



Ideas to help spark action in the workplace



WHAT'S YOUR PLAN?

Developing and implementing a strategic plan to create a mentally healthy workplace is a fundamental, proactive step that should be undertaken by every workplace. The existence and use of robust policies, strategies and processes support wellbeing providing they are effectively communicated, visible, implemented consistently throughout the workplace and updated regularly. The strategy should consider the appointment of wellbeing champions, holding leaders accountable for implementation (as part of their performance measures) and providing workers with the knowledge and skills to take responsibility for managing their own mental health and wellbeing.

TRY THIS:

BRING STRATEGY TO LIFE

It's one thing to have a strategy, it's another thing to bring it to life! Promoting mental health and wellbeing should become a normal part of the workplace operating rhythm or 'business as usual'. This can be achieved by making your mental health strategy visible and accessible to everyone, and ensuring it can be translated into practical applications that become part of daily work activities. Get creative and make some posters to promote different aspects of the strategy, hanging them in places with lots of exposure – on the back of toilet doors, in the lunchroom, near the water cooler and in meeting rooms.



BUILD ON WHAT YOU'VE GOT

A mental health and wellbeing strategy may be incorporated into an existing Work Health & Safety (WHS) policy or be a standalone policy that sits alongside a WHS policy – visit HeadsUp for a [mental health and wellbeing policy template](#). Many workplaces already have policies and detailed processes such as risk assessment and incident reporting that provide for physical safety. These can be expanded to include workplace factors associated with mental health and wellbeing.

TRY THIS:

WORKSHOP WELLBEING

If you don't already have one, set up a wellbeing committee and set time aside to workshop existing policies and formulate new policies if required. Each member of the committee can be assigned an existing policy to review in preparation for the day and then lead the discussion on the opportunities to incorporate mental health and wellbeing factors ranging from risks, education and prevention through to support and return to work.



FINDING THE BALANCE

Designing and managing work to minimise harm is one of the fundamental ways in which organisations can support the ongoing mental health and wellbeing of workers. Positive management of job demands – physical, cognitive and emotional – is essential, but, it's also important to implement policies and practices that support work-life balance and flexibility. The [Fairwork Ombudsman](#) offers good guidance on best practice as well as a useful checklist for creating a family-friendly workplace.

TRY THIS:

PAPER TO PRACTICE

Often workplaces offer excellent flexibility and work-life balance policies which only exist on paper, or in the digital equivalent. Good policy requires intentional action to see it through to practice in the workplace. Some of the obstacles to effective practice include lack of awareness, systems and procedures that make flexibility difficult to access, and workplace attitudes and stigma associated with flexible working. Identify the obstacles to putting your organisation's policies into practice and work towards removing them.



HOW DO YOU MEASURE UP?

The old saying 'what gets measured gets done', holds equally true for mental health and wellbeing measures as it does for other workplace metrics. Thriving workplaces collect, assess, measure and respond to data about their efforts to promote mental health and wellbeing. When you know what's working well and what's not, you can make informed decisions about how to improve your policies and practices for the benefit of your workforce, ensuring you are having the positive impact that was intended.

TRY THIS:

CONDUCT A WELLBEING AUDIT

Conduct an annual mental health and wellbeing audit to identify what is being done well and what gaps and opportunities there are for improvement. Your audit should include a review of measures with a preventative focus, such as reduction of risk factors, effectiveness of education and training, wellbeing literacy and awareness of support available, in addition to more traditional measures such as compensation claims, costs and absenteeism. Once you have the data, review the findings with your wellbeing committee to identify action items. Don't forget to let your workforce know how things are tracking.