

Mental Injury Treatment Guidelines:

A Comprehensive Guide for Patients
and Providers



Introduction

Mental injuries arising from workplace incidents are a growing area of concern across Australia. From first responders to office workers, no one is immune to the psychological impact of trauma, conflict, or chronic stress in the workplace. Whether it manifests as depression, anxiety, PTSD or adjustment disorder, timely and evidence-based treatment is essential.

This ebook is designed to provide a clear, accessible guidance on Mental Injury Treatment Guidelines, while highlighting the comprehensive and personalised services offered by Monarch Mental Health Group. Our experienced team of psychiatrists, psychologists, and nurses deliver expert-led, evidence-based care tailored to your needs—whether you're navigating a WorkCover claim for mental health concerns or seeking next-step treatments.

Chapter 1: Understanding Work-Related Mental Injury

What is a Work-Related Mental Injury?

Work-related mental injuries occur when a worker experiences psychological harm due to events or conditions in their workplace. Common causes include bullying, verbal abuse, exposure to traumatic incidents, and sustained high-pressure environments. These experiences can trigger a range of psychological responses, from acute stress reactions to long-term conditions such as Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).

In Australia, WorkCover schemes are structured to provide access to treatment for mental injuries that are directly attributable to a work incident or environment. Importantly, these claims require medical evidence and a formal diagnosis under DSM-5 criteria. Monarch Mental Health Group assists patients and referring doctors in compiling the appropriate clinical documentation to support valid claims. Our experienced psychiatrists and psychologists conduct thorough assessments to differentiate between pre-existing conditions, workplace exacerbations, and new mental injuries.

Additionally, early recognition of symptoms is critical. Some individuals may notice subtle changes in mood, concentration, or sleep patterns long before seeking treatment. Monarch encourages both workers and employers to be proactive in addressing these concerns. The earlier treatment begins, the better the outcomes. Our clinics across Australia are well-equipped to provide immediate support and intervention for those who suspect their psychological symptoms are work-related.



A workplace mental health injury is a psychological condition—such as PTSD, anxiety, depression, or adjustment disorder—that arises directly from work-related stress, trauma, or conflict, and Monarch Mental Health Group provides expert-led diagnosis, treatment, and support to help individuals recover and navigate the WorkCover process with confidence.

Chapter 2: The Biopsychosocial and Lifestyle (BPSL) Model

A Holistic Approach to Mental Health

The Biopsychosocial and Lifestyle (BPSL) model is a holistic framework that considers a person's mental health in the context of biological, psychological, social, and lifestyle factors. This model is particularly useful in treating work-related mental injuries, as it allows for a comprehensive understanding of each individual's unique circumstances.

Biological factors include genetics, brain chemistry, and physical health conditions that may predispose someone to mental illness. Psychological elements encompass coping mechanisms, cognitive patterns, trauma history, and resilience. Social components involve relationships, support networks, work environment, and financial stressors. Lifestyle factors such as sleep, exercise, diet, substance use, and routines also play a major role in recovery.

At Monarch Mental Health Group, we adopt the BPSL model in all treatment planning. This means that rather than relying on a single therapeutic approach, we create multidisciplinary treatment plans that integrate therapy, medication, lifestyle counselling, and social support. For instance, a patient with PTSD may receive a combination of trauma-focused CBT, psychiatric medication, and help establishing a daily exercise routine.

This model also underscores the importance of the return-to-work process. Recovery doesn't just mean symptom reduction; it means regaining functionality in all aspects of life, including employment. Our clinicians collaborate with employers, case managers, and other health providers to ensure patients are supported not only clinically, but also socially and practically.

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Chapter 3: Evidence-Based Therapies

Proven Approaches to Psychological Recovery

The treatment of work-related mental injuries relies heavily on evidence-based psychological therapies and psychiatry services. These therapies are scientifically validated to improve outcomes for conditions such as PTSD, depression, anxiety, and adjustment disorders. The most commonly recommended therapies include Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT), Trauma-Focused CBT (TF-CBT), Eye Movement Desensitisation and Reprocessing (EMDR), Interpersonal Psychotherapy (IPT), Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT), and Progressive Muscle Relaxation (PMR).

