Vignettes: The Lived Experience & Wellbeing of Aviation Workers

Introduction

These vignettes have been derived from research interviews undertaken by Dr Joan Cahill with aviation professionals.

The vignettes take as their starting point the lived experience and wellbeing of aviation workers (i.e., biopsychosocial).

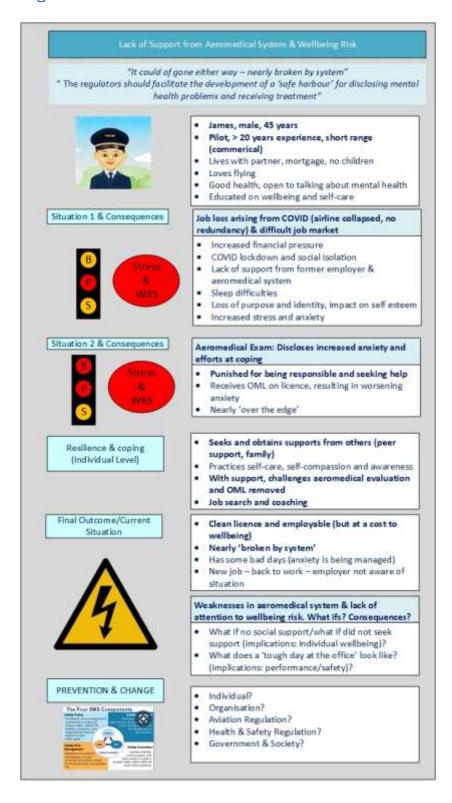
In any situation, there are multiple factors and interactions. Not everything stacks up perfectly (i.e., series of holes in Reason's Swizz cheese theory and diagram). It is essential to map the overall lived experience and sources of WRS/psychosocial hazards both in and outside work (i.e., problem space), and the core impact of this in relation to individual wellbeing, performance, and safety.

These vignettes can be used to:

- Communicate issues to decision makers and leadership (action change/prevention, addressing psychosocial hazards)
- Support problem solving re addressing wellbeing risk in SMS
- Support staff wellbeing and MH awareness/education (allows basic self-risk assessment and awareness...answer question is this me/relatability)
- Support safety promotion and health promoting workplace
- Support fostering of health, wellbeing, and safety culture

In this way, they can be linked to the 4 pillars in the SMS.

In relation to change/prevention – this needs to be addressed at different levels. Vignettes can be used to identify change requirements, as part of risk/safety management processes.



"I have to take the flight work when I get it - even when I am tired" "I can't rely on aviation job – I have to do other work to pay the bills" "I am constantly exhausted – thank goodness no safety issues so far" Vicky, female,29 years Cabin Crew, > 8 years, commercial airline Single, no children Good health, open to talking about mental health Practices yoga and healthy lifestyle Situation 1 & Consequences Reduced hours/income arising from COVID Increased financial pressure COVID lockdown and social isolation Sleep difficulties & Lack of support from employer Increased stress and anxiety (about career in aviation, job precarity etc). Situation 2 & Consequences Return to Work - P/T Hours & Job Precarity P/T hours only, contract changes Unpredictable and precarious roster Seeks P/T work in restaurant Exhaustion and fatigue on job Seeks and obtains supports from others (family) Resilience & coping Practices self-care, self-compassion and awareness (Individual Level) Obtains second job as waitress in city restaurant Second job helps with financial pressure and job uncertainty, but exhausting Final Outcome/Current Employer not aware of situation (i.e., two jobs and Situation fatigue risk) Has presented to work, with <3 hours sleep and 'not fit for work' Exhaustion is worsening her anxiety No peer assistance for Cabin Crew. Job precarity. What ifs? Consequences? What if no social support/what if did not seek support (implications: individual wellbeing)? What does a 'tough day at the office' look like? (implications: performance/safety)? PREVENTION & CHANGE Individual? Organisation? Aviation Regulation? Health & Safety Regulation?

Government & Society?

