

The Healthy Workplace Toolkit

A step-by-step guide to create a healthy, safe, and thriving workplace.



Government
of South Australia

Wellbeing SA

**Healthy
Workplaces**



Government
of South Australia

Wellbeing SA

This guide is for everyone.

Everyone deserves to work in a place where their health and wellbeing matter. When people are supported in healthy workplaces, they thrive.

Many workplaces are now creating much healthier environments where everyone is heard, plays their part in designing their work and can help create a supportive workplace environment and culture.

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The Healthy Workplace Toolkit is based on *A workplace health and wellbeing toolkit: Step by step guide to developing a successful workplace program*, first written in 2012, reviewed in 2014 and 2019 as part of the Healthy Workers–Healthy Futures Initiative.

1. 2012 version, reviewed 2014, revised in 2019

For guidance and support using the toolkit contact us. Register your workplace at healthyworkplaces.sa.gov.au/service to access the Healthy Workplaces Service.

The Healthy Workplaces Service provides businesses of all sizes in South Australia with free, practical information and resources to create a healthy, safe and thriving workplace.

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Consultation and representation at work factsheet	PDF
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Health and wellbeing committee agenda	PDF Word
Communications plan template	PDF
Action plan - example and template	PDF Word
Activity and event log	PDF
Monitoring and evaluation quick guide	PDF

The healthy workplace toolkit

We've developed the healthy workplace toolkit to help you along your healthy workplace journey. The toolkit's step-by-step process and supporting tools will help you plan, action, and evaluate a workplace health and wellbeing strategy. This strategy will articulate your workplace's commitment to worker health and wellbeing in an integrated and holistic way.

Who can use the toolkit?

Anyone can use the toolkit, but we've primarily designed it for leaders who are responsible for people and culture, employee engagement, and workplace health and safety. This could be business owners, managers, work health and safety representatives, or human resource managers. It doesn't matter how big or small your organisation is, or what industry you work in, workplace health and wellbeing can be a part of your everyday workplace practices.

Workplace leaders can use their influence to create healthy workplaces, where health and wellbeing is embedded into business systems and the environment promotes and protects people's physical and mental health. This means everyone working together to embed and integrate health and wellbeing into workplace practices.

How to use the toolkit

The toolkit contains six steps that will help you to plan, action and evaluate a workplace health and wellbeing strategy. The best way to use the toolkit is to follow these steps in order. Read through the material at each step, use the resources and tools to help you take action, and then complete the checklist at the end of each step before moving onto the next.

If your workplace already has a strategy in place, then you can use the toolkit to reflect on how you developed the strategy and how you can strengthen it. You can dive in and out of each step and use the templates and resources to help you create a healthier workplace.

RESOURCES

We've developed a variety of templates to help you along your healthy workplace journey. Look out for these boxes which will guide you to the relevant resources.

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The healthy workplace journey



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An introduction to healthy workplaces

South Australian workplaces are increasing their focus on workplace health and wellbeing, with many delivering strategies and programs to protect and promote worker health, safety, and wellbeing.

The idea that working is good for us is well supported and working in a healthy workplace has greater benefits.¹

Workplace health and wellbeing relates to all aspects of working life, from the quality and safety of the physical environment to how people feel about their work, the culture at work, the way work is organised and how people are encouraged to maintain good physical and mental health.²

Our definition of workplace is any place where work is carried out for a business or undertaking and includes any place where a worker goes, or is likely to be, while at work. This may include offices, factories, shops, construction sites, vehicles, ships, aircraft or other mobile structures on land or water. The COVID-19 pandemic has made us realise that a workplace can also be our own home.

What is a healthy workplace?

A healthy workplace is one where employers and employees collaborate to continually protect and promote people's health, safety, and wellbeing and workplace sustainability.³

A healthy workplace considers:

- health safety and wellbeing matters in the **physical** work environment
- health, safety and wellbeing matters in the **psychosocial** work environment, including organisation of work and workplace culture
- personal health in the workplace and how it can be supported
- community participation to improve the health of workers, their families and other members of the community.



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Why is a healthy workplace important?

We spend up to a third of our lives at work on average, so healthy, safe, and thriving workplaces can have a profoundly positive impact on South Australia's people and economy.

You can read more about the advantages of a healthy workplace in Step 1, but workplaces should invest in becoming healthy, safe and thriving because it's:

- **the right thing to do** – people deserve to work in a place where their health and wellbeing matter
- **the smart thing to do** – it can save money and there is a cost of doing nothing
- **the legal thing to do** – workplaces must comply with relevant legislation and regulatory requirements
- **the safe thing to do** – it reduces workplace injuries and keep workers safe and healthy.

Research continues to show that improved workplace safety, health and wellbeing can:

- improve health and wellbeing
- increase productivity
- reduce injuries and illness
- enhance engagement and job satisfaction
- lower absenteeism rates
- build a stronger sense of community.⁴

You can find more detailed information on why we should create healthy workplaces in [Build a business case](#) (p. 15).

Creating a healthy workplace makes good business sense – it benefits both businesses and people.

COSTS OF AN UNHEALTHY WORKPLACE

4x more likely to **lose talented workers**

7x more **costly** workers compensation claims

9x more **sick days** taken per year

BENEFITS OF A HEALTHY WORKPLACE

3x more **productive**

50% less **injuries**

5x more **engaged** workers



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The cost of not investing in health and wellbeing can have a bigger impact on your workplace than you may think.



\$11 billion

The estimated **impact of employees' mental health conditions** on productivity, participation and compensation claims on Australian businesses equate to around \$11 billion per year.⁵



\$44 billion

The combined **cost of annually due to absenteeism and presenteeism**. Broken down that's \$578 per worker per sick day, or \$3,608 per worker per year.⁶



\$5 billion

The estimated **cost of work-related injury and illness** is \$5 billion per year in South Australia.⁷



\$4 billion

The estimated **cost of alcohol** on Australian workplaces is \$4 billion, with an estimated \$3.6 billion due to absenteeism.⁸



The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare found that **96%** of working-age Australians have at least one chronic disease risk factor, while **72%** have more than one risk factor.⁹



\$6.4 billion

The **health impact of obesity** through reduced work productivity represents a large component of indirect costs, and is caused by absenteeism (time off work due to ill health), presenteeism (reduced productivity while at work), and reduced workforce participation. It is estimated at \$6.4 billion in lost productivity in Australia per year.¹⁰



66 per cent

Employees with **unhealthy diets** were 66 per cent more likely to report having a loss in productivity.¹¹



Low physical activity levels

There are higher rates of absenteeism amongst employees who have **low physical activity levels**, and for employees, increased sedentary time is associated with decreased productivity and lower job satisfaction.¹²



\$6-36 billion

The estimated **cost of workplace bullying every year is between \$6-36 billion**, when hidden and lost opportunity costs are considered.¹³

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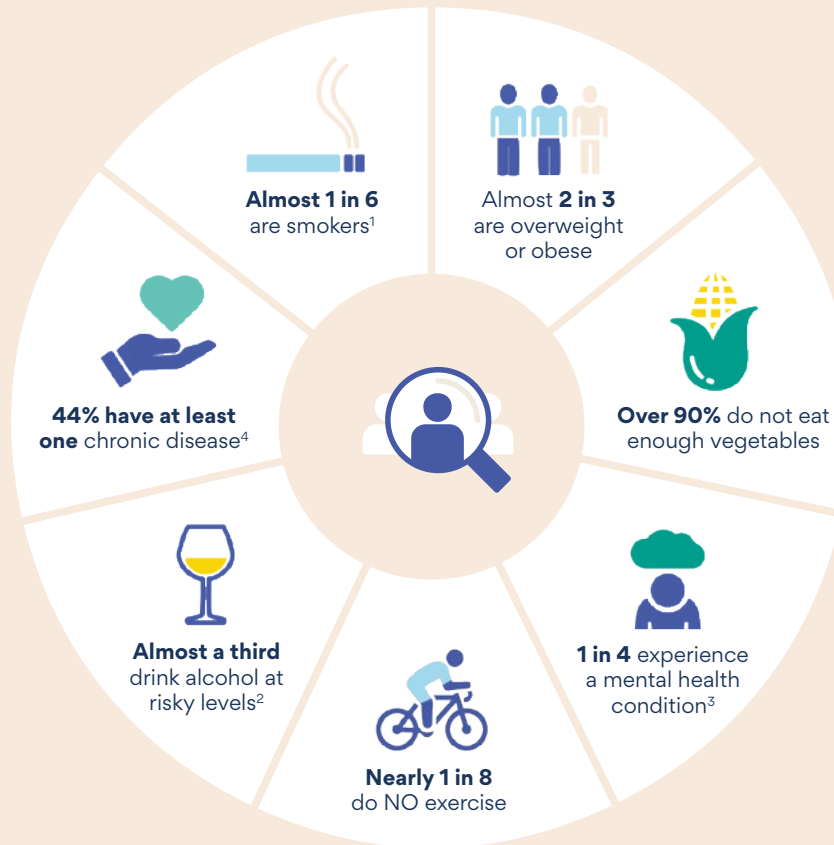
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The state of South Australian workers' health

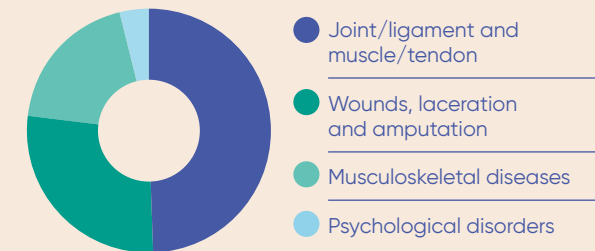


Source: Government of South Australia, Wellbeing SA. Tailored data from the South Australian Population health Survey 2020. 1 Smokers include those who report smoking either daily, weekly or less than weekly. 2 Increasing risk of injury by drinking five or more drinks on a single occasion at least once in the last month. 3 Mental health condition includes anxiety, depression, stress related problem, and other mental health condition in the last 12 months.. 4 Chronic disease includes diabetes, asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), cardiovascular disease (CVD), arthritis and cancer.

The state of South Australian workers compensation claims

12,610 claims from workers were received and accepted by ReturnToWorkSA during the 2022 financial year.

Claims received by nature of injury:



Average claim costs by injury type:

\$71K Psychological disorders

\$46K Musculoskeletal diseases

\$34K Fractures

\$23K Joint/ligament and muscle/tendon

\$7.8K Wounds/lacerations and amputations

Source: ReturnToWorkSA - Insurer Statistics FY2022
public.tableau.com/app/profile/rtwsa/viz/ReturnToWorkSA-InsurerStatisticsFY2022/ReturnToWorkSA-InsurerStatistics?publish=yes

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How do we create a healthy workplace?

There are several frameworks that are used to create healthy, safe, and thriving workplaces.

The South Australian Collaborative Partnership for Workplace Health and Wellbeing has endorsed a framework that integrates protection and promotion. Work in these areas has traditionally been separated into occupational health and safety or ad hoc workplace health promotion programs to encourage healthy lifestyles.¹⁴

The South Australian framework for healthy, safe, and thriving workplaces is based on the World Health Organization's Healthy Workplace Model, the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health Total Worker Health Framework, and evidence-based research from around the world.¹⁵



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The South Australian healthy, safe, and thriving workplaces framework

The healthy, safe, and thriving workplaces framework has three main elements.

HEALTHY WORKPLACES MODEL

An integrated approach to workplace health, safety, and wellbeing where work health and safety, human resources, and health promotion all work together. These are supported by a mix of strategies across policies and practices, the physical environment, and people. (see p. 9).



CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS

These are the key markers of a successful and sustainable program (see p. 11).

Leadership commitment

Employee engagement and consultation

Resources

Tailored approach

Systems integration

Mix of individual, environmental and organisational strategies

Communicate and promote

Sustainability

Monitor and evaluate

HEALTHY WORKPLACE JOURNEY

A step-by-step guide on how to develop successful and sustainable workplace health and wellbeing from the ground up (see p. 12).



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Element one The healthy workplace model



The Healthy Workplace Model promotes an integrated approach to workplace health, safety, and wellbeing where work health and safety, human resources, and health promotion all work together.

These are supported by a mix of strategies that incorporate policies, programs, and practices for workplaces, physical environments, and people.



HEALTHY VISION

Strategies address cultural perceptions and commitment from management and encourage workplaces to consider how usual practice might support and promote health and wellbeing.



HEALTHY PLACES

Strategies address the environmental factors that negatively impact worker health and actively encourage positive health and wellbeing.



HEALTHY PEOPLE

Strategies focus on individual needs, such as improving access to services and information, improving people's health knowledge and skills, and supporting people to engage in healthy behaviours.