CBT remains the foundational therapy, helping individuals identify and modify unhelpful thought patterns and behaviours. TF-CBT is especially useful for processing traumatic workplace incidents. EMDR is a non-verbal technique that reduces emotional distress associated with trauma. IPT addresses interpersonal conflicts that often arise due to workplace strain. ACT enhances psychological flexibility through mindfulness, making it particularly effective for workers managing chronic pain alongside mental illness.

At Monarch, all these therapies are available and tailored to the patient's specific condition and goals. Our psychologists are trained across multiple modalities, allowing us to match patients with the right provider and treatment plan. We also support outcome tracking through clinical reviews, ensuring each intervention is contributing to symptom relief and improved functioning.

The structured nature of these therapies—with clearly defined goals, session limits, and regular evaluations—aligns with WorkCover guidelines and optimises treatment efficacy. Where appropriate, sessions may be delivered face-to-face or via telehealth, improving access for patients in regional and remote areas.

Chapter 4: Advanced Interventions

Innovations in Mental Health Treatment

For individuals with treatment-resistant symptoms or severe mental health presentations, advanced interventions may be necessary. These include Repetitive Transcranial Magnetic Stimulation (rTMS), Deep TMS (dTMS), Electroconvulsive Therapy (ECT), and Medication-Assisted Psychotherapy.

rTMS is a non-invasive brain stimulation technique used to treat major depression that has not responded to standard therapies. It involves the application of magnetic pulses to specific areas of the brain involved in mood regulation. While rTMS is not currently approved under WorkCover Queensland for PTSD, it is widely endorsed for depression and offered at Monarch clinics nationwide.

dTMS uses a specialised coil that reaches deeper brain structures and has shown promise in treating OCD and complex depression. Monarch was among the first to introduce this therapy in Australia, supporting ongoing research into its efficacy.

Medication-Assisted Psychotherapy is an innovative approach combining short-acting medication with structured therapy sessions to enhance emotional processing. Our clinicians use this method with select patients when trauma symptoms interfere with conventional talk therapy.

While ECT is reserved for severe, treatment-resistant depression, it remains an important option for patients with psychotic features or catatonia. Although Monarch does not provide ECT directly, we can refer patients to accredited facilities and ensure their care is coordinated before, during, and after treatment.



Our advanced therapies for workplace mental injury treatment underscores our commitment to providing every patient with a personalised, cutting-edge treatment pathway that reflects their condition, preferences, and progress.

Chapter 5: Medications and Management

Safe and Effective Pharmacotherapy

Pharmacotherapy remains an important part of treating work-related mental injuries, particularly when combined with psychological therapy. WorkCover supports the use of conventional medications such as SSRIs, SNRIs, and low-dose antipsychotics when prescribed appropriately. At Monarch, all medication management is overseen by experienced psychiatrists.

Our psychiatrists follow best-practice guidelines from the [Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists](#) (RANZCP) when prescribing. This includes starting with a single agent at a low dose, monitoring for response and side effects, and gradually adjusting or augmenting treatment as needed. Polypharmacy (using multiple medications) is avoided unless clinically justified.

We also offer [Next Step Medication Reviews](#) for patients whose current treatment is not delivering the desired results. These comprehensive consultations consider all aspects of the patient's health and lifestyle, and may include switching medications, managing side effects, or integrating other therapies. Our doctors also counsel patients on risks associated with dependency-forming drugs, such as benzodiazepines, and offer strategies to manage withdrawal if needed.

Importantly, we understand that medications are not a one-size-fits-all solution. Our goal is to ensure that each prescription enhances wellbeing, supports therapy, and aligns with the patient's work and life goals.

Chapter 6: Services We Offer at Monarch

Comprehensive and Personalised Mental Health Care

Monarch Mental Health Group provides an extensive range of mental health services designed to meet the complex needs of patients with work-related psychological injuries. Our approach is collaborative, trauma-informed, and grounded in evidence-based practice.

Key services include:

- Psychiatric Assessments and Reports (including WorkCover 291 reports)
- Psychological Therapy: CBT, ACT, EMDR, trauma therapy
- Adult ADHD Assessments and Management
- Repetitive TMS and Deep TMS
- Medication Reviews and Optimisation
- Medication-Assisted Psychotherapy
- Return-to-Work Support and Case Coordination

Each service is delivered by a team of qualified professionals, including psychiatrists, clinical psychologists, and mental health nurses. We operate clinics across New South Wales, Victoria, and Queensland, with convenient locations in both metro and regional areas.

