse methods and data sources. We recognise that not all people with disability are represented in these surveys and data collection methods.

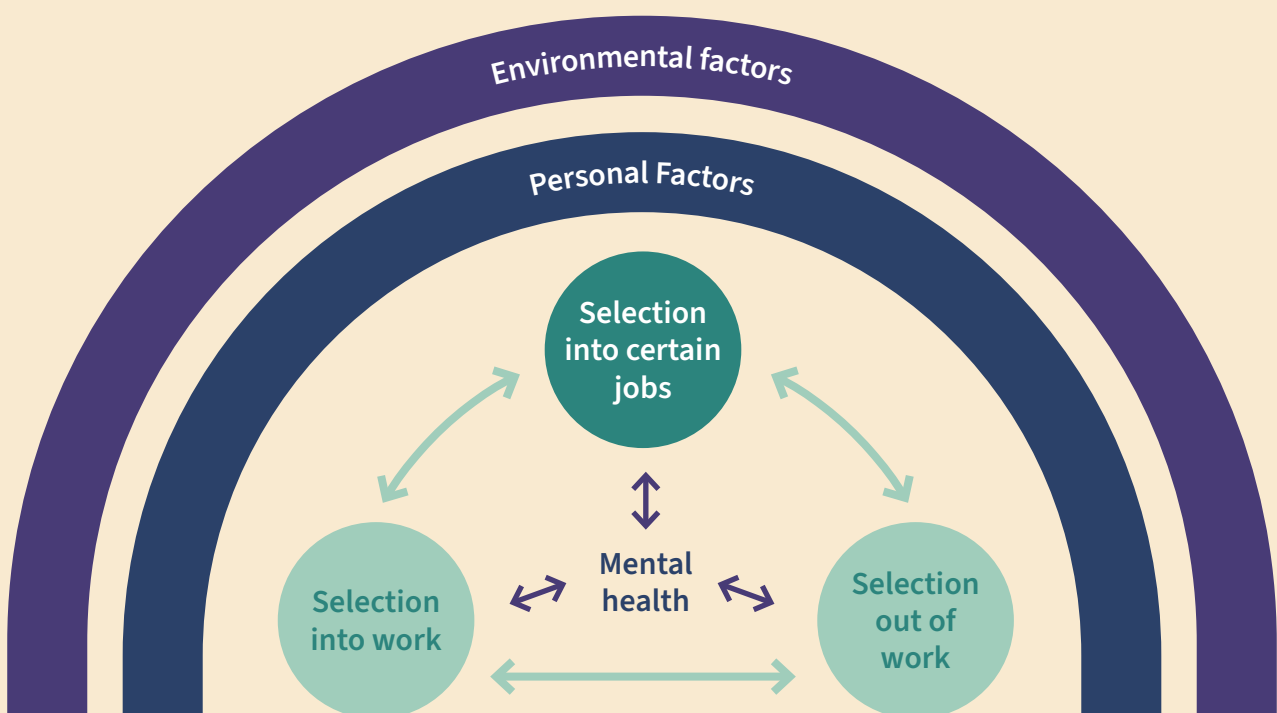
Case study



Chelsea lives with mental illness and has scarring from non-suicidal self-injury. At Chelsea's first shift at her new retail job she was surprised to be given a uniform which was different from the short-sleeved shirt worn by other employees. Despite continuing to do well on the job, Chelsea was told by her supervisor that she needed to remain covered up as her scars were distracting for customers.

Chelsea described feeling her 'heart sink' as she realised she was welcome at her job only as long as she continued to dress a certain way.

Selection into certain types of jobs and exposure to poor psychosocial working environments refers to the fact that when people with disability get jobs, they are more likely to experience poorer working conditions, such as being underemployed, or experiencing more psychosocial job stressors, like job insecurity.





Hours worked

Working part time (<35 hours per week) was beneficial for people with disability's mental health compared to not working. However, being underemployed (wanting to work more hours) was more common among people with disability and was associated with poor mental health outcomes.



Exposure to psychosocial job stressors and discrimination

Experiencing psychosocial job stressors, like low job control, was associated with greater sickness absence among people with disability compared to people without disability. Discrimination in the workplace was commonly reported by people with disability, from employers and other employees.

Further information

The CRE-DH generates evidence to guide social and health policy reform with the aim of improving the health of Australians with disability aged 15-64 years and reducing inequitable, avoidable health and wellbeing disparities between Australians with and without disability.

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