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HEALTH PROMOTION

The workplace has been recognised as 'one of the priority settings for health promotion into the 21st century' as it 'directly influences the physical, mental, economic and social well-being of workers and in turn the health of their families, communities and society'.¹⁶ Workplace health promotion places particular emphasis on improving the work organisation and working environment, increasing workers' participation in shaping the working environment, and encouraging personal skills and professional development. These links recognise the determinants of health, individuals change in health, behaviour change, and that the workplace provides access to more opportunities to promote health and emotional wellbeing and prevent disease and injury.¹⁷



HEALTH AND SAFETY

Health and Safety relates to protecting and preventing harm in accordance with workplace health and safety legislation. A person conducting a business or undertaking (PCBU) has a primary duty to ensure, as far as reasonably practicable, that the health and safety of their workers is not put at risk.

Employees have a legal responsibility to maintain their own health and safety and not place others at risk.¹⁸



HUMAN RESOURCES

A core function of human resources is to identify ways to enhance employee wellbeing by linking it to key outcomes such as performance and productivity, job satisfaction, and employee retention. Factors to consider:

- fostering positive workplace relationships and connection
- promoting diversity and inclusion
- improving workplace culture and engagement
- providing training, job crafting and development opportunities
- ensuring leaders have the appropriate skills and approach.¹⁹

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Element two

Critical success factors

The critical success factors are essential for a successful and sustainable program. These need to be in place so you can implement an effective workplace health and wellbeing strategy.²⁰

1. LEADERSHIP COMMITMENT

- All levels of authority promote and participate in the program.
- A program action plan is developed and endorsed.
- Accountability is built into the program structure.
- Potential barriers to participation are removed.

2. EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT AND CONSULTATION

- Employees are actively involved in decisions affecting their health and safety.
- Employees are involved in program planning and problem solving.
- Equitable access is available, regardless of health status or role in the workplace.
- Work and non-work related factors that determine an individual's health are recognised.
- Workplace champions are acknowledged.

The toolkit will help you to develop these critical success factors.

3. RESOURCES

- Dedicated resources are available to achieve the proposed program outcomes.
- Qualified and credible external service providers are employed.
- Equal access is available to all people.
- Incentives and rewards are aligned to participation and effort.

4. TAILORED APPROACH

- Workplace priorities are identified through a needs assessment.
- The program is matched to specific industry, workplace and worker needs.
- The program design and delivery is flexible.

5. SYSTEMS INTEGRATION

- The health and wellbeing program is evident in organisational plans and day-to-day workplace practices.
- The program is attached to work health and safety systems and approaches, disability support practices, and employee assistance programs.
- Program governance is provided through the organisation's leaders and communicated widely.

6. MIX OF INDIVIDUAL, ENVIRONMENTAL AND ORGANISATIONAL STRATEGIES

- Strategies and programs are evidence informed.
- There is a well-designed and resourced physical work environment.
- Information, education, and training programs and services are available.
- The organisation promotes and protects people's health, safety, and wellbeing through systems, policies, and practices for the workplace.

7. COMMUNICATE AND PROMOTE

- Workplace communication is regular.
- Messages are relevant and delivered appropriately.
- Program values and direction are communicated to the workplace.
- Progress and outcomes are highly visible.

8. SUSTAINABILITY

- A long-term commitment is made to promote sustainability.
- Quality improvement is promoted and aligned to work practices.
- The program has a comprehensive design, with modest targets and initiatives that allow for scaling up of effective small initiatives.

9. MONITOR AND EVALUATE

- Progress is measured against objectives and data is analysed against agreed criteria.
- Program tracking and monitoring is attached to other business monitoring
- Data collection focuses on continual program improvement and feedback.

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Element three The healthy workplace journey

Following this journey is the 'how to' part of the healthy, safe, and thriving workplaces framework.

Following the steps in the cycle will help workplaces develop a successful and sustainable workplace health and wellbeing strategy and will embed the critical success factors within the strategy.



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Step 1: Get workplace leaders to commit

IN THIS SECTION YOU'LL LEARN HOW TO:

- ✓ Make your case for change
- ✓ Build a business case
- ✓ Lead your workplace through change
- ✓ Create a health and wellbeing policy

The most successful health and wellbeing programs are those which have the support of leaders, including the business owner, CEO and senior managers. It doesn't matter if the desire for change starts with workers or leaders (or both), gaining leadership commitment is a critical first step for your health and wellbeing strategy.

Leadership commitment is the degree to which a workplace leader:

- makes health, safety and wellbeing a clear priority
- communicates this priority through the vision, mission statement or strategic documents
- is a positive role model and engages in health, safety, and wellbeing practices every day.

In practice, committed leaders:

- endorse a workplace health and wellbeing strategy
- connect health and wellbeing with organisational values and practices
- engage all levels of management to champion workplace health and wellbeing
- commit resources and assign responsibilities, both financial and human
- regularly communicate their vision and organisation's commitment
- serve as a role model and actively participate in health and wellbeing initiatives across the workplace
- reward success via recognition, incentives, and celebrations.



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Make your case for change

To be successful, your workplace health and wellbeing strategy will need the support of those around you.

This includes those who can influence the workplace environment such as business owners, managers, team leaders, human resources, and work health and safety representatives.

Your leadership team may be hesitant to commit to workplace health and wellbeing, and your role will be to get them on board.

When you're trying to engage your leaders, it can help to:

- recognise that each leader has different values and priorities. Some are in full support of workplace health and wellbeing while others may need convincing
- speak their language. Angle your pitch to appeal to their different values, needs or problems
- think about what's in it for them. Is it healthier employees, less injuries, a reaction to a recent workplace event or a desire to be an employer of choice?
- build a business case. This could be presented in a presentation, proposal, email or business case.

BUILD A BUSINESS CASE

Preparing a business case can help you gain leadership commitment and internal support for a workplace health and wellbeing strategy. Senior leaders often want to understand how investments they make in their people will improve both employee outcomes and business objectives. A business case will demonstrate a sound rationale for a workplace health and wellbeing program. The detail and format of the business case will depend on your workplace size, internal structures, and resourcing, but they all have some common elements.

Your business case should:

- outline why action is needed in your workplace, the context of your workforce, and the health and wellbeing needs that are of concern
- incorporate statistics that show the benefits of investing in healthy workplaces
- show how your health and wellbeing strategy aligns to your workplace's goals
- identify the main reasons to invest
- request support for the program management cycle and resource allocation
- make recommendations for next steps.

We've developed a **Business Case Proposal template** to help you prepare your business case and gain support from leadership and senior managers. It includes all the relevant statistics and facts related to workplace health and wellbeing.

RESOURCES:

Business Case Proposal template | [Word](#)



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Lead the way

There are many ways that leaders can show their commitment to creating a healthy workplace.

COMMIT ON PAPER

When the leadership team document their commitment to workplace health and wellbeing it lends credibility to the initiative and conveys a culture of care.

Document your commitment by:

- expand your existing Work Health and Safety policy to specify physical, health mental health and wellbeing.
- creating a new health and wellbeing policy in consultation with employees
- developing a mission statement or pledge that details the commitment to health and wellbeing.

RESOURCES:

Work health, safety and wellbeing policy template | [PDF](#)

Health and wellbeing policy template | [Word](#)

Health and wellbeing pledge | [PDF](#) | [Word](#)

ALLOCATE RESOURCES

Many workplace health and wellbeing goals can be achieved at no or minimal cost.

You can demonstrate commitment by:

- giving people time to participate in skills development, training and meetings
- allocating a dedicated person who will be responsible for managing health and wellbeing
- creating a physical environment that facilitates people's health and wellbeing
- budgeting for equipment, services, incentives, and programs that encourage health and wellbeing.

LEAD BY EXAMPLE

It's important that leaders 'walk the talk' and live the changes and policies that they're asking people to embrace.

You'll lead by example if you:

- show interest and enthusiasm in people's health, safety, and wellbeing
- lead health and wellbeing activities in the workplace
- participate in skills building, trainings and programs
- understand the links between leadership behaviour and people's health and wellbeing.

TALK ABOUT IT

Communication is so important to achieve your health and wellbeing goals.

You'll be communicating well if you:

- encourage open discussion about work health, safety, and wellbeing and opportunities for improvement
- make health and wellbeing a regular and key topic at team meetings
- give positive feedback to individuals and teams for good wellbeing performance.

SYSTEMISE HEALTH AND WELLBEING

If leaders make health and wellbeing a part of their everyday operations, then it becomes a priority for everyone.

To systemise, you can:

- set business goals/targets for health and wellbeing performance
- include health and wellbeing responsibilities in job descriptions
- include health and wellbeing in performance reviews
- add health and wellbeing into workplace inductions
- endorse procedures and processes for workplace health and wellbeing.

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Track your progress

Congratulations! You've reached the end of Step 1.



You can chart your progress in the table below and go back through the toolkit to complete any actions you might have missed. Don't forget that we have templates available to help you build your health and wellbeing strategy.

STEP 1 RESOURCES:

Business Case Proposal template | [Word](#)

Work health, safety and wellbeing policy template | [PDF](#)

Health and wellbeing policy template | [Word](#)

Health and wellbeing pledge | [PDF](#) | [Word](#)



CHECKLIST	SMALL BUSINESS (20 employees or less)	MEDIUM TO LARGE BUSINESS
Senior leaders are on board	–	
Managers have agreed to business case proposal	–	
Leadership commitment is documented		
Resources are allocated to the strategy		

If you've checked all the boxes you need, it's time to move on to Step 2: Learn about your workplace.



Step 2: Learn about your workplace

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IN THIS SECTION YOU'LL LEARN HOW TO:

- ✓ Complete a workplace needs assessment
- ✓ Find out what your workers need
- ✓ Identify priorities for action planning in Step 4
- ✓ Make sure everyone is protected through the process

Now that you've got everyone on board, it's time to learn more about your work environment, and what your workers want. A successful healthy workplace strategy includes an assessment of your current health and wellbeing environment.

This process is often called a 'needs assessment' as it involves working out what you might need to shift your workplace from its current condition to a healthier one. Identifying and addressing these needs will give your health and wellbeing strategy its direction, scope, and priorities.

We've put together a general guide to help you **conduct a needs assessment**.

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Conduct a workplace needs assessment

We've created the *healthy workplace check* to help you complete part of your needs assessment. It's designed to be completed by workplace decision-makers like owners, general managers, health and safety managers, or human resource managers to reflect your understanding of policies, practices, and programs currently operating in your workplace. This survey tool asks questions across the seven domains that relate to the promotion and protection of workplace health, safety, and wellbeing:

- A. Leadership commitment and communication
- B. Worker participation and consultation
- C. Policies, practices and procedures
- D. Physical work environment
- E. Programs and workforce capability
- F. Data-driven measurement and evaluation
- G. Psychosocial safety climate

Once you have completed the healthy workplace check, you will be provided with a score and ideas for next steps. The healthy workplace check will help your workplace to set priorities and will also be useful to regularly complete to demonstrate success as you monitor progress.



RESOURCES:

How to conduct a needs assessment | [PDF](#)

Healthy workplace check
healthyworkplaces.sa.gov.au



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Conduct a worker needs assessment

It's essential to ask what people need and want before taking action.

This is the opportunity to consult with your workers and obtain their input about the direction of your new or existing workplace health and wellbeing strategy. It will also make sure that any steps you take to address health and wellbeing in your workplace will hit their mark. We'll be going into more detail about consulting with and listening to people in Step 3, but we've created a **Worker interests survey** to help you gather information about the types of health and wellbeing initiatives workers would like to see implemented.

The Worker interests survey gives people a chance to comment on the types of health and wellbeing initiatives they would like to see implemented.

The **Workplace Wellbeing Question Bank** includes a list of questions that you can use to measure and monitor the wellbeing of workers.

RESOURCES:

Worker interests survey | [PDF](#)

Workplace Wellbeing Question Bank
whatworkswellbeing.org/resources/workplace-wellbeing-question-bank/



Protect privacy and show care

PRIVACY IS ESSENTIAL

When collecting people's details, health information and opinions, it's important to make sure that distribution, collection methods and questions don't identify individual respondents.

Once collected, handle and store survey information securely and only provide summarised or aggregated results prior to circulation throughout the organisation. Any disclosure of personal information without a person's written consent is unethical and, in some cases, may be illegal.

FOLLOW WORKPLACE ETHICS PROCEDURES

Workplaces may have to consider internal ethics processes prior to getting people involved in surveys and data collection. Participation and subsequent data should only be used for the purpose it is intended and therefore only inform the creation of a tailored health and wellbeing program. Be clear with participants exactly how and where their data will be used. Check with your human resources (HR) department or management team for input. HR will often be able to help you administer surveys within the organisation.

PARTICIPATION IS A PERSONAL CHOICE

Make sure that the people's right to choose to take part in the needs assessment stages of your program is protected and communicated. Take care that individuals do not feel alienated if they are unable to take part in some or all of the program activities.



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Track your progress

Congratulations! You've reached the end of Step 2.



You can chart your progress in the table below and go back through the toolkit to complete any actions you might have missed.

Your workplace needs will change over time as you develop and execute your health and wellbeing strategy. An initial needs assessment can provide you with a useful understanding of the direction your program can take and provide some benchmark statistics and facts. If you regularly conduct needs assessments, then you can track progress from your benchmark score and continuously identify areas for change and improvement.