We also prioritise timely access to care. Our goal is to schedule assessments and therapy sessions within days of your referral. Whether you're just beginning your recovery journey or seeking more advanced care after unsuccessful treatments, Monarch is here to guide you through every step.

Chapter 7: WorkCover and Return to Work

Supporting a Safe and Sustainable Recovery

The return-to-work process is not just about going back to a job—it's a vital part of psychological recovery. WorkCover Queensland, along with best practice organisations like the Royal Australasian College of Physicians (RACP) and SuperFriend, emphasise early intervention and workplace reintegration.

At Monarch, we incorporate return-to-work planning into every treatment pathway. This might include writing workplace recommendations, preparing reports for case managers, or supporting the patient in graded return-to-work arrangements. Our clinicians work with patients to build confidence, manage expectations, and overcome barriers.

Data shows that if a worker is off work for more than six months, their chance of returning drops below 5%. That's why we act fast. We also support patients who can remain in the workplace by helping them access modified duties, flexible hours, and psychological strategies to manage stress on the job.

We understand that recovery is not linear. Some patients may return to work quickly, while others need more time and support. What matters most is that the return is safe, sustainable, and aligned with the patient's clinical progress.

Chapter 8: What WorkCover Will Not Cover

Limitations of Coverage

WorkCover only funds treatments that are backed by robust scientific evidence. This means many complementary or alternative therapies are excluded. These include equine therapy, yoga, flotation tanks, medicinal cannabis, and psychedelic-assisted therapy. While interesting from a research standpoint, these interventions currently lack the necessary data for approval.

At Monarch, we follow the WorkCover treatment guidelines strictly to ensure our services remain eligible for compensation. However, we remain open to emerging treatments through our partnership with the Monarch Research Institute. We monitor clinical trials and collaborate on studies exploring the next generation of safe, effective mental health interventions.

We also help patients and referrers understand which treatments are eligible under WorkCover and which are not. This ensures expectations are realistic and claims proceed without unnecessary delays or denials.

Chapter 9: Health Literacy and Informed Consent

Empowering Patients Through Education

Health literacy is a cornerstone of patient-centred care. It ensures that patients not only receive appropriate treatment but understand it well enough to participate in decision-making. This includes knowing their diagnosis, understanding their treatment options, and having clarity on the goals of therapy.

At Monarch, we prioritise clear communication. All assessments and treatment plans are explained in accessible language. We provide written summaries, encourage questions, and respect cultural or personal preferences (e.g., requesting a female or male clinician, or someone from a particular background).

We also involve family members or carers where appropriate and encourage patients to take an active role in managing their recovery. Empowered patients are more likely to attend sessions, follow through on recommendations, and experience better outcomes.

Our clinicians receive ongoing training in health literacy practices, ensuring that all care is respectful, transparent, and easy to understand.

Chapter 10: The Role of Psychiatrists and Psychologists in Mental Injury Care

Working Together for Optimal Recovery

At Monarch Mental Health Group, psychiatrists and psychologists work collaboratively to deliver a comprehensive treatment experience for individuals with work-related mental injuries. Understanding the distinct roles each professional plays can empower patients and improve engagement with the recovery process.

Psychiatrists are medical doctors who specialise in diagnosing mental health conditions and prescribing appropriate medications. They conduct detailed assessments to determine the nature of the psychological injury and whether pharmacological intervention is needed. They are also responsible for producing WorkCover 291 reports, medication reviews, and managing complex cases involving comorbid conditions or treatment-resistant symptoms.

Psychologists, on the other hand, focus on evidence-based psychological therapies. They guide patients through modalities such as CBT, EMDR, ACT, and trauma-focused therapy. Psychologists work closely with patients to improve emotional regulation, reduce anxiety or depressive symptoms, and develop strategies for coping and behaviour change.

