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HEALTHIER NEWS

TRAINING & EVENTS

Social and emotional wellbeing – mental health

What is good health?

Social and emotional wellbeing is essential for our overall health and wellbeing. Being socially and emotionally well means being able to realise your abilities, cope with the normal stresses of life, work productively and contribute to your community.

Of concern, almost a third of ACT workers report at least moderate levels of psychological distress, with 9% reporting high levels of psychological distress¹.

Stressful work environments, long work hours and low morale contribute to absenteeism, presenteeism and sick leave and can have a negative effect on our social and emotional wellbeing. Recognising and promoting social and emotional wellbeing within the workplace can have a positive impact on employees.

Workplace strategies

A combination of healthy people and healthy places strategies are most effective in promoting health and wellbeing in the workplace. Healthy people strategies may look to increase the health knowledge, awareness

and positive attitudes of workers (personal development) and/or facilitate their active participation in healthy behaviours (behaviour change). Healthy places strategies are about providing a health promoting workplace environment through facilities, supportive cultures and/or policies.

For detailed information on developing and implementing a workplace health and wellbeing program, download a copy of the [Guide to Promoting Health and Wellbeing in the Workplace 2016](#)  (PDF – 5.4). Also refer to [Supporting Resources](#) for great ideas, services and information to assist your workplace in implementing the example strategies below, and more.

Examples of social and emotional wellbeing strategies

Healthy people Healthy places

?	Circulate information such as brochures, fact sheets, intranet sites and posters that promote positive mental health.	X
?	Intermittently circulate links to different e-lessons that promote positive workplace culture and upskill staff in supporting others in the workplace	X
?	Promote and encourage employees to participate in local recreation and community clubs and activities such as book clubs, walking groups, art and craft groups, relaxation and yoga classes.	X
?	Promote telephone support services throughout the workplace.	X

?	Organise staff presentations, seminars, workshops or lunchtime guest speakers on various stress management topics (e.g. the causes of stress, conflict resolution, resilience, leadership, signs and effects of stress and strategies for self-care, time management, personal financial planning).	X
?	Organise social functions within the workplace for employees and their families, to help build social networks.	X
?	Allocate a space for a staff lounge with books and magazines on healthy lifestyles.	X
?	Encourage employee recognition for exceptional efforts, activities supporting a healthier work environment, providing leadership or a team working well together (e.g. host a free healthy staff barbeque, distribute a whole of organisational email celebrating achievements).	X
?	Undertake the Heads Action Plan to identify a range of activities that can assist in creating a mentally healthy workplace. www.headsup.org.au	X
??	Address bullying behaviour where this is an issue to improve workplace stress, productivity and wellbeing.	X
??	Conduct a staff satisfaction survey to gather feedback on	X

	areas of concern and ideas about how to create a workplace that supports positive mental health.	
??	Review policies and practices to ensure they promote positive mental health, and support workers with a mental health issue (e.g. policies concerning worker privacy or return to work programs).	X
??	Establish an Employee Assistance Program to provide employees with access to confidential counselling services.	X
??	Create and support a work environment where there is recognition of work-life balance. Include policies that accommodate family/employee medical appointments, urgent family issues and flexible work schedules.	X
??	Develop a workplace policy that addresses ethics, diversity and code of conduct in the workplace.	X
??	Provide training for managers for understanding the impact of the work environment on social and emotional wellbeing.	X
??	Provide critical incident support for managers and individuals.	X

Within these tables: ? this symbol indicates an easy or low-resource activity ?? this symbol indicates a more comprehensively resourced

activity.

Links to Further Resources

The following websites have some great ideas and information.

Health Campaigns and Information

Three Services offered by [beyondblue](#) are HeadsUp, NewAccess and the Speakers Bureau.

1. [Heads Up](#)

Heads Up is all about giving individuals and businesses free tools and resources to create mentally healthy workplaces. Developed by beyondblue and the Mentally Healthy Workplace Alliance, Heads Up is a national initiative to encourage Australian workplaces to become mentally healthy, for the benefit of the whole community and businesses, large and small.

The Heads Up website (www.headsup.org.au) is a great place to start, with useful tips and guidance to help you look after your own mental health. You'll find lots of video case studies and personal stories, interactive online tools and useful templates like a return to work plan. You can also use our Heads Up online action plan to create a strategy that's tailored for your business. This interactive tool will help you define and prioritise your goals, identify risk areas and take a step-by-step approach to creating a mentally healthy workplace.

2. [NewAccess](#)

NewAccess is a FREE service that provides support in the form of a coach. It's someone who can guide you in setting practical goals that will get you back on track. For small businesses it can be promoted in the place of EAP and for large businesses they can promote it as an alternative independent support for staff. The program is a confidential service that provides support via Low Intensity Cognitive Behavioural Therapy.

3. [Speakers Bureau](#)

The sharing of personal stories of people who have experience of anxiety and depression is a powerful means of raising awareness, reducing stigma and encouraging people to take action.

beyondblue welcomes opportunities to engage the community by providing Speakers and Ambassadors to speak at public events to disseminate our key messages of hope, resilience and recovery throughout Australia.

If you would like to secure a beyondblue representative to speak at your

event, please email speaker@beyondblue.org.au for the link to our online Speaker Request Form. Please note that we require a minimum of 30 days before the scheduled date of your proposed event to secure a speaker.