Don't forget that we have templates available to help you build all aspects of your health and wellbeing strategy.

STEP 2 RESOURCES:

How to conduct a needs assessment | [PDF](#)

Healthy workplace check
healthyworkplaces.sa.gov.au

Worker interests survey | [PDF](#)

Workplace Wellbeing Question Bank
whatworkswellbeing.org/resources/workplace-wellbeing-question-bank/



CHECKLIST

CHECKLIST	SMALL BUSINESS (20 employees or less)	MEDIUM TO LARGE BUSINESS
The information collection approach has been planned		
A workplace needs assessment has been completed	–	
A worker needs assessment had been completed		
Priorities from the workplace level assessment and worker level assessment have been identified		
Privacy and confidentiality has been maintained		

If you've checked all the boxes you need, it's time to move on to Step 3: Involve your team.



Step 3: Involve your team

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IN THIS SECTION YOU'LL LEARN HOW TO:

- ✓ Communicate and promote your strategy
- ✓ Consult effectively using different methods
- ✓ Create a health and wellbeing committee
- ✓ Find champions in your workplace
- ✓ Excite people about the program

Your workplace health and wellbeing strategy isn't going to be successful unless it is centred around your people, and they are actively involved in the process. It's vital to communicate regularly and promote changes. People are more likely to be motivated if they are informed and involved.

Workplace owners and managers should consult and involve people at every level of their organisation so they can help plan and make decisions about their health, safety, and wellbeing. If you involve people in strategy planning and evaluation, then you will have a stronger strategy.

People can take part in many ways, including sharing their thoughts by completing surveys or participating in focus groups, participating in a committee, and developing health and wellbeing policies or procedures. Workers can also lend their skills to a program (some people may be qualified and insured yoga instructors, allied health professionals, massage therapists or cooks), take part in activities and initiatives and encourage other people to do the same, and even seek incentives, resources, or equipment through their personal links to the local community.

'Workplace health is something we do with and for people..... it's not something we do to them'

David Hunnicutt, WELCOA, 2009

There are five main ways that you can work with employees to develop and maintain a successful workplace health and wellbeing strategy.

- 1 **COMMUNICATE AND PROMOTE**
- 2 **CONSULT**
- 3 **FORM A COMMITTEE**
- 4 **FIND CHAMPIONS**
- 5 **MOTIVATE PEOPLE**

These ideas are useful at all stages of the workplace health and wellbeing journey and not just here in Step 3.

Communicate and promote

Regular communication and promotion is vital to the success of your strategy at all stages of the project management cycle.

People will want to know about changes to workplace practices or the environment that may impact their everyday work and have their say. They can only get involved in a health and wellbeing strategy if they know about it and learn about the ways they can participate. You may need to let people know about new or reviewed policies, upgrades to facilities (e.g. walkway repairs or new kitchen facilities) or to promote an upcoming activity or event.

Regular communication:

- creates recognition
- stimulates interest, anticipation and motivation
- informs potential participants of their role
- explains where to go for more information
- keeps the broader workforce such as employers, managers and team leaders informed.

To ensure you keep communicating regularly, and to the right people, we've developed a simple **communications plan template** to help you get started and keep your communications on track.

RESOURCES:

Communications plan template | [PDF](#)



WAYS TO COMMUNICATE AND PROMOTE YOUR STRATEGY¹

Print promotions

- Include a message in your workplace newsletter.
- Create some eye-catching posters and place in high traffic areas such as kitchens, stairwells.
- Include a message in your workplace newsletter or CEO memos.

Online methods

- Include information on your intranet.
- Email people and set calendar reminders about events.
- Use social media such as Facebook and Twitter to notify people.

Staff meetings

- Talk to people at regular team meetings or catch-ups.
- Use managers or champions to spread the word.
- Share any individual successes or positive stories, with people's permission.

Program launch

- Invite a guest speaker or ask senior management to speak at launch.
- Provide a healthy breakfast, lunch or morning tea to model healthy choices.
- Give away healthy incentives, such as pedometers or water bottles, to encourage attendance.

Source: Government of Western Australia Department of Health. Toolkit for a Healthier Workplace 2021 (cdn.livelihood.com.au/assets/resource/workplace/2021-07-toolkit-for-a-healthier-workplace.pdf)

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Consult

While consultation between employers and workers is a legal requirement, it is also an essential element in proactive workplace health and wellbeing.

Effective consultation encourages greater awareness of issues and can lead to an improved culture. Given that no two workplaces are the same, it is important that your workplace health and wellbeing strategy is developed in consultation with employees from the start. This will help turn ideas into something tailored and relevant to people's needs. Engaging employees early can also create a feeling of ownership that encourages people to participate.

Different consultation methods are needed for different audiences. A small workplace may decide to use existing meetings or suggestion boxes, whereas a large workplace may choose to conduct a survey or run interdivision focus groups. They may also use formal consultation methods such as staff meetings or work health and safety committee meetings or through Health and Safety Representatives (HSR's).

We've also put together some **guidelines for consultation and representation at work**. These guidelines cover everything from the legal obligations to training health and safety representatives and resolving any issues.

The **Worker interests survey** we used in Step 2 can also be a good tool to help you consult with your people.

Consulting with workers will help you identify their health and wellbeing priority areas that you can add to your action plan in Step 4.

METHODS OF CONSULTATION

Online survey*

A great choice for employees based at a computer or for a mobile workforce

Paper-based survey*

For employees who aren't based at a computer, distribute/leave surveys in high traffic areas such as a lunchroom, with a ballot box for completed copies.

Face-to-face chat / informal discussions

For a small workplace or a hard-to-engage group of employees, try gaining insight informally via a casual catch up or chat.

Focus group

Larger workplaces might find focus groups useful. Gather employees from different departments, levels, and/or locations to ensure you get a good snapshot of representatives.

Compulsory meetings*

For a greater response rate, have employees complete a survey during or before a meeting.

Existing groups

Use existing working groups such as occupational health and safety committees or social clubs as a focus group, by attending one of their scheduled meetings.

Key staff members

If there are employees who are natural leaders and well respected within your workplace, get them on board to seek feedback from their colleagues.

Incentives

Using healthy incentives may assist in an increased response rate. Host a healthy morning tea or offer the chance to win a prize for providing feedback.

* Consider literacy levels and language differences when deciding on consultation strategies.

Source: Government of Western Australia Department of Health. Toolkit for a Healthier Workplace 2021 (cdn.livelihood.com.au/assets/resource/workplace/2021-07-toolkit-for-a-healthier-workplace.pdf)

RESOURCES:

Guidelines for consultation and representation at work | [PDF](#)

Worker interests survey | [PDF](#)



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Form a committee

One of the most successful employee engagement strategies is to set up a health and wellbeing committee or make health and wellbeing an ongoing and regular agenda item in an existing meeting.

If you have a health and wellbeing committee then the responsibility for decisions and actions does not just fall to one person and it's a great way to hear diverse opinions and make sure all workplace areas are involved.

To form a valued and effective committee:

- consider a diverse range of participants to get good representation from a range of departments, positions or leadership levels
- recruit for a range of abilities and then create opportunities for those participants to learn new skills, such as program planning, implementation, monitoring, and marketing and promotion
- define the purpose of the committee and stay true to this plan. It's also a good idea to commit to a length of term. Although it might be difficult to define initially, consider the commitment required of each role within the committee, so that participants can nominate themselves to a role accordingly

- make room for proxy members. Members should be able to nominate a proxy if attendance becomes an issue
- set timelines and dates in advance. Schedule meeting dates in advance when you start putting together the committee and be clear about the program's timeline
- consider approaching health and safety representatives (if applicable) to see if they would like to be involved.

In smaller workplaces the committee may need fewer members, but members should ideally be able to speak on behalf of management and employees and act as program decision makers. It may also be important to evenly spread the workload and responsibilities to various employees to achieve your set goals.

Committee roles could include:

- chairperson – usually this role will be filled by the individual managing the health and wellbeing program but a rotating chair, involving everyone on the committee, can help to increase participation and build individual skills
- promotions/communication
- meeting coordination and hosting
- budget and resourcing
- external provider/local and community services liaison
- record keeping (program activities, evaluation documents and meeting minutes)
- reporting.

Members who have limited capacity for involvement could play a different role. For example, they may have skills in policy writing and could commit to that instead. Roles can also change during different phases of the program.

Have your committee in place but not sure how to run it? Take a look at the following resources to help you get started.

RESOURCES:

Health and Wellbeing Committee Terms of Reference template | [PDF](#) | [Word](#)

Health and Wellbeing Committee Agenda | [PDF](#) | [Word](#)



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Find your wellbeing champions

Workplace champions go by many titles: advocates, leaders, connectors, and mentors. No matter what the name, they can play a key role in the success of your health and wellbeing program.

A workplace champion advocates for change and drives health and wellbeing activities. Workplace champions may or may not be a representative on the health and wellbeing committee.

Wellbeing champions have:

- a good understanding of structures and processes within the workplace
- some authority to support change and progress ideas
- some experience (or are looking for some) to manage a project or coordinate tasks
- good relationships with colleagues and can engage on many levels
- an understanding of health and wellbeing, or a willingness to learn
- enthusiasm
- respect for an individuals' personal choice and their privacy
- the capacity to take on the role within the confines of their own job.

Wellbeing champions can:

- determine people's health and wellbeing interests, through surveys or meetings, and provide feedback to decision makers
- develop and deliver activities or events
- source activities and information by working with stakeholders and external organisations
- generate innovative ways to promote activities and events
- talk to decision-makers about the importance of investing in health and wellbeing
- talk to colleagues about planned changes and motivate them to join in
- mentor colleagues to make healthy choices, drawing on their own positive experiences.

You can support potential champions by:

- sharing the workload among several people. This may be useful if your workplace doesn't have a dedicated health and wellbeing coordinator
- communicating details about the role and anticipated size of the commitment when you're recruiting them
- letting them know how they'll be supported. Will the workplace provide training if required? Is other support available? Is extra remuneration on offer?
- making sure the time allocated to each role and task is realistic
- providing incentives in addition to personal skill development. Consider if the workplace may offer recognition of added duties, time in lieu for training or activity planning.



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Motivate people

People are motivated to engage in healthy behaviour for different reasons and will engage in health and wellbeing depending on their level of readiness, priorities, and resources.

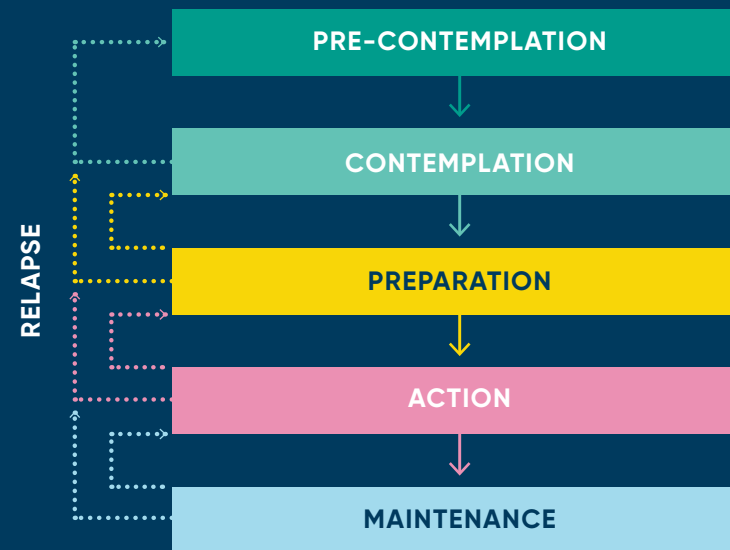
When you're involving your team in the health and wellbeing journey, and when you begin to put strategies to your priorities, you need to understand how health is determined and how people may become motivated.

A person's health is determined by many factors, some of which can be outside of their control. These factors include genetics, family situation, education level, employment status and type of work, past and ongoing trauma, socio-economic status, and where a person lives. Healthy also means different things to different people.

The stages of change model is useful to understand where people may be at in making healthy changes.²

STAGES OF CHANGE MODEL

The stages of change model describes five stages of behaviour.



- 1. PRE-CONTEMPLATION:** the person is unaware that their behaviour is unhealthy or not interested in changing.
- 2. CONTEMPLATION:** the person is weighing up the pros and cons of changing their behaviour.
- 3. PREPARATION:** the person is planning on changing their unhealthy behaviour.
- 4. ACTION:** the person is in the process of changing their unhealthy behaviour.
- 5. MAINTENANCE:** the person has adopted the new healthy behaviour and ceased the unhealthy behaviour.

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Workplace health and wellbeing strategies often target people in the latter stages of change (preparation, action and maintenance) through activities such as exercise classes. However, the challenge is to identify strategies that will target and engage those in the earlier stages (pre-contemplation and contemplation).

Workplaces gain the most from improving people's health who are in the earliest stages of readiness, as these are usually the least healthy within the workforce. The actions you choose to implement as part of your health and wellbeing strategy, like introducing a new policy or making changes to the environment, can positively influence all employees, even those who appear disengaged. For example, if a workplace introduced a healthy catering policy and swapped the biscuit jar for a fruit bowl, the eating habits of all employees will be positively influenced.

