

Mental health and wellbeing benchmarks

To be recognised for this health priority area, workplaces must meet the benchmarks in the green boxes. Below each benchmark are strategies to help achieve it. The strategies in the blue boxes are mandatory, while the white boxes contain suggested strategies.

Healthy culture

The organisational culture promotes positive mental health and wellbeing, through supportive leadership, employee participation and shared decision making.



Policies are in place to support mental health and wellbeing at work and reduce job stress. These are consistent with and reference other relevant policies e.g. Occupational Health and Safety.

An effective policy should:

- outline roles and responsibilities of all employees (including a commitment to an environment free from discrimination, bullying and harassment, and upholding fair treatment, positive duty, equity and respect as per legislation¹)
- outline mentoring and peer support systems, if applicable
- outline feedback structures, including grievance and conflict resolution
- outline relevant arrangements, including return to work, reasonable adjustment and discretionary leave
- outline recognition of and reward for employees' achievements
- outline provisions for those experiencing mental health issues²
- be developed in consultation with employees
- be promoted to all employees (e.g. through induction to ensure that new employees are aware of the policy and procedures in relation to mental health and wellbeing within the workplace)
- be implemented across the organisation
- be regularly monitored and reviewed.

1. *Equal Opportunity Act 2010* and *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004*

2. For example, Employee Assistance Programs, online, telephone or face to face support such as SANE Australia, Beyond Blue, Lifeline, Mensline Australia, Australian Psychological Society, mindhealthconnect, mindspot clinic and Black Dog Institute

Healthy culture *continued...*

The workplace and workforce provide a positive work environment that promotes mental health and wellbeing and a sense of community.

For example:

- flexible work arrangements to support work/life balance as per reasonable adjustment requirements³
- job autonomy and workload management
- recognition of and reward for employees' achievements.

Management supports employees by:

- promoting key messages through forums and meetings
- consulting with and involving employees in decision making about mental health and wellbeing in the workplace (e.g. workplace design)
- ensuring that individuals with mental health issues are respected and not stigmatised.

Employees and managers are jointly involved in supporting positive mental health and wellbeing in the workplace.

For example:

- working together to develop ideas for creating and sustaining a mentally healthy workplace
- ensuring staff inductions include information on how positive mental health and wellbeing is being supported.

Healthy physical environment

The physical workplace environment promotes positive mental health and wellbeing.



Working arrangements allow for employees to adapt work to suit them as per reasonable adjustment requirements^{3*}.

For example:

- flexible working arrangements, if appropriate (e.g. flexible start and finish times, job rotation, working from home, working reduced hours)
- modifying job or work tasks (e.g. changing or sharing responsibilities and tasks, if appropriate)
- changing the workplace or work area (e.g. moving work locations such as to a quieter space)
- purchasing or modifying equipment.

Providing spaces to accommodate a range of working styles and tasks.

These include:

- private break-out spaces or quiet rooms for personal time or focused work
- spaces for learning, such as e-learning, in person and one-to-one
- spaces for social interaction that are separate from work areas (e.g. employee area for breaks)
- spaces for formal and informal collaboration.

The organisation addresses the physical environment where it impacts on mental health and wellbeing and job stress.

For example:

- providing outdoor space including seating and shade
- incorporating colour, art and/or graphics into workplace, where appropriate
- using display boards to communicate information to staff
- incorporating greenery (e.g. plants, flowers) into the workplace
- providing opportunities for interactions with pets.

3. *Equal Opportunity Act 2010 and Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004*

* Considerations include that: providing core business hours are worked, the overall fortnightly or monthly hours are met, essential business needs are achieved and allocated tasks are met and core meetings and events are attended. This would be at the discretion of the workplace to determine these arrangements.

Health and wellbeing opportunities

Resources, information and opportunities are provided to improve mental health and wellbeing.



Relevant information about mental health and wellbeing, job stress (e.g. stress management, resilience, coping strategies) and relevant workplace policies is accessible in suitable locations (e.g. noticeboards) relevant formats (e.g. multiple languages) and at suitable times (e.g. recruitment and induction).

Local support services are promoted to employees and their families and they are encouraged to access these services.

Opportunities for education and skills development to promote positive mental health and wellbeing are provided for employees where possible.

For example:

- the organisation supports mentoring opportunities for all employees (e.g. peer support for new employees and mentoring for management)
- professional development opportunities or study leave, if possible
- the organisation supports employees to engage with their professional or occupational communities (e.g. unions, professional societies)
- managers are supported and trained, when required, to develop appropriate knowledge and skills to support employees around mental health and wellbeing (e.g. recognising and responding appropriately to early signs of distress or mental ill health and training in competencies for preventing occupational stress in the workplace)⁴.

Local recreational and leisure opportunities are promoted (e.g. book clubs, walking groups, art and craft groups, parks, community kitchens, community gardens, relaxation and yoga).

Healthy community connections

The organisation engages with the wider community to support positive mental health and wellbeing.



The organisation encourages employee participation in community organisations or events.

The organisation provides mentoring and work experience opportunities to the community.

The workplace supports community organisations and events through financial grants or in-kind support, such as volunteering.

Employees are given opportunities to participate in family events, such as school events, with their children.

The organisation offers social opportunities that include employees' families, where possible.

The workplace and workforce participate in awareness raising events consistent with policies to support mental health and wellbeing at work (e.g. Go Home on Time Day and RUOK? Day).

4. Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004