[Let's Talk](#), the ACT Government suicide prevention campaign has a valuable website with fact sheets, resources and training offered by the ACT Health, Mental Health Policy Unit.

Individual Mental Health Treatment Support Services

- [Anxiety Online](#) (Swinburne University of Technology) – internet-based treatment clinic for people with anxiety problems
- [Care Inc](#) – information and financial counselling services for low income consumers
- [Directory of Mental Health Services in the ACT](#) (Mental Health Foundation)
- [Eating Disorders Foundation](#) – information and support on eating disorders
- Eating Disorders Program (ACT Government Health Directorate) – for advice and counselling support (Ph 02 6205 1519)
- [e-couch](#) (Australian National University) – self-help interactive program with modules for depression, generalised anxiety and worry, social anxiety, relationship breakdown, and loss and grief
- [headspace ACT](#) – support, information and assistance for young people aged 12 to 25 years who are experiencing emotional or mental health issues and/or substance use issues (Ph 02 6201 5343)
- [Lifeline](#) – 24 hour telephone counselling service (Ph 13 11 14)
- [MensLine Australia](#) – 24 hour national telephone and online support, information and referral service for men with family and relationship concerns (Ph 1300 78 99 78)
- [Mental Health ACT](#) (ACT Government ACT Health) – 24 hours crisis assessment and treatment team (Ph 1800 629 354)
- [MoodGYM](#) (Australian National University) – self help interactive web program designed to prevent depression
- [NewAccess](#) – for people with mild to moderate anxiety and depression. Coaches provide tailor-made support, helping you get back on track when life's pressures are overwhelming
- [Reachout](#) – advice on getting help, support and connections needed to manage mental health and wellbeing for young people
- Relationships Australia Canberra – relationship support services for individuals, families and communities (Ph 1300 364277)
- [Suicide call back service](#) – 24 hour crisis counselling for people at risk of suicide, carers for someone who is suicidal and those bereaved by

suicide (Ph 1300 659 467)

You can also seek advice, support and referrals from your General Practitioner or other health professionals regarding your health and wellbeing.

Programs and Activities

Mental health literacy training for workplaces

- [Heads Up](#) – Free interactive online tools, video case studies, personal stories, links to educational resources and useful templates to help create mentally healthy workplaces.
- [Black Dog Institute](#) – specific workplace programs relating mood disorders such as depression and bipolar disorder
- [Community education sessions](#) (Mental Illness Education ACT) – increase knowledge and understanding of people with mental illness in the workplace
- [Mental Health First Aid](#) – training to support adults experiencing mental illness or a mental health crisis
- [Mindful employer program](#) (SANE) – provides information for both employers and employees on responding to mental illness in the workplace
- [Mental Health Intervention Skills Training](#) – provides a range of training courses to help you to help others as part of their mission to raise awareness and skill levels for helpers in the community.
- [Preventing work-related stress for employees in the private sector and Preventing work-related stress for employers in the public sector](#) (WorkSafe Victoria)
- [SuperFriend](#) – offers a range of online and face to face training that is delivered by leading organisational psychologists and development consultants to build capability within organisations to keep their employees 'present and productive'.
- [Safe Talk](#) (LivingWorks Education Australia Pty. Ltd) – training that prepares anyone to identify persons with thoughts of suicide and connect them to suicide first aid resources

Mental health promotion programs

- [Working together: Promoting mental health and wellbeing at work](#) – A guide developed by the Australian Public Service Commission and Comcare to help promote mental health and wellbeing in the workplace.
- [OzHelp Foundation](#) – information, training and support focussing on mental health, suicide prevention and life skills in a range of industry settings, particularly construction and community services
- [SuperFriend](#) – individual and organisational resources to provide simple, practical information to assist you to improve the mental

health of your workplace.

- [Tradies Tune-Up](#) (OzHelp Foundation) – quick and confidential health assessment for workers in the construction industry
- [Workplace bullying](#) (WorkSafe ACT) – information, free training and posters

Community events

- [Healthier Work Calendar](#) – for a list of events to support in the workplace
- [Movember](#) (Movember Foundation) – awareness for men’s health, specifically prostate cancer and depression in men

Workplace Policy

- [Breast Feeding Friendly Workplace](#) (Australian Breastfeeding Association) – practical resources and information for workplaces looking to support employees to maintain breastfeeding after returning to work
- [Employee Assistance Professional Association of Australasia](#) – information on providers for employers interested in establishing a scheme in their workplace
- [Guidelines for organisations](#) (beyondblue, University of Melbourne, Orygen Youth Health) – helping employees successfully return to work following depression, anxiety or a related mental health problems
- [Mental wellbeing workplace policy template](#) (WorkHealth, WorkSafe Victoria)
- [Stresswise toolkit](#) (WorkSafe Victoria) – preventing work-related stress: A guide for employers in the public sector
- [Supporting the return to work of employees with depression](#) (beyondblue)
- [Workers with Mental Illness: a Practical Guide for Managers 2010](#) (Human Rights Commission)

For more information on providers of health and wellbeing activities go to the [Service Providers](#) section.

[1] PricewaterhouseCoopers (2011). ACT Workplace Health Promotion Needs Analysis: Summary Report. Prepared on behalf of the ACT Government Health Directorate. Accessed 7 March 2012 at <http://www.health.act.gov.au/c/health?a=sendfile&ft=p&fid=1577587735&sid=>

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