What could this look like in practice? We've included some examples of strategies across different stage changes in the table opposite that you can use to help people create change.

SECTION REFERENCES

1. Live Lighter, *Toolkit for a healthier workplace*, Live Lighter, 2021.
2. Boston University School of Public Health, *The transtheoretical model (stages of change)*, Boston University School of Public Health, accessed 2022. bu.edu

WAYS TO COMMUNICATE AND PROMOTE YOUR STRATEGY¹

Stage of change	Workplace strategies	Examples that address physical inactivity
Pre-contemplation: unaware of unhealthy behaviour, not ready to change or think it's too hard to change	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Raise awareness• Individual monitoring of activity levels• Healthy policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Take the stairs poster• Provision of pedometers• Active transport policy
Contemplation: considering changing unhealthy behaviour	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• All of the above AND• Healthy environments (infrastructure and facilities)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• End-of-trip facilities like showers, bike storage and lockers• Shared use of work bikes• Sit-stand workstations
Preparation: planning to change unhealthy behaviour	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• All of the above AND• Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Physical activity education session• Provision of physical activity brochures
Action: process of changing unhealthy behaviour	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• All of the above AND• Opportunities and activities to participate in	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lunch time walking group• Standing or walking meetings• Access to gym or fitness classes
Maintenance: adoption of healthy/ cessation of unhealthy behaviour	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• All of the above AND• Supportive workplace culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Active social activities (i.e. Friday after-work lawn bowls instead of drinks)

Source: Adapted from the Government of Western Australia Department of Health. Toolkit for a Healthier Workplace

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Track your progress

Congratulations! You've reached the end of Step 3.



You can chart your progress in the table below and go back through the toolkit to complete any actions you might have missed.

Don't forget that we have templates available to help you build all aspects of your health and wellbeing strategy.

STEP 3 RESOURCES:

Communications plan template | [PDF](#)

Guidelines for consultation and representation at work | [PDF](#)

Worker interests survey | [PDF](#)

Health and Wellbeing Committee Terms of Reference template | [PDF](#) | [Word](#)

Health and Wellbeing Committee Agenda | [PDF](#) | [Word](#)



CHECKLIST

SMALL BUSINESS
(20 employees or less)

MEDIUM TO LARGE BUSINESS

Your team has been consulted		
A Health and Wellbeing Committee has been established	-	
Wellbeing champions have been selected	-	
Health topics have been placed on meeting agendas		
A communication and promotion mechanism for your team has been established	-	
Your team was involved in identifying 2-5 priorities		

If you've checked all the boxes you need, it's time to move on to Step 4: Plan and act.



Step 4: Plan and act

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IN THIS SECTION YOU'LL LEARN HOW TO:

- ✓ Set goals and objectives for priority areas
- ✓ Create strategies to achieve your goals
- ✓ Use incentives and rewards to help keep people motivated
- ✓ Choose external providers to help you achieve your goals

Now that you have leadership commitment, tracked what you already have in place by completing a needs assessment, and consulted with employees, it's time to pull together an action plan.

When you look at all the work you've completed so far, the health and wellbeing priorities of your workplace should have been identified. Think about and discuss the most common or important issues that emerged from the needs assessment in Step 2 and by involving your team in Step 3. These might be broad topics or themes at this stage or there may be a particular health and wellbeing issue that's emerged as a leading concern.

In this step, we'll help develop an action plan to address your priority areas. It is an important step because an action plan will:

- set out what you're going to do and how you're going to do it
- give you specific actions and targets to help you structure your health and wellbeing activities
- help you to remain focused on achieving outcomes and track your progress
- make it easy for workers, key partners, champions and other 'helpers' to follow what's going on and what's expected. A written action plan can be used as a communication piece across the workplace
- help you find a balance between what people would like and the realistic activities that the workplace is willing and able to support. How to create an effective action plan.

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How to create an effective action plan

An effective way to develop an action plan is to:

1. Use the GOST model which stands for goals, objective, strategies, and tactics; it's a critical framework for strategic planning. Table 1 (p. 32) provides an example of GOST in action.
2. Consider all the ways to meet your objective, with strategies that cover vision, places and people as per the healthy workplaces model. If you spread your tactics across these areas you will help to cement them within your workplace, rather than ending up with a program of ad-hoc activities and events. Thorough and wide-reaching programs are more likely to succeed and reach staff at varying stages of change.
3. Identify the resources you may need, how it will be promoted, who is responsible for coordinating people, and how you'll monitor and evaluate.
4. Make sure you align your content with SMART criteria to give you the best possible chance of success. SMART stands for:
 - specific to the workplace
 - measurable change over time
 - achievable, considering the resources and support you have available
 - realistic, sensible and practical
 - time frames that are reasonable.



HEALTHY VISION

addresses cultural perceptions and commitment from management, policies and procedures.



HEALTHY PLACES

addresses environmental factors preventing individuals from being healthy and offers the resources that actively encourage positive health and wellbeing.



HEALTHY PEOPLE

focuses on individual needs such as improving access to services and information and improving people's health knowledge and skill level.

Table 1

AN ACTION PLAN FRAMEWORK USING THE GOST MODEL

Goal	Objective	Strategies	Tactics	Timeframe	Person responsible	Resources and support	Measure of success
A <i>goal</i> is the big picture 'what' or the outcome you want.	<i>Objectives</i> are the steps you take to achieve the goals—they help break down the goal into processes that are achievable and measurable.	<i>Strategies</i> are detailed ways of reaching each of the objectives—these need to be realistic and achievable. You may have one or several strategies for each objective.	<i>Tactics</i> are the actions that need to happen for each of the identified strategies. These are all of the day-to-day tasks of the program.	Each activity will also need a <i>timeframe</i> of when a task starts and when it will be completed.	A <i>responsible employee(s)</i> , who is able to carry out the activity will need to be identified.	<i>Resources and support</i> will need to be identified for each activity	The action plan should include indicators that measure the effectiveness of each strategy and keep the program on track. Identify what information will help you monitor your strategies before the program begins, as it will save time and resources down the track. Refer to the <i>Monitoring and evaluation quick guide</i> .

Consider your goals, objectives and strategies to meet each identified priority – here's an example of a simple action plan for physical activity

Goal	Objective	Strategy	Tactics
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduce sitting time at home and in the office. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To increase the number of staff that report moving more and sitting less within 6 months. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop an environment that supports staff to be physically active. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Roll out the free <i>Be upstanding</i> program. Provide sit-stand desks. Decrease access to desk bins. Start a lunch time walking group.

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Develop your action plan

Now that you have established your priority areas by learning about your workplace and involving your team (Step 2 and Step 3), we are going to step you through the process of developing an action plan to address them.

We've developed an **Action plan template** with instructions to help you and it will help if you have it open while you work through this section of the toolkit.

We've also put together a list of recommendations for the most common health and wellbeing issues. These sections contain strategies and tactics that you can draw on for your own plan. Read through the relevant sections with your action plan template on-hand so that you can fill it out as you go.

ALCOHOL (P. 34)

SMOKING AND VAPING (P. 38)

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND SEDENTARY WORK (P. 41)

NUTRITION (P. 44)

PREVENTIVE HEALTHCARE (P. 47)

MUSCLE AND JOINT PROBLEMS (P. 50)

SLEEP AND FATIGUE (P. 53)

MENTAL HEALTH (P. 57)

Choose one area or work through them all to create strategies for change in your workplace.

RESOURCES:



Monitoring and evaluation quick guide | [PDF](#)

Action plan template [PDF](#) | [Word](#)



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Alcohol

Alcohol is the most widely used drug in Australia and its misuse causes significant harm to individuals, families, and communities. In 2020, around 1 in 12 South Australians were daily drinkers and almost 1 in 6 drank at a level that put them at risk of alcohol-related harm.¹

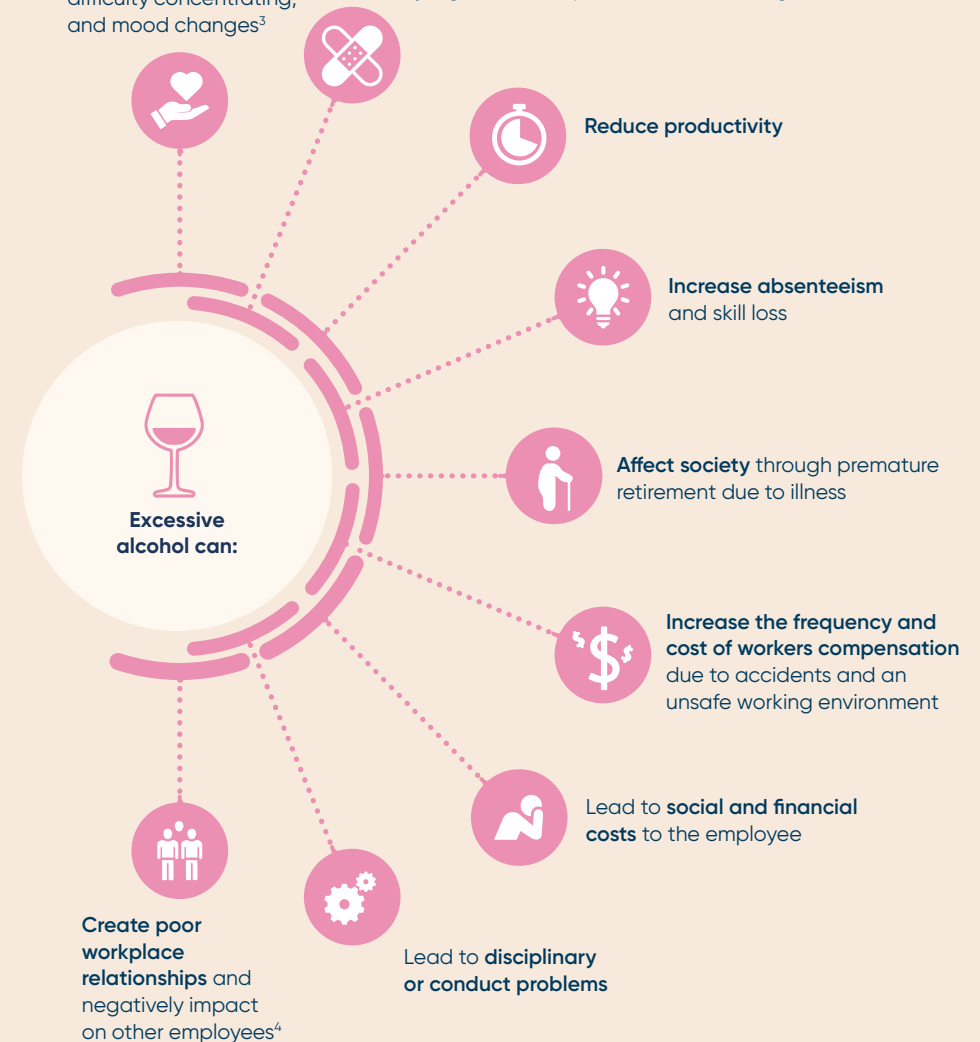
The national guidelines for alcohol consumption recommend no more than 10 standard drinks a week and no more than 4 standard drinks on any one day to reduce the risk of alcohol-related disease or injury.² Women who are pregnant or breastfeeding should not drink alcohol as it can harm the baby.

Drinking alcohol above these levels is known to be harmful to individuals, their families, and their colleagues, and it can be costly for employers.

Drinking is often involved in work social functions, meals and outings to celebrate team and individual successes, or informal after-work gatherings. **Alcohol can also be used to relieve work-related stress and other issues.**

Increase the risk of cancer, liver damage, stroke, heart trouble, general ill health and cognitive impairment, such as poor memory, difficulty concentrating, and mood changes³

Increase injury risk through poor coordination, slow response times, lack of judgement and poor decision-making



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Drinking alcohol at risky levels is more common among those who work than those who don't.⁵ The culture and context of a workplace can shape people's behaviour, including their patterns of alcohol consumption. Workplace factors that are known to increase risky alcohol consumption include:

- access to and availability of alcohol (such as at workplace functions)
- shift work
- working conditions (for example hazardous or dangerous work)
- interpersonal factors such as workplace bullying and conflict
- stressful workplace environment with unrealistic responsibilities, targets, and over or under work
- industry type
- workplace culture.⁶

Workplaces can promote healthy attitudes towards avoidance and responsible alcohol consumption through education and awareness. By supporting people to adopt healthy behaviours around alcohol consumption, you can benefit from a healthier and happier workforce and a safer workplace for everyone.

A formal alcohol policy is at the heart of preventing and managing alcohol-related behaviours in the workplace. The policy should be developed in consultation with employees, applied equally to all levels, and clearly state acceptable and unacceptable behaviours, including consequences. The policy and how it will be implemented should be clearly communicated to everyone in the organisation.

