

# **Risk Assessment:**

## *An enabler or barrier*

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# Presentation outline

- What is risk?
- How do we address the management of risk?
- Can we enhance the way we use it?

# Role of Manual Handling Advisor

- Maintain safety of person and carer
- Reduce incidence of musculoskeletal injury
- Risk = injury

# What is Risk?

- Chance or possibility of danger, loss, injury or other adverse consequences

(Oxford University Press, 2003)

- Level of dangerousness

(Duncan, 2008)

- The likelihood of an event happening with potentially harmful or beneficial outcomes for self or others

(Carson, 2010)

# Value of risk – *mental health literature*

- Dignity of risk
- Opportunity to make choices
- Responsibility versus compliance and conformity
- Opportunity for learning and growth
- Therapeutic risk taking – positive risk taking

(Lawson, 2010)

(Stickley & Felton, 2006)

# Risk Continuum — *mental health literature*

**Non-therapeutic**

**Therapeutic**



Harmful  
*Negative*

Opportunity  
*Positive*

# Creativity and Risk

- Rehabilitation versus management
- Mental health and manual handling deviate

Darragh, Campo & Olson (2009)

- Creativity – problem solving
- To be creative is to take a risk
- Divergent thinking

Csikszentmihalyi (1997)

# What is risk assessment/management?

- Determine which hazardous manual handling tasks in your workplace pose a risk of musculoskeletal injury

Victorian Work Cover Authority (1985)

- Preventing/minimising the probability of unwanted and negative consequences

(Eriksson & Hummelvoll, 2008)



# Risk Management

## Risk Identification

- *Statement of the situation/identification of the problem*

## Risk Assessment

- *Likelihood and Severity of event*

## Risk Control

- *How can risk be minimised, limiting residual risk*

# When do we use risk assessment?

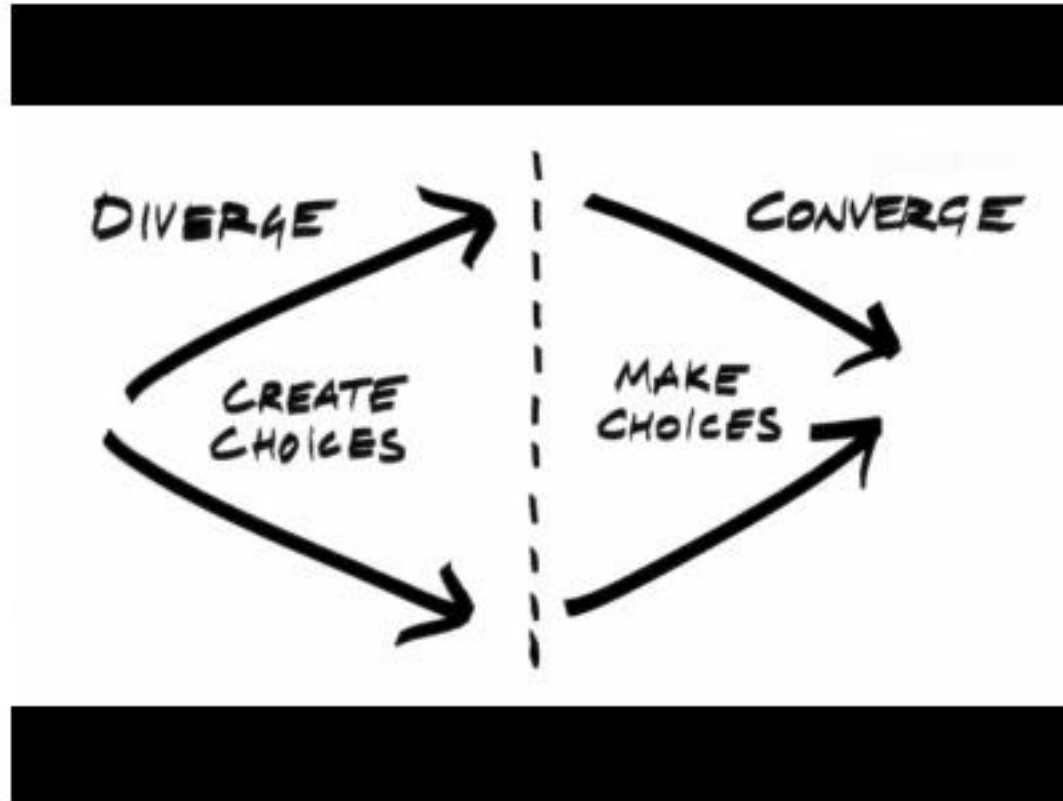
- When danger is present/promote safety
  - Efficiency?
  - Opportunity to test out/verify options?
- When no rules to guide
  - Who are rules for/not for? Herd mentality?
  - Stifle creativity – no working it out (Fawcett & Rhynas, 2014).
  - How are rules communicated?
  - Experience  $\neq$  competence
  - To many people "experience" means "making the same mistakes with increasing confidence over an impressive number of years"

(O'Donnell, 1997)

# When do we use it?

- Covering ones back
  - Accountability and blame
  - Avoid claims of negligence
  - Lack of meaningful engagement
  - Missed opportunity to engage in creative thinking
- Static versus dynamic
  - Academic versus practical
  - Narrative problem solving – what would this look like/opportunities? (Divergent thinking) what are the risks to be aware of (Convergent thinking)

# Creativity and Risk



Neil Perkin, 2010

# Implementing risk assessment

- Eases anxiety
- Promotes opportunities that professionalism and responsibility offer professionals

(Carson, 2010)

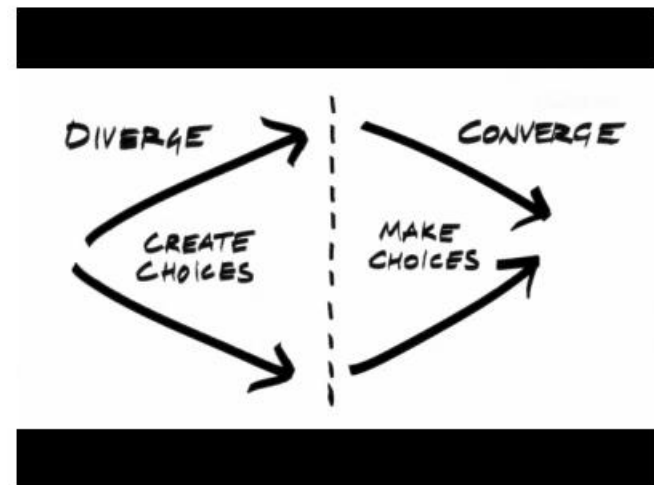
- Enable sound decision making
- Give confidence in fully justifying decisions

(Lawson, 2010)

- Job fulfilment

# The Balance

- Litigation: No law of risk or risk taking
- Legal concepts: “Negligence” or “Recklessness”  
(Carson, 2010)
- Risk assessment minimises chances of negligence
- Determines harmful from unharmed



# Risk Assessment and professional Practice

- *How many of us make decisions based on what is always done as oppose to really thinking about it?*
- *How many of use look for rules as oppose to logically using our clinical reasoning and thinking it out?*

# Conclusion

- Risk not just about injury
- Risk offers opportunity for creative problem solving
- Divergent thinking allows problem solving to take place
- Risk assessment = framework for convergent thinking after creative solutions explored
- Risk assessment – safety net
- Avoids over reliance on rules and danger



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