TMS (Transcranial Magnetic Stimulation) therapy is another important area where psychiatrists and psychologists work together at Monarch. TMS is a non-invasive, evidence-based treatment for individuals with treatment-resistant depression. While the procedure itself is overseen by trained clinicians and technicians under the direction of a psychiatrist, psychologists play a key role in preparing patients for the experience, supporting them through the emotional effects of treatment, and integrating therapeutic strategies post-session. Psychiatrists assess eligibility, adjust treatment parameters, and monitor progress, ensuring that the therapy is safe and effective. This coordinated care helps patients get the most benefit from TMS, combining physical and psychological treatment for a more complete recovery.

The synergy between psychiatry and psychology at Monarch ensures that treatment is holistic, coordinated, and aligned with WorkCover's guidelines. Case conferences, shared progress tracking, and continuous communication between providers help ensure that patients receive the right care at the right time. This integrated model supports faster symptom improvement and more sustainable return-to-work outcomes.

Chapter 11: Supporting Employers and Workplaces

Building Safer, More Supportive Work Environments

Employers play a critical role in preventing, recognising, and responding to mental injuries in the workplace. At Monarch Mental Health Group, we actively collaborate with employers to foster environments where employees feel supported throughout their recovery journey.

A psychologically safe workplace is one where mental health is prioritised alongside physical safety. Employers can contribute by fostering open communication, providing mental health training to managers, and offering early intervention pathways when employees begin to show signs of distress.

Monarch offers tailored recommendations for return-to-work programs that include modified duties, flexible scheduling, or graduated reintegration. We work with employers to help interpret clinical reports, implement recommended changes, and maintain open lines of communication with treating clinicians—always with the patient's consent.

We also provide education and advice on recognising psychological risk factors, understanding WorkCover obligations, and supporting staff through workplace changes. When employers become proactive partners in mental injury recovery, outcomes improve significantly—for both the worker and the wider team.

Chapter 12: Common Challenges and How to Overcome Them

Navigating Barriers to Recovery

Recovering from a psychological injury is rarely a straight line. Many patients face challenges that can delay or derail their progress. At Monarch, we help patients overcome these obstacles with compassionate care and practical solutions.

Common barriers include stigma about mental illness, fear of losing employment, difficulties navigating WorkCover processes, or lack of support from managers or co-workers. Some patients also face internal challenges such as avoidance, low motivation, or uncertainty about their diagnosis.

Our team helps patients address these challenges through psychoeducation, support navigating claims, and advocacy when workplace adjustments are slow or denied. We ensure patients feel heard and understood—reducing feelings of isolation or helplessness.

We also provide practical resources and peer support options, where appropriate, and encourage involvement from family members to bolster recovery. By addressing both the clinical and practical aspects of mental health care, we empower our patients to regain control, progress steadily, and return to their lives with resilience and clarity.