The following tables provide a combination of strategies to address alcohol consumption, ranging from changes in the physical environment and social culture to helping employees in their personal efforts to reduce their drinking.

ACTIONS YOU CAN TAKE TO REDUCE ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION IN THE WORKPLACE

Healthy vision – create policies, practice and cultures to support responsible alcohol consumption

- In consultation with workers, develop and implement a formal workplace alcohol policy. This should include the responsible service of alcohol, how to respond to workers who are under the influence, any testing procedures, how your organisation provides support for individuals struggling with alcohol misuse, and provides education programs based on national guidelines (e.g. NHMRC).
- Include your alcohol policy and education information in induction materials.
- Lead by example and encourage management to be responsible drinkers.
- Consider your workplace's customs, beliefs, attitudes, and traditions towards alcohol and facilitate or support practices where drinking isn't expected or encouraged.
- Review employment practices and working conditions that might impact on employee stress (working hours, flexible working conditions, job design, workload, resources, bullying etc). This could be achieved using the 'People at Work' survey tool.
- Train managers or team leaders to recognise and respond appropriately to the negative impact of alcohol within the workplace.
- Use a risk management approach to prevent and manage alcohol-related harm and issues in the workplace.
- Ensure alcohol is not used as prizes or gifts. Swap alcohol for gifts that promote wellbeing and health, such as vouchers for activities, plants, books, sports or baking equipment.

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Healthy place – create a workplace environment that reduces alcohol consumption

- Display alcohol-related posters, including drink driving prevention posters and those showing the health and financial benefits of giving up alcohol.
- Don't stock alcohol in the fridge or have it where employees can see it.
- Provide plenty of non-alcoholic drinks and food on occasions where alcohol is offered and ensure responsible service of alcohol.
- Provide alternative public transport options from workplace events where alcoholic beverages are served.
- Hold work functions around activities that don't include drinking, such as movie nights, family days or sports activities, or have work social functions at times when alcohol isn't expected, such as breakfast, morning tea, or lunch.

MORE RESOURCES TO HELP YOU TAKE ACTION:

Healthy workplaces has easy to navigate resources with links to all the relevant websites, categorised by action, so you can create a healthy workplace. Search for the Alcohol Resource Referral Guide at healthyworkplaces.sa.gov.au

WorkLife has been designed to help workplaces respond to alcohol and drug issues and to develop alcohol and drug policies. worklife.finders.edu.au

The Alcohol and Drug Foundation has facts, information and resources on alcohol and other drugs. adf.org.au

SafeWork SA has dedicated information and advice related to alcohol and other drugs. safework.sa.gov.au

Healthy people – support workers to drink responsibly

- Educate workers on the safe consumption of alcohol, the harms of alcohol, the Australian drinking guidelines and on standard drink sizes.
- Highlight the positive aspects of reducing alcohol intake so workers clearly understand the benefits of cutting back or stopping altogether.
- Promote the use of support services such as the Alcohol and Drug Information Service (ADIS), employee assistance programs, and general practitioners and allow confidential access to these services during work hours.
- Help those who need help. Access to treatment is an important part of having a comprehensive approach to prevent and manage alcohol-related harm in the workplace. This should include support to find and get counselling and treatment, appropriate paid or unpaid leave to access treatment, and worker confidentiality.

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Smoking and vaping

Although tobacco smoking rates in Australia have been steadily decreasing, a survey from 2020 showed that approximately 1 in 10 South Australians aged over 15 still smoke daily. While smoking rates are decreasing, the use of electronic cigarettes is on the rise, with 3.2% of current smokers using them daily (up by 1.5% since 2016).¹

Smoking causes a range of serious health problems including cancers, coronary heart disease, stroke, and chronic lung diseases, and remains the leading cause of preventable death in Australia. In 2018, more than 20,000 Australians died from smoking-related causes (13% of all deaths).² Every year, around 1,490 South Australians die from tobacco-related causes.³

There is no safe level of tobacco smoking. Breathing in other people's tobacco smoke (passive smoking, second hand smoking or environmental tobacco smoking) is also harmful and there is increasing evidence that second-hand smoke exposure is associated with psychological distress.⁴

Many people believe that vaping causes less harm than smoking cigarettes because vapes don't contain tobacco, but this is not true. No safe level of vaping has been established. With or without nicotine, all e-liquid solutions used in vaping contain a mixture of unregulated and harmful chemicals and additives.

There is not enough evidence to promote the use of e-cigarettes to help people stop smoking. From 1 October 2021, consumers need a valid prescription to import nicotine vaping products, such as nicotine e-cigarettes, nicotine pods and liquid nicotine.

Quitting is one of the best things someone can do to improve their health and the health of their friends and family. Importantly, some health and other benefits can be enjoyed almost immediately. These benefits occur at any age and can range from increased life expectancy and improved quality of life to significant financial benefits.⁵ People who have successfully quit smoking report feeling fitter and more energetic—and they are also saving money.

Nicotine is highly addictive and quitting can be difficult. In fact, most people try to quit multiple times before they are successful. Almost three quarters of South Australian smokers have made a previous quit attempt. More than a third have tried to quit in the past year and over two thirds want to try to quit in the next six months.⁶ This means that a lot of people want to quit smoking. It is important for workplaces to support those thinking about quitting.

Smokers have a **20–30% higher risk of injury** than non-smokers, and when injured they take longer to recover.

In South Australia, smoking is prohibited by law in all enclosed workplaces and shared work areas (such as offices, shops, factories and work vehicles), including outdoor dining areas.⁷ This law is in place to protect people from the harmful effects of second-hand smoke.⁸

Smoke-free workplaces also have other benefits, including:

- reducing the workplace costs associated with smoking. Smoking related costs are due to loss of staff due to premature death, absenteeism, environmental impact, and clean up or refurbishment costs due to cigarette butt litter⁹
- improving productivity
- reducing fire risk
- promoting a healthy and responsible corporate image
- enhanced workplace safety
- minimising the risk of prosecution or civil action by employees who are exposed to environmental tobacco smoke and compliance with legislation, including the *Tobacco and E-Cigarette Products Act, 1997 (SA)*, *Work Health and Safety Act 2012 (SA)*, and smoking bans within enclosed workplaces from 2004 (hospitality venues, 2007)
- improving staff morale and relationships
- creating fair working conditions for both smokers and non-smokers
- creating a fresher and cleaner atmosphere for visitors and clients.

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ACTIONS YOU CAN TAKE TO HELP PEOPLE TO QUIT SMOKING AND CREATE A SMOKEFREE WORKPLACE

Healthy vision – create policies, practice and positive culture for a smoke-free workplace

- Promote a smoke-free workplace by developing and implementing a 100% smoke-free policy. This should include outdoor areas where appropriate, in particular those within 10 metres of building entrances.
- Embed no-smoking support procedures into work, health, and safety procedures and policies.
- Update your knowledge about South Australian tobacco legislation.

MORE RESOURCES TO HELP YOU TAKE ACTION:

Healthy workplaces has easy to navigate resources with links to all the relevant websites, categorised by action, so you can create a healthy workplace. Search for the Smoking and Vaping Referral Guide at healthyworkplaces.sa.gov.au

Cancer Council SA has information on how to help people quit smoking. cancersa.org.au

SafeWork SA has dedicated information and advice related to smoking. safework.sa.gov.au

The Alcohol and Drug Foundation has facts, information and resources on nicotine and vaping (e-cigarettes). adf.org.au

Healthy place – create a smoke-free workplace environment

- Promote and provide a smoke-free workplace. If there is onsite smoking, make sure the dedicated area complies with legislation.
- Spread the quit smoking message with promotional materials and run events to encourage quitting. Embed quit smoking messages into all communication channels.

Healthy people – encourage and support workers to be smoke-free

- Promote, and provide access to, support services for those wanting to quit or reduce smoking such as Quitline (ph. 13 78 48), the My QuitBuddy app, and besmokefree.com.au
- Remind workers that a general practitioner can help them quit smoking by prescribing nicotine replacement therapy and/or referring them for counselling.
- Find out if your workplace employee assistance program offers help with goal setting and behavioural change. If it does, promote the program widely and let people know their options.
- Consider sponsoring comprehensive quit programs. For example, subsidise quit smoking aids like nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) or provide incentives for those who quit smoking.
- Provide, or support participation in, quit smoking programs during work time.
- Consider extending workplace quit programs to people's families and household members where feasible.
- Inform workers on the latest information on vaping

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Physical activity and sedentary work

People engage in three movement-related behaviours each day: sitting, moving, and sleeping. Two of these, sitting and moving, are important to the workplace and they're interrelated – if you are sitting, you are likely not moving; and if you are moving, you are likely not sitting still.

Any increase in physical activity is good for our health.⁴ As little as **10 minutes per day of light physical activity** is beneficial with more activity producing greater benefit.

People spend approximately 60–70% of their waking hours being sedentary.¹ The average person reports sitting approximately 6.4 hours per day, with desk-based people sometimes sitting for up to 82% of their working hours.² As such, the workplace is identified as a high-risk site for excessive sitting time in many western countries, including Australia. As full-time employees tend to spend an average of 37–40 hours per week working, workplaces are an ideal setting to promote a healthy culture to encourage their employees to move more and sit less.³

Even if your employees are active before and after work, they should still be encouraged to move more and sit less while at work to significantly improve their health and wellbeing.

Physical activity will:

- reduce the risk of disease, such as Type 2 diabetes, stroke, cardiovascular disease and Alzheimer's disease
- improve mental health and sleep
- promote greater physical fitness and health
- strengthen bones and muscles.⁵

The benefits of physical activity are important for everyone in the workplace, but they will be especially important for older workers as the retirement age in Australia continues to rise.

REPLACING SITTING WITH MOVING

Reallocating sedentary time to physical activity is associated with favourable health outcomes.⁶ Workplace physical activity interventions have been shown to significantly increase daily step counts and employee fitness levels.⁷ Interventions work best when everyone works together to make them a part of day-to-day business.⁸ This can be done by changing the physical environment and organisational structure to actively reduce sitting time and encourage movement. In addition to the above health improvements, workplaces also experienced:

- reduced absenteeism
- improved cognitive function, leading to a greater ability to concentrate
- enhanced work performance and productivity.⁹

BARRIERS TO MOVING MORE

Managers have identified the organisational barriers that limit physical activity, and they include health and safety regulations, costs and competing concerns. For example, productivity targets may take priority or there may be a cost involved with modifying the work environment. Employees reported individual barriers to movement such as difficulty finding time or the impact of geography on active transportation options. They also reported that manager support and the demands of their work played a significant role.¹⁰

Workplaces can encourage people to add movement into their daily routine, by creating a workplace culture where physical activity is valued and encouraged. Building opportunities for staff to add movement into their working day can lead to happier and healthier employees.

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ACTIONS YOU CAN TAKE TO INCREASE PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND REDUCE SEDENTARY WORK

Healthy vision – create policies, practice and a workplace culture that supports movement

- Create a workplace *short activity break* policy that encourages people to break-up prolonged periods of sitting with standing or moving. Start with one 10–15 minute movement break every workday with, and led by, other employees.
- Consider policies that explicitly allow people to include walking meetings as part of their workday. Walking meetings can be especially useful when brainstorming ideas or creative approaches.
- Create opportunities for flexitime or time-in-lieu for physical activity and embed this within relevant WHS policies.
- Allow people to be physically active while on the clock, even for as little as 10–15 minutes.
- Support and account for regular stretch or walk breaks in delivery and transport schedules.
- Create a recurring agenda item addressing sedentary practices at staff-related meetings.

MORE RESOURCES TO HELP YOU TAKE ACTION:

Healthy workplaces has easy to navigate resources with links to all the relevant websites, categorised by action, so you can create a healthy workplace. Search for the Physical Activity Resource Referral Guide at healthyworkplaces.sa.gov.au

SA Health has great information and tips on ways to be active. Search for be active at sahealth.sa.gov.au

Safe Work Australia has information on sedentary work as an emergent work health and safety issue. safework.sa.gov.au

Healthy place – create a workplace environment conducive to movement

- Have shared and centralised facilities, including break rooms, bathrooms, printers, and trash bins, to encourage movement to use these facilities.
- Display prominent signs that encourage people to use the stairs and talk about stair use via internal communication channels.
- Create inviting and friendly stairwells by painting the walls a calming colour, adding artwork, or installing motivational signs/slogans.
- Purchase height adjustable desks and high meeting tables for standing options.
- Provide access to showers, change rooms, and lockers or alternatives nearby if these facilities aren't available onsite.
- Create secure and easily accessible bike storage to encourage cycling to and from work.
- Create a dedicated exercise space. Provide exercise equipment, a TV with internet access, or a stretching space.
- Audit the workplace environment and practices for sedentary behaviors to gauge areas for improvement.

