

Mental health offshore: building an inclusive, healthier dive industry



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ADAS Executive Director

Trigger warning – mentions of suicide

Overview

1. Mental health offshore – overview

2. Contributing factors

- The offshore environment
- Neurodiversity awareness & inclusion
- Gender diversity
- Generational differences

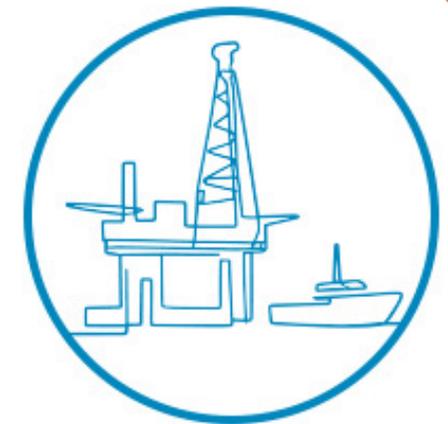
3. Building an inclusive, future-ready industry

- Raising awareness of mental health
- Gathering better data
- Industry initiatives
- Contractualization of divers to tackle job insecurity



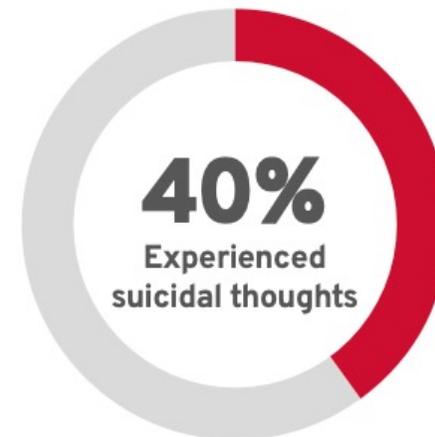
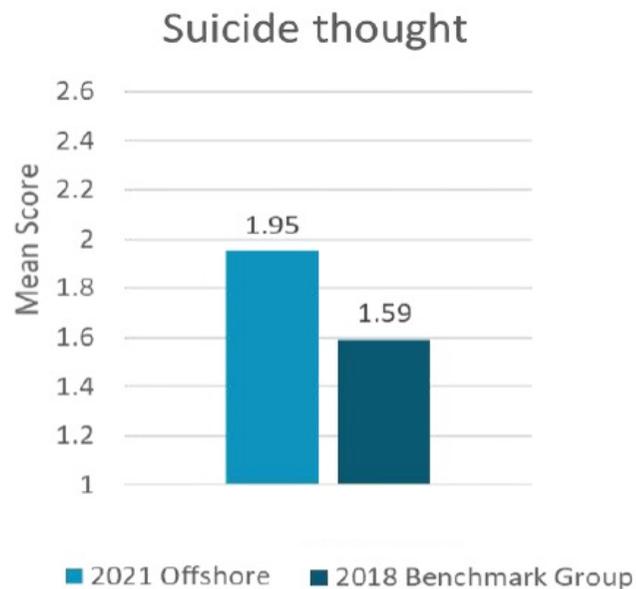
1. Mental health offshore

- ✦ Offshore workers consistently report higher levels of psychological distress compared to the general population



1. Mental health offshore

- ✦ Offshore workers are 15 times more likely to die by suicide than those onshore



2. Contributing factors

✦ The offshore environment itself

- Poor sleep quality
- Lack of privacy
- Risky work
- Shift work
- Low autonomy over job tasks
- Does not encourage meaningful connections
- Isolation
- Higher prevalence of bullying