Chapter 13: The Future of Mental Injury Treatment

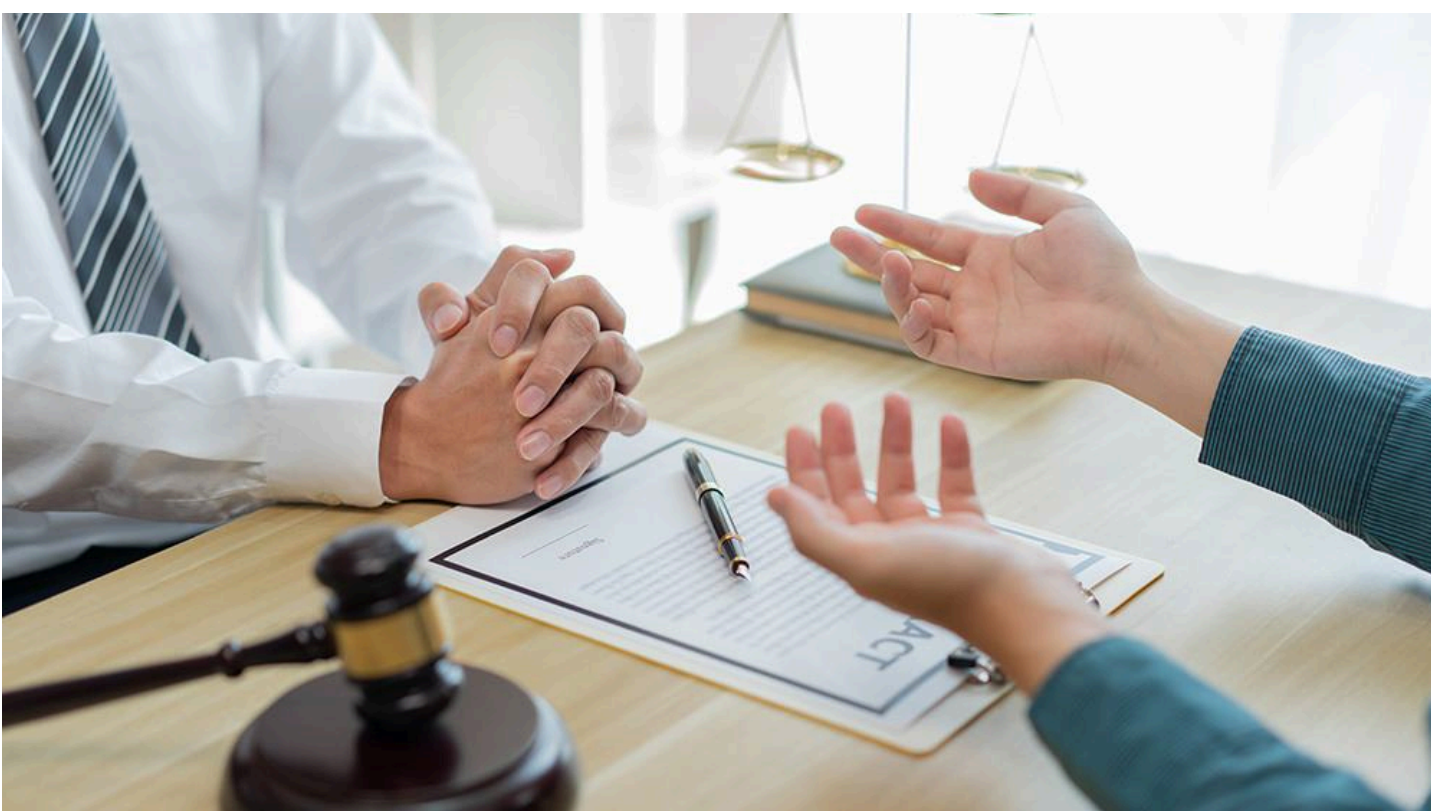
Emerging Therapies and the Role of Research

Mental health care is a rapidly evolving field. At Monarch Mental Health Group, we are at the forefront of clinical innovation through our partnership with the Monarch Research Institute. This collaboration enables us to explore and evaluate emerging treatments for mental injury, ensuring our patients benefit from the latest evidence-based care.

New treatment pathways currently being studied include digital therapeutics, next-generation neuromodulation techniques, and enhanced trauma therapies using virtual reality or pharmacological augmentation. While not all these options are currently funded under WorkCover, they represent promising frontiers that may transform recovery in the coming decade.

Monarch is committed to remaining research-informed. We actively contribute to clinical studies and monitor global mental health developments, particularly in the treatment of PTSD, depression, and anxiety. Our long-term goal is to make advanced treatments accessible, affordable, and acceptable within both clinical and compensation settings.

As research evolves, so too will the guidelines. Monarch will continue to adapt our offerings to ensure patients always receive the most effective, personalised care possible—now and into the future.



Monarch Mental Health Group is here to assist you by providing compassionate, evidence-based assessment and treatment tailored to your mental health needs, while guiding you through the WorkCover process with expert clinical and administrative support.

Chapter 14: Navigating a WorkCover Claim with Monarch

Your Partner in the Recovery Journey

Navigating the WorkCover system can be confusing, especially when you're dealing with mental health symptoms. At Monarch, we simplify the process. Our admin team can help you:

- Obtain a GP referral and Mental Health Care Plan
- Schedule a psychiatric assessment or therapy intake session
- Understand which services are claimable
- Submit required documentation to your insurer
- Communicate with your case manager or employer

We also provide detailed clinical reports aligned with WorkCover item codes and treatment timelines. If your claim requires further justification, our team can assist in drafting supplementary reports, attending case conferences, or referring you for an independent medical exam (IME).

You don't have to do this alone. Whether you're a new patient or already undergoing treatment, Monarch will support you every step of the way—from your first consultation to your successful recovery and beyond. [Contact us today](#) for more information and [find a Monarch clinic near you](#).