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Healthy people – create programs that encourage movement

- Organise and take part in a company-wide physical activity challenge, through the 10,000 steps program.
- Sign up to the *Be Upstanding* program to encourage employees to monitor sitting time and prompt standing.
- Subsidise the purchase of self-monitoring devices (e.g. activity trackers/pedometers), bicycles for commuting to work, or public transit fares. Consider negotiating a corporate rate for a local gym.
- Assign a workplace champion to provide information about the benefits of regular movement via communication channels such as newsletters, CEO memos, noticeboards and lunchrooms.
- Provide supervised or partially supervised physical activity programs onsite or at nearby fitness facilities.
- Hold educational workshops on the benefits of breaking up sitting time and adding movement into the workday.
- Encourage management to role model movement activities, such as active breaks, standing to break up sitting time, and walking meetings.
- Promote and provide work time to access the free Better Healthy Coaching Service (betterhealth.sa.gov.au)
- Provide computer disabling software to support regular breaks.
- Promote regular walking such as lunchtime walking trails and group team challenges.
- Hold cycling information sessions about defensive cycling strategies, cycling road rules or bicycle maintenance to encourage cycling to work.

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Nutrition

There are a lot of reasons why we should promote healthy eating in the workplace. Eating healthy food helps us go about our day with more energy and contributes to general health and wellbeing. Good nutrition also plays a role in preventing and managing chronic diseases like obesity, high blood pressure, heart disease, type 2 diabetes and some cancers.

What we eat plays a **major role in our health, our mood, and our ability to maintain energy and concentration** while at work.

Generally a healthy diet, as outlined in the Australian Dietary Guidelines¹ includes a wide variety of the five food groups with a focus on:

- eating plenty of fruits and vegetables
- avoiding foods and drinks that are high in added sugar, salt, saturated fat and alcohol
- drinking more water
- eating the right amount of food to meet your body's essential needs.

Currently, less than 1 in 10 South Australian adults eat the recommended serves of vegetables (at least 5 per day, note that the Australian Dietary Guidelines recommend men aged 19–70 have between 5.5 and 6 serves) and less than half eat enough servings of fruit (2 per day).²

Barriers to building healthy eating habits can include access, affordability and knowledge. This may look like:

- lack of affordable, healthy food options from surrounding food outlets, onsite food services, vending machines, or while travelling for work
- lack of food preparation and storage facilities
- a poor understanding of healthy food options, budget planning or preparation methods
- the culturally accepted or encouraged eating patterns of the workplace
- shift work practices
- limited healthy food options during meetings and function catering.



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ACTIONS YOU CAN TAKE TO IMPROVE NUTRITION IN YOUR WORKPLACE

Healthy vision – create policies, practice and a workplace culture that supports healthy eating

- Incorporate healthy food options into a healthy food and drink policy for all worksites. The policy could include: catering for functions, meetings, and social occasions; vending machines, onsite canteens or food kiosks; and whether alcohol can be served and what drinks, including water, are available.
- Create a breastfeeding policy and include a dedicated breastfeeding space for return-to-work mothers (where relevant). Become accredited with Australian Breastfeeding Association's Breastfeeding Friendly Workplace Initiative.³
- Include healthy food and drink policy information in staff induction packages.
- Provide flexible work hours (start, finish and lunch times) to accommodate and encourage healthy eating throughout the day (e.g. encouraging workers to eat away from their desks).

Healthy places – create a workplace environment conducive to nutrition

- Provide drinking water (water fountain or filtered water tap).
- Provide a breastfeeding/expressing room equipped with fridge to store expressed milk and washing facilities (or a room that can be booked for this use over the day).
- Provide safe and clean food storage and preparation facilities for workers (e.g. fridge, freezer, microwave, kettle).
- Provide safe and clean food storage and preparation facilities for offsite workers (e.g. eskies, cooler bags, thermoses, water esky cooler).
- Provide workplace environments that encourage healthy eating (e.g. a pleasant and clean kitchen space, shaded areas outside the workplace building).
- Negotiate to remove sources of foods and drinks high in added sugars, salt, alcohol and saturated fat (e.g. biscuit jars, soft drinks, alcohol, crisps, potato chips, chocolates, doughnuts or cake at regular morning tea, meetings or events) from the workplace.
- Provide healthy alternatives in onsite vending machines (e.g. mixed nuts, dried fruit and bottled water). Negotiate with vending machine owners to supply healthier options.

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Healthy people – raise awareness within the workplace about the benefits of healthy eating

- Communicate healthy food options and nutrition topics via fact sheets, newsletters, intranet, posters, and print materials.
- Recommend individuals seek specific dietary advice from a qualified health professional, such as an Accredited Practising Dietitian listed with Dietitians Australia.
- Promote your workplace program widely and inform employees of access options and topics. Workplace employee assistance programs (EAP) can often help with goal-setting and behavioural change.
- Promote links to local food providers (e.g. markets that sell local produce and food co-ops) that stock healthy options within your intranet or newsletters.
- Invite a health professional to run onsite seminars or cooking demonstrations on making healthy food, budget-friendly recipes, and meal preparation.
- Promote and provide work time to access the free Better Healthy Coaching Service (betterhealth.sa.gov.au)
- Initiate healthy food or non-food related fundraisers when fundraising and make sure that morning teas include healthy food and drink options.
- Host workplace challenges such as healthy lunch competitions and fruit and vegetable weekly challenges. Encourage team or multi-site competition with incentives.
- Sponsor the production of a healthy food cookbook with staff recipes. Consider using it as a fundraiser.
- Establish a partnership with your local greengrocer to access fresh and affordable produce.
- Provide regular fruit and vegetable boxes in the workplace.

MORE RESOURCES TO HELP YOU TAKE ACTION:

Healthy workplaces has easy to navigate resources with links to all the relevant websites, categorised by action, so you can create a healthy workplace. Search for the Nutrition Resource Referral Guide at healthyworkplaces.sa.gov.au

The Wellbeing SA Healthy Food Environments Hub has great information and tips on ways to create healthy food environments which can support staff to access healthy food. wellbeingsa.sa.gov.au/foodenvironments

The Better Health Coaching Service is a free, evidence based, confidential telephone program designed to support South Australians to be active, eat well and reduce the risk of chronic disease. betterhealth.sa.gov.au

Dieticians Australia is the peak body for dietitians in Australia providing credible and evidence-based nutrition information and advice. Their site includes a library of the latest articles on a wide range of nutrition-related health issues and a link to a list of accredited practicing dietitians. dietitiansaustralia.org.au

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Preventive healthcare

While a good workplace health and wellbeing program will focus on creating an environment that fosters a safe, respectful and positive workplace, the program can also provide opportunities for workers to address their personal health.

Personal health conditions such as asthma, arthritis, cancer and heart disease are common among working populations, so implementing targeted strategies to prevent onset of disease, illness or injury and promote early detection can reduce their negative impacts. Completing recommended health checks and keeping up with recommended immunisations can play a significant role in workers long-term health, helping to delay (or even avoid) the onset of conditions that can drastically affect their vitality, wellbeing, and time away from the workplace.

The adage that **prevention is better than the cure**, is never more true than for our health.

Effective health and wellbeing prevention is a shared responsibility between workers and employers.

The workplace has an obligation to protect the worker from harm as much as reasonably practicable, and there is legislation on health monitoring used to detect changes in a worker's health because of exposure to certain substances. As an example, to protect workers from occupational sun exposure the workplace would provide protection strategies such as including restriction of time in peak UV, suitable protective clothing, sunscreen and portable shade. In addition, preventive strategies make their health and wellbeing program more robust by including health screening, such as skin checks for early skin cancer detection.



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ACTIONS YOU CAN TAKE TO ENCOURAGE PREVENTIVE HEALTH CARE

Healthy polices, practice and culture – create a workplace culture that puts people's health first

- Include the preventive health care checks and immunisations that your workplace supports in policies and procedures.
- Provide wellbeing leave or allow workers flexitime to attend appointments with health professionals for preventive care.
- If your workplace undertakes pre-employment health assessment checks, take the opportunity to use the results to inform your workplace health and wellbeing program.
- Implement a comprehensive sun protection program, including policy and education about detecting skin cancer early through skin checks for employees (where relevant).
- Use a risk management approach and comply with health monitoring requirements if workers are exposed to hazardous chemicals.
- Make sure you consult workers and that diversity and inclusion principles are applied to groups with particular health needs in your workforce.

Healthy place – create a workplace environment that supports preventive health care

- Use posters to promote national cancer screening programs, such as Breast Screen, bowel cancer screening, and cervical cancer screening.
- Minimise the risk of noise, vibration, and exposure to hazardous substances and injuries.
- Provide personal protective equipment (PPE) and clothing to protect workers from physical, chemical, or biological exposure.
- Make reasonable accommodations, such as making the workplace accessible and providing ergonomic workstations or equipment to help workers fulfill their duties at work.

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Healthy people – support workers with prevention and early detection

●	Offer workers access to confidential personal health assessments.
●	Ask health professionals to come and speak about the importance of early cancer detection and prevention of health conditions.
●	Encourage workers to use the Better Healthy Coaching Service (betterhealth.sa.gov.au) – a free telephone coaching service to support healthy lifestyle change.
●	Provide clear, evidence-based information that demonstrates the importance of immunisation and offer onsite vaccinations.
●	Host a general wellness challenge over several weeks that focuses on health promoting behaviors (e.g. stress management techniques, increased fruit and vegetable intake, new exercise ideas).
●	Create a staff health newsletter or lending library, including health journals, quality nutrition and fitness books or magazines, and information on personal health goal setting.
●	Educate workers about the importance of early detection and encourage them to consult a doctor if they notice changes.
●	Promote digital platforms that workers can access for evidence-based and trusted health information and advice from experts (e.g. Health Direct). ¹

MORE RESOURCES TO HELP YOU TAKE ACTION:

Healthy workplaces has easy to navigate resources with links to all the relevant websites, categorised by action, so you can create a healthy workplace. Search for the Preventive Healthcare Resource Referral Guide at healthyworkplaces.sa.gov.au

SA Health has great information on recommended health checks. Search for recommended health checks at sahealth.sa.gov.au

Safe Work Australia provides information on health monitoring to workers if there is a significant risk to worker's health because of hazardous chemical exposure. safeworkaustralia.gov.au

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Muscle and joint problems

Muscle and joint problems, or musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs), are one of the leading workplace health and safety issues in Australia, accounting for more than half of workers compensation claims in 2020.¹

Non-work related MSDs are also very common, with 90% of individuals experiencing back pain at some point in their lives and 3.6 million Australians living with arthritis.²

A musculoskeletal disorder is any condition that affects the muscles, tendons, ligaments, joints, or the associated nerves and blood vessels. **MSDs can occur suddenly or over time** and are considered 'work related' if they occur through the course of employment or 'non-work related' if they occur through personal activities.

Common MSDs include:

- back pain or injury
- muscle strain
- torn ligament or tendon
- degeneration of a joint or bone, such as arthritis
- nerve injury, such as carpal tunnel syndrome.

Individual circumstances

– age, gender, physical capacity, fatigue levels, genetics, general health.

Psychosocial factors – evidence suggests that psychosocial factors are as influential as physical factors on the risk of developing an MSD. Psychosocial factors include things like poor job design, high work loads, low job control and workplace conflict.³

Work organisation – ability to afford high level controls, leadership support.

Work layout – for improving work design and accommodating individuals with MSDs.

Hazardous manual tasks – when you use the body to lift, lower, push, pull, carry or otherwise move, hold or restrain any object, person or animal.

Task invariability – doing the same work again and again without any variations in the body.

Environmental issues – hot, cold, wet or slippery environments can reduce our overall physical capacity.

Sedentary work – prolonged sitting, limited movements and muscle activity.

These factors combine in a way that magnifies their effect. For example, if an individual is repeatedly performing heavy work, with little control over when and how they perform their work (breaks, methods etc), then they are at an increased risk of sustaining an MSD. Therefore, it is important to address as many factors as possible to effectively prevent MSDs.

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PREVENTING AND MANAGING MUSCULOSKELETAL DISORDERS

The foundation of Musculoskeletal Disorders (MSDs) management and prevention is designing work that is inherently safe and that considers all relevant known and foreseeable hazards.

Under the *Work Health and Safety Act 2012*, employers are responsible for reducing, so far as reasonably practicable, their workers exposure to hazards in the workplace. This means they must identify all hazards and manage all risks using the most effective means available. Workplaces should refer to the hierarchy of risk control when designing and implementing control measures for MSDs (safework.sa.gov.au/workplaces/work-tasks-and-projects/hazardous-manual-tasks).

A participative ergonomics approach which involves the workers to identify and analyse hazards and develop, trial and implement controls is a best practise approach and has been shown to improve both health and safety outcomes and productivity.

Employers should support this process by providing the appropriate knowledge, skills, tools, facilitation, and resources.⁴

Due to the complex nature of MSD's, even with effective controls in place unforeseen hazards can still lead to the development of MSDs. It is important that workplaces are prepared to respond to support a worker by adjusting their work to accommodate their abilities.⁵ For MSDs, adjustments may include modifying the workstation, introducing flexible work arrangements or providing supportive devices/technology.⁶

If an MSD is work-related, then workplaces and workers must adhere to their obligations under the *Return to Work Act 2014*. More information regarding entitlements and obligations is available on the ReturnToWorkSA website at rtwsa.com.