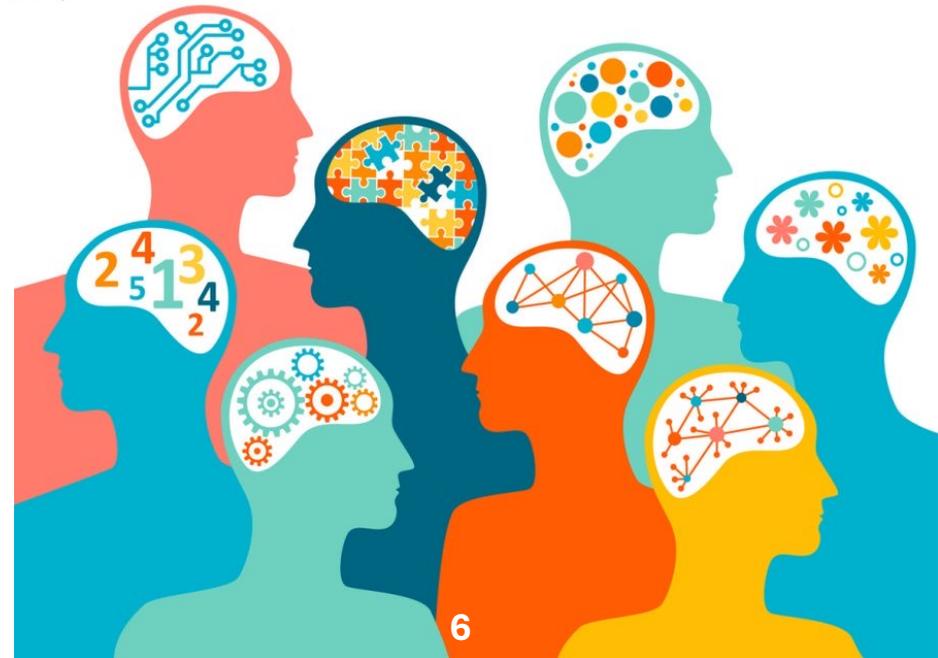


"...fly-in, fly-out means you don't create partnerships or you don't create friends in that sort of environment. It's actually very isolationist. So, it's not only isolation from the partner that stays at home...it's more isolated for the people that go up. They move you around the camp. You don't get the same room twice... cramped quarters, long work hours, which means that by the end of that day, you don't really make any friends. So you're there to work and that's all there is. So there's no social life. There's no interactions. It's just so isolating for the person individually as well as being in an isolated part of the world."

2. Contributing factors

The less obvious ones...

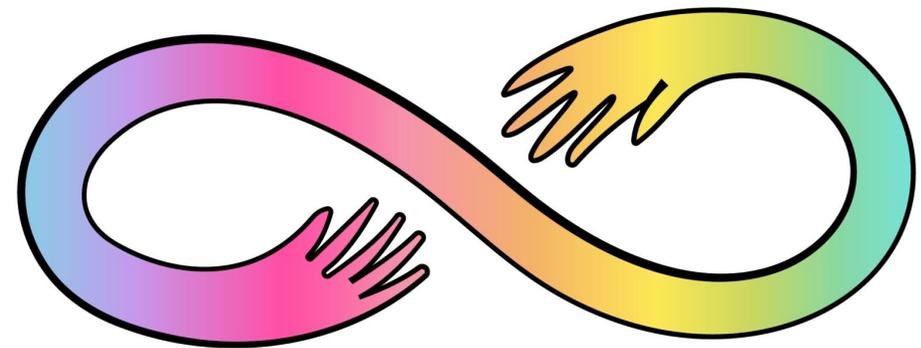
- Lack of neurodiversity awareness & inclusion
- Low gender diversity
- Prevalent “hypermasculine” culture
- Generational differences



2. Contributing factors

★ Neurodiversity - awareness

- Dyslexia: around 1 in 10 adults
- ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder): 3 to 4% of adults
- ASD (Autism Spectrum Disorder): 1% of adults
- Dyspraxia: 5% of adults
- OCD (Obsessive Compulsive Disorder)
- BP (Bipolar Disorder)
- Tourette Syndrome



NEURODIVERSITY

2. Contributing factors

✦ Neurodiversity - inclusion

- 80% of neurodiverse construction workers do not disclose their condition at work
- No clear guidelines for the medical assessment of neurodiverse divers



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



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Diving and Hyperbaric Medicine Volume 55 No. 3 September 2025