Even if the MSD is not work related, employers are encouraged to consider reasonable adjustment so as to assist workers to remain productive to the benefit of all.

ACTIONS YOU CAN TAKE TO PREVENT MSDS

A broad, integrated and systems approach to MSD risk management includes management support, high levels of worker participation, and accurate hazard identification.⁷

Healthy vision – *create policies, practices and a workplace culture that prevents MSDs*

- Make sure workplace leaders commit to preventing MSDs.
- Use the WHS legislation and associated codes, regulatory standards and related guidance information to help development of workplace solutions to prevent MSDs.
- Develop a policy and procedure to identify and manage MSD risks in the workplace. The policy and procedure should be developed in consultation with workers and include: both physical and psychosocial hazards; outline access to appropriate and timely treatment; and provide suitable duties, claim lodgment and support for remaining at or returning to work.
- Develop a policy and procedure for reasonably accommodating non-work-related MSDs that takes into account the health benefits of work and fosters an inclusive workplace.
- Undertake job and task analysis to identify suitable duties for workers with MSDs while they recover at work.
- Work with a certified professional ergonomist to support the design of systems (tasks, jobs, products, processes and environments) so that both the system and people can work effectively.

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Healthy place – create a workplace environment that minimises MSD

- Embrace the Principles of Good Work Design provided by Safe Work Australia.
- Design the work environment to take into account the capabilities and limitations of the workforce using engineering controls, like using mechanical assist devices or changing workstation layouts.
- Provide the right equipment for workers to minimise the risk of MSD.

Healthy people – support workers to minimise joint and muscle problems

- Encourage workers to speak up about their concerns regarding MSD. This could be done at staff meetings, using posters, or through other communication channels.
- Provide task-based training. This should include information, instruction and training in the tasks workers are required to perform so that they can get the necessary knowledge and skills to perform tasks safely. A clear message from the research evidence is that general manual handling technique training is not effective.
- Develop an early intervention program. This program may include 3–4 sessions with a local physiotherapist or GP to get on top of MSDs early. Consider providing access for both work-related and non-work-related MSDs.
- Provide regular access to onsite physiotherapy or exercise physiology.
- Encourage workers to engage in physical activity and strength-based exercise by hosting walking groups or subsidising gym memberships. Workers who engage in exercise reduce their risk of work-related MSDs (see [Physical activity](#), p. 41, for additional recommendations).
- Encourage workers to get an early diagnosis and appropriately manage arthritis to decrease pain and improve function.

MORE RESOURCES TO HELP YOU TAKE ACTION:

Healthy workplaces has easy to navigate resources with links to all the relevant websites, categorised by action, so you can create a healthy workplace. Search for the Muscle and Joint Problem Resource Referral Guide at healthyworkplaces.sa.gov.au

Safe Work Australia has a model Code of practice – Hazardous manual tasks and good work design principles as well as webinars on MSD prevention. safeworkaustralia.gov.au

The Human Factors & Ergonomics Society of Australia Inc include information on work-related MSDs. ergonomics.org.au

OHS Body of Knowledge for WMDs and Psychosocial Hazards has chapters with detailed information on MSD causes and control measures. ohsbok.org.au

Arthritis Australia has information sheets, booklets and a support line available. arthritisaustralia.com.au

Latrobe University, Centre for Ergonomics and Human factors. APHIRM Toolkit – A participative hazard identification and risk management toolkit for MSDs. aphirm.org.au

Healthy Workplaces Good Practice Awards 2020–2022 – This booklet showcases awarded and commended good practice examples prevention and management of MSDs in the workplace osha.europa.eu/en/publications/healthy-workplaces-good-practice-awards-2020-2022

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Sleep and fatigue

HOW SLEEP AFFECTS WORK

Many Australian workers are sleepy at work, sleepy on the roads on their commute to work, and may experience errors in the workplace, increased injury and accidents, or may miss work because they are too tired. Fatigue causes more road accidents than alcohol and drug use combined.¹

Sleep supports nearly every system in the body, refreshing our body and mind. This refresh is vital for our cardiovascular and immune systems, as well as our ability to think clearly, learn new information, and manage our emotions.² Not having enough sleep or high quality sleep makes it harder to perform our daily tasks and increases the risks of mistakes and accidents.³

As the world changes there is greater demand for 24/7 operations and longer or fragmented working hours for individuals. These demands increase the risk of work-related fatigue and significantly disrupt sleep. **Sleep is a restorative function of the body, essential for our physical and mental health, fundamental to our ability to think and learn, and critical to maintaining safe and healthy workplaces.**

Sufficient, quality sleep is an essential requirement for a person's wellbeing. Seven to nine hours of quality sleep is the generally accepted amount for cognitive and physical health in adults.⁴

In Australia, almost 40% of adults regularly don't get enough quality sleep. For some people this is due to a clinical sleep disorder, but for others it's caused by work patterns or lifestyle pressures. While people may understand that sleep is necessary, they don't always make it a priority or consider the effects of insufficient sleep.⁵

Almost 80% Australians report being less productive after sleeping poorly. In 2016–17, it was estimated that inadequate sleep cost the Australian economy \$26.2 billion, mostly due to reduced productivity. If the impact of lost health and wellbeing is included, the estimated cost rises to \$66.3 billion.⁶ Inadequate sleep has been associated with impaired performance in the workplace, primarily through reduced productivity while at work and increased absenteeism. This comes at a cost to employers, employees, and the safety of the broader community.⁷

WHAT IS WORK-RELATED FATIGUE?

Fatigue is a state of mental and/or physical exhaustion which reduces alertness and impacts an individual's ability to perform their work safely and effectively.⁸

Fatigue can result in:

- feeling drowsy, or in extreme cases, unintentionally falling asleep
- difficulty concentrating
- impaired decision-making and judgement
- reduced reaction time and poor physical coordination.

WHAT ARE COMMON CAUSES OF FATIGUE IN THE WORKPLACE?

Fatigue-related hazards may not be easily visible, so it is important to thoroughly assess your workplace to identify them. While some industries or roles are more prone to fatigue, the following hazards are present in most workplaces:

- work schedules – including shift work, length of shifts, time off between shifts, timing of shifts and breaks. The risk increases dramatically with shifts longer than 8 hours
- job demands – sustained concentration, monotonous or repetitious tasks, high physical effort and high workload can drain workers energy reserves
- environmental conditions – exposure to heat, cold, vibration and noise can make workers tire more quickly.⁹

Non-work-related factors can also impact levels of fatigue at work such as:

- sleep – length, quality and time since sleep
- lifestyle – diet, exercise, and drug and alcohol use
- family responsibilities
- health – medication, sleep apnoea, insomnia, and physical and mental health conditions
- type and length of commute to work
- working multiple jobs.

While workplaces have an obligation to provide safe working conditions, everyone in the workplace has a duty to make sure that fatigue does not pose a risk to health and safety.

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HOW TO IMPROVE SLEEP AND PREVENT FATIGUE IN THE WORKPLACE

A broad, integrated, systems approach to risk management of workplace fatigue includes key management support, high levels of worker participation, accurate hazard identification and the implementation of appropriate controls using the hierarchy of risk control. When it comes to preventing fatigue in the workplace the 'defences in depth' model is regarded as best practice.

The model should be implemented in consultation with workers and includes the following layers of protection:

Level 1 – Provide adequate rest/sleep opportunities by implementing hours of service rules.

Level 2 – Make sure that adequate sleep/rest was obtained before work starts. This may include providing information and resources to workers to help them get adequate sleep/rest.

Level 3 – Assess fatigue behavioural symptoms. This can include self-reporting, co-worker observation, and physiological observation (e.g. eye detection in vehicles).

Level 4 – Prevent and detect fatigue-related errors (e.g. lane correction technology in vehicles with warnings prompting the driver to pull over and rest).

Level 5 – Analyse fatigue-related incidents in depth to identify uncontrolled hazards.

The effects of fatigue on work performance can be compared with the effects of alcohol. **Being awake for 17 hours impairs performance to the same level as having 0.05 blood alcohol content.** Being awake for 20 hours has the same effect as a 0.1 blood alcohol content.¹⁰

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ACTIONS YOU CAN TAKE TO IMPROVE SLEEP AND MANAGE FATIGUE

Healthy vision – create policies, practices and a workplace culture that improves sleep and manages fatigue

- Develop a policy and procedure to identify and manage fatigue-related hazards/risks in the workplace. This should include worker consultation and sector specific recommendations/regulations.
- Design controls using a 'defences in depth' approach and make sure that all affected staff members are consulted throughout the change process. It can help to trial interventions and obtain feedback before officially adopting them.
- Develop a clear procedure for workers to report fatigue-related risks, including self-reporting of fatigue and co-worker action if someone is displaying fatigue impairment. Include steps for getting fatigued workers home safely (e.g. provide rest areas and transport).
- Implement flexible working arrangements that better allow workers to meet their personal, occupational, and health needs. Consider the importance of completely disconnecting from work and making clear distinctions between 'work' and 'home' if working remotely.
- Provide stable/regular shifts in the casual or shift-work environment as far as reasonably practicable and with as much notice as possible. This allows workers to plan their rest and personal life obligations in advance.
- Encourage all staff members to use their allocated leave entitlements and ensure that there are adequate levels of staff to backfill leave.
- Consider the types of leave afforded to your workers and how access (or lack of access) may impact fatigue levels.

Healthy place – create a workplace environment that minimises fatigue

- Make sure workers have appropriate rest/break facilities to eat and rehydrate. Factor in the work environment, like providing a cool refuge for those working in the heat or a spot for sedentary workers to get some movement and fresh air.
- Embrace the Principles of Good Work Design provided by SafeWork Australia and consider the fatigue impacts from plant, equipment, materials and substances used.
- Provide the right equipment for workers to minimise the risk of fatigue.

Healthy people – support workers to gain quality sleep and manage fatigue

- Educate all staff members on the risks of unmanaged fatigue and how to recognise fatigue in themselves. Use promotional materials around the workplace, toolbox meetings/in-person sessions and online learning modules.
- Educate all staff on the importance of obtaining adequate sleep/rest and provide them with resources and strategies to achieve this, such as sleep/relaxation apps, or access to professional help for physical or mental health.
- Help workers who report struggling with sleep/fatigue. This may include making reasonable adjustments to their work and time for specialist appointments including sleep studies.

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MORE RESOURCES TO HELP YOU TAKE ACTION:

Healthy workplaces has easy to navigate resources with links to all the relevant websites. Search for the Sleep and Fatigue Referral Guide at healthyworkplaces.sa.gov.au

Safework Australia's guide for managing fatigue is an excellent resource. safeworkaustralia.gov.au

Sleep Health Foundation has information and resources on sleep. sleephealthfoundation.org.au

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Mental health

Work can be a protective factor for mental health but it can also contribute to potential harm. Feeling connected to workmates, having healthy relationships with leaders, feeling valued with some control over our work are major drivers for mental wellbeing.

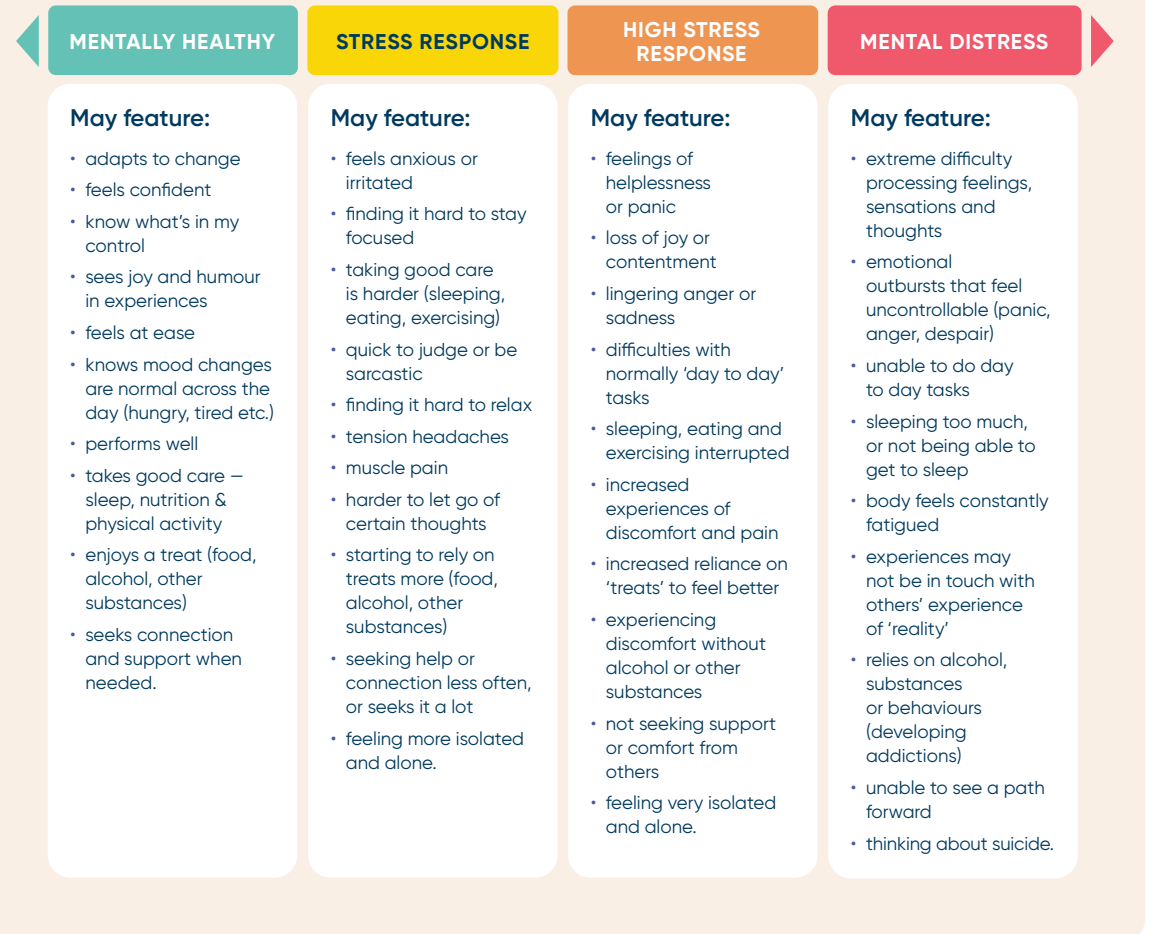
One in five workers in Australia are likely to be affected by a mental illness during any given year. There are about 2.8 million working Australians who live with diagnosed mental illness, with some needing time off work to maintain their wellbeing. A further 440,000 working Australians are carers of someone with mental ill-health.