Review article

Assessing dive fitness in individuals with autism spectrum disorder

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Keywords

Fitness-to-dive; Mental health; Psychiatry; Scuba

2. Contributing factors



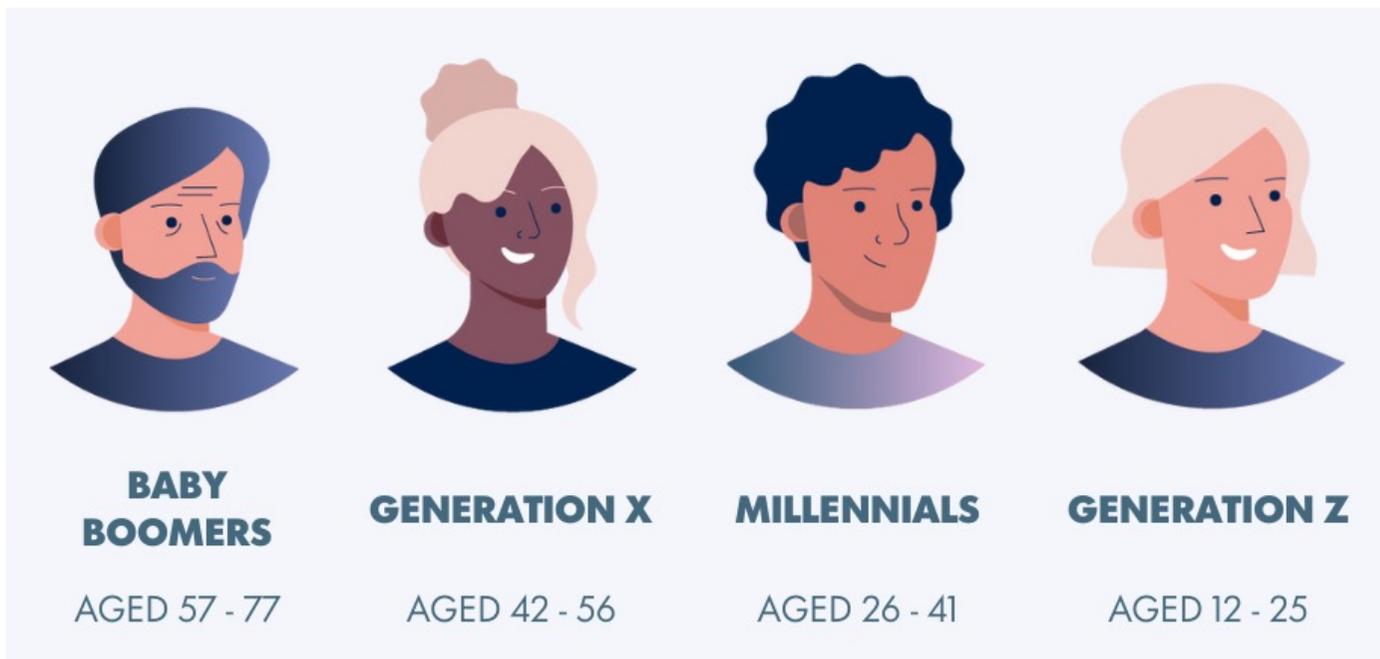
- ✦ **Lack of gender diversity** in the industry
 - Women represent ~ 3% of offshore workers globally
 - < 6% of ADAS card-holders are women (<1% are offshore divers)



- ✦ **Hypermasculine culture** underpins mental health stigma
 - Discourages men from seeking help or opening up to their peers
 - Impacts safety outcomes by discouraging reporting
- ✦ Impacts on **performance and wellbeing**
 - Women speak more openly about mental struggles & are more likely to seek help
 - Workplaces with ~ gender parity in staff & middle management perform better

2. Contributing factors

- ★ **Generational differences & expectations**



2. Contributing factors

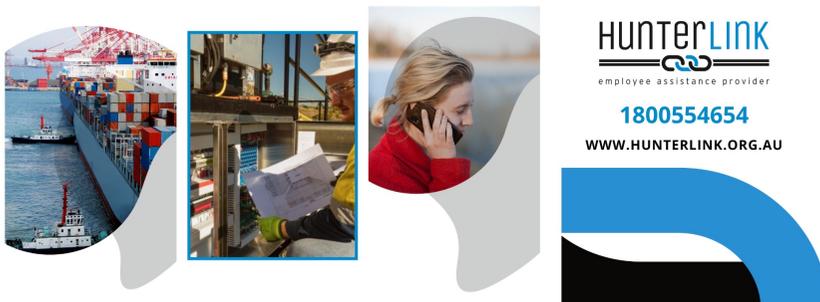
- ★ **Generational expectations**



3. Recommendations

1. Raise awareness of mental health to break the stigma

- Through training (student divers and diver trainers)



- Through leadership (to produce guidance for companies)



3. Recommendations



2. Gather data on the mental health of our workforce

- **Mental fitness:** collection during the medical examination of divers
- **National surveys:** Norway's RNNP
- **Industry-wide surveys:** Wellbeing survey from North Chapter of IADC
- **Research:** long-term cognitive effects of HPNS (DOF accident)



Snapshot

In 2017, a saturation dive took place from a diving support vessel to facilitate repair of subsea infrastructure located on the seabed at a water depths between approximately 237 and 270 meters. The dive was described as "the deepest occupational diving job in Australian waters."

RECORD DIVE LEAVES MEN WITH NEUROLOGICAL PROBLEMS

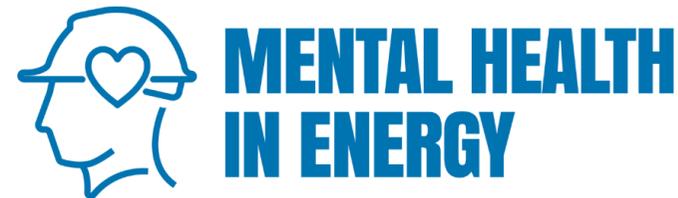
Most of the team of 15 divers reported suffering "hallucinations, nausea, headaches, tremors, and cognitive impairment as they worked to repair a pipeline on the ocean floor."



3. Recommendations

3. Encourage (and sign up to) industry initiatives

- Mental Health in Energy Charter
- ISO 45003 alignment



www.mentalhealthinenergy.com

Mental Health in Energy Gap Analysis

This updated gap analysis questionnaire integrates ISO 45003 requirements with the original MHIE Charter assessment. It is designed to help organisations measure their progress, identify gaps, and plan improvements.

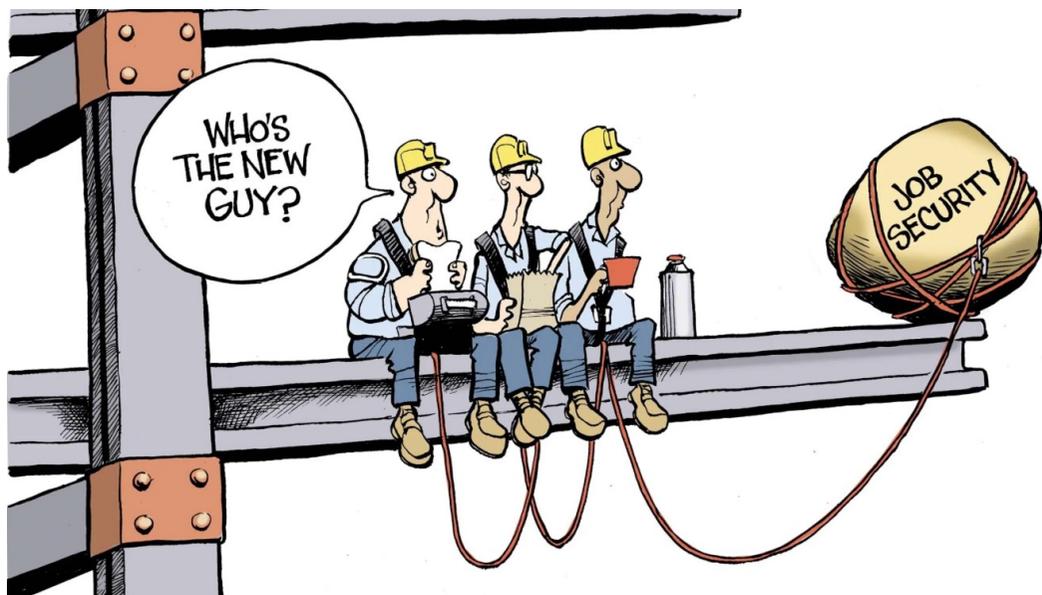
Mental Health In Energy - The Charter

The principles and commitment of the Mental Health In Energy members

Explore

3. Recommendations

4. Recognise the impacts of job insecurity on the mental health of free lance divers



- Mental health issues often occur once divers have left the site : what support is available then?
- Boskalis has moved to diver contracts to “enhance workforce stability”
- Contract management is a part of the issue – and can be a part of the solution



Special thanks to

Dr Simon Maryan (Chairman, Mental Health in Energy, UK)

Dr Phil Bryson (Medical Director, Diving Services TAC Healthcare, UK)

Dr Blandine Aublin (Hyperbaric Doctor, France)

Gary Ferguson (Saturation Diver, Combat Journal, UK)

Øyvind Loennechen (HAVTIL, Norway)

Ulrik Junge (HAVTIL, Norway)

Steve Clark (Dive supervisor, Australia)

Andy Butler (Diving Manager, Boskalis)

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