Mental health is different from mental illness. The World Health Organization (WHO) defines mental health as “a state of wellbeing in which every person realises their own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and are able to contribute to their community.”

Mental health is not a fixed state, it can be understood by considering a continuum. Like physical health, we fluctuate and can move up and down. At one end of the mental health continuum is optimal wellbeing and being mentally healthy, while mental distress is at the other end of the continuum. The workplace is a very influential environment when it comes to mental health, where a safe and healthy working environment supports mental health and good mental health enables people to work productively.¹ Ultimately the workplace environment can nudge people back and forth along the continuum.²

THE MENTAL HEALTH CONTINUUM

Changes in Mood, Thinking, Behaviour, Social Interactions & Performance



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COSTS OF POOR MENTAL HEALTH ON WORKPLACES

\$39 billion

The economic loss due to the effects of mental ill-health on participation, absenteeism and presenteeism.³ This doesn't include staff turnover, temporary staff replacement or compensation, which would cause more financial pressure.

\$10 billion

The cost of workplace absenteeism due to mental ill health each year.

\$7 billion

The cost of presenteeism caused by mental ill-health. Presenteeism is where employees remain at work despite experiencing symptoms and are less productive.

3x more time off

Psychological injuries typically require three times more time off work than other injuries.

43% more sick days

Workplaces with poor psychological working conditions accrue 43% more sick days per month.

As with physical ill-health, the costs of mental ill-health can go beyond just the person involved, it can also affect their colleagues' productivity.

Source: Productivity Commission Inquiry report - mental health, 2020, report no. 95.



BENEFITS OF A MENTALLY HEALTHY WORKPLACE

There is a growing focus on the role workplaces can play to maintain workers mental health. Workplaces that take action to prevent and address work-related stress, support general health and wellbeing, and invest in programs to create mentally healthy workplaces can reap rewards through:

Improved communication, higher job satisfaction, and a positive work environment

Decreased staff turnover, illness and absenteeism

Reduced accidents and incidents

Improved employee and customer loyalty

Lower absenteeism

Increased productivity

Reduced compensation claims⁴

A return on investment of \$2.30 for every \$1.00 invested.

Source: thriveatwork.org.au

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MENTAL HEALTH AND LEGISLATION

It is important for every workplace to understand that they are required to manage risks from hazards, including psychological health and safety risks. *The Work Health and Safety Act 2012 (SA)* states that persons conducting a business or undertaking (PCBU) have a duty to ensure the health and safety of workers at the workplace, with health being defined as both physical and psychological health.

Workplace stressors can range from bullying, unreasonable workloads, inflexible work scheduling, to an inability to influence job-related decisions. Racial prejudice, racial discrimination and xenophobia are also stressors as 20% of Australians experience racism every year.⁵ In general, stressors can be intertwined and can be from those in the social and physical environment and/or the systems of work or management. These can all impact on employee wellbeing and reduce a person's capacity to work. Workers in specific industries, including health and social services, law enforcement, defence, and teaching are more prone to facing work-related stressors and have higher rates of poor mental health.

It is important for every workplace to understand that under the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)* and equivalent state and territory laws it is unlawful to discriminate against, harass or victimise people with disabilities or their associates – including in employment, where the term 'disability' is broadly defined. It covers mental illness: whether temporary or permanent; past, present or future, actual or imputed.⁶ Workplaces can include actions to support workers with mental illness in their healthy workplace strategy.

STRATEGIES TO ADDRESS MENTAL HEALTH AT WORK

We recommend using a three-pillar approach to address workplace mental health (protect, promote, respond). This will prevent and protect against work-related mental health risks, promote positive mental health and wellbeing, and help workers experiencing mental ill-health to participate in and thrive at work. These pillars intersect, with action in one area often leading to improvements in others.



To create a mentally healthy workplace you'll need to:

- **Protect** – Identify and manage work-related risks to mental health.
- **Promote** – Recognise and enhance the positive aspects of work that contribute to good mental health.
- **Respond** – Identify and respond to support people experiencing mental ill-health or distress and support recovery and return to work.⁷

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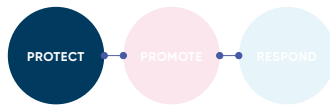
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Protect against work-related mental health conditions

Most job roles involve some degree of stress, but when workers feel that they are unable to cope with repeated stressors or there are no support mechanisms to manage the situation, stress can manifest in ways that become detrimental to the workers and the business.

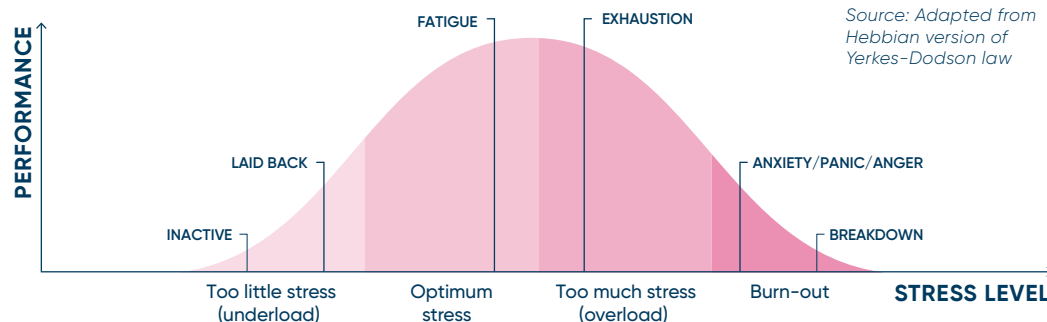
Strategies to protect workers from mental health conditions at work centre on psychosocial risk management. The [Managing psychosocial hazards at work code of practice](#) from Safe Work Australia provides practical guidance on how to achieve the standards of work health and safety required under the WHS Act and the Work Health and Safety Regulations and effective ways to identify and manage risks.

Psychosocial hazards are anything in the design or management of work that increases the risk of work-related stress and can lead to psychological or physical harm. A stress response consists of the physical, mental and emotional reactions that result when a worker perceives the demands of their work exceed their ability or resources to cope.

Stress itself is not an injury. But if workers are stressed often, over a long time, or the level of stress is high, it can cause harm.

- Psychological harm may include anxiety, depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, sleep disorders and burnout.
- Physical harm may include musculoskeletal injuries, chronic disease, or fatigue-related injuries.

The 'optimum' level of stress is not the same for everyone! Each individual will have their own relationship between stress and task performance – this is known as the Yerkes-Dodson law.⁸ It proposes that you reach your peak level of performance with an intermediate level of stress or arousal. Too little or too much arousal results in poorer performance. This shows us that performance increases with stress to a point, beyond which additional stress becomes counterproductive. Spend too long past the optimum point in the stress curve and we risk exhaustion, anxiety and eventually a breakdown and burnout.



Promote positive mental health

Workers who feel positive about the environment and culture in their workplace are more likely to perform better, contribute to employee engagement, and be more committed to the workplace. They are also less likely to experience work-related stress, sustain a psychological injury or leave the workplace.

Promoting positive mental health involves taking a strengths-based approach and focusing on the opportunities, strengths, and resources that will help to foster a healthy, positive, and supportive workplace culture. People thrive when they have:

- strong workplace connections
- meaning and purpose in work
- opportunities for personal and professional growth
- positive and supported leadership
- increased personal resources.

Mental health and wellbeing can also be improved when workers are offered opportunities to address smoking, alcohol, healthy eating, and physical activity risk factors. Adopting these healthy behaviours can improve wellbeing and resilience. Good mental health and a positive frame of mind means employees are better equipped to resist stress, tackle challenges and develop resilience.

By building on the aspects of work that help people optimise wellbeing, workplaces can function at their best too.

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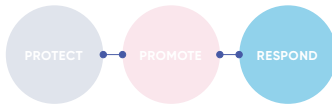
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Respond to and support workers

It is common for people to experience periods where they need additional support or flexibility because of life circumstances, caring responsibilities, or mental ill-health. Key characteristics of a mentally healthy workplace include established workplace systems and processes to intervene early, respond and provide support when a worker begins to show signs of distress.

Workplaces can help by building their capability to respond and support people who are experiencing mental ill-health or distress. Creating an environment that reduces stigma, makes it safe to talk, supports early intervention and suicide prevention, and ensures people can recognise, respond and refer will lead to a win-win situation for individuals, organisations, businesses and communities.⁹

ACTIONS YOU CAN TAKE TO CREATE A MENTALLY-HEALTHY WORKPLACE

Healthy place – create a workspace environment that supports positive mental health

- Consider the physical working environment at all worksite types, whether that be a home, vehicle, office or factory. When workers feel comfortable and calm in their physical work settings they produce their best work.
- Regularly assess environmental conditions include hazardous manual tasks, poor air quality, high noise levels, extreme temperature, working near unsafe machinery, cramped workspace, vibration, poor lighting, temperature, and humidity.
- Consider creating a designated support room or a relaxation zone where people can have private conversations.

Healthy vision – create policies, practices and a workplace culture that promotes positive mental health

Protect

- Foster a culture that promotes psychological safety.
- Create systems for workers to raise concerns at work without negative consequences. Make sure these systems are designed with worker safety in mind.
- Apply a risk management approach to identify the hazards, assess the risk, control risk, and review the measures to ensure they are working, in meaningful consultation with workers.
- Conduct a psychosocial risk assessment. You can use the free People at Work survey (peopleatwork.gov.au).
- Apply proactive and systematic approaches to address bullying, harassment and discrimination, and develop and support a procedure to address conflict, grievances and critical incidents in the workplace.
- Create reasonable job demands and manage staffing levels to ensure that adequate resources are available to meet workload requirements during times of high demand. Make sure that rosters are fair and provide adequate rest and recovery periods for shift workers.
- Develop appropriate policies and procedures to prevent and respond to occupational violence trauma in the workplace.
- Ensure employees are supported and well-informed during times of organisational change.
- Define job roles well and make sure employees clearly understand their roles and responsibilities.
- Create opportunities for people to shape their work using strategies like job crafting.

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●	Conduct regular performance reviews and give workers the opportunity to discuss psychological hazards and have input into the way they do their work.
●	Recognise individual and team contributions and achievements with praise and recognition.
●	Provide a workplace culture that supports open communication so workers feel comfortable to discuss issues.
●	Encourage positive interactions based on trust, respect, and civility.
●	Provide flexible work and leave arrangements.

Promote

●	Provide opportunities for personal and professional development, career progression and lifelong learning.
●	Model good work-life balance and self-care to others in the workplace. Positive leaders create positive work environments.
●	Use recruitment methods that assess personal competencies relevant to the position to ensure job-person fit.
●	Provide opportunities for workers to build positive working relationships.
●	Recognise and celebrate diversity and inclusion and reduce discrimination.
●	Create a culture that encourages taking lunch breaks and other breaks as awarded in your sector.

Respond

●	Respond appropriately to mental ill-health in the workplace according to legislated duties ranging from workers compensation, discrimination, privacy, and workplace relations. You can use the Guide to Workers with Mental Illness: a Practical Guide for Managers from the Australian Human Rights Commission as a reference.
●	Provide reasonable adjustments to support people experiencing mental ill-health.
●	Create an environment that reduces stigma, makes it safe to talk about mental health, and supports early intervention.
●	Understand how to manage disclosure.
●	Provide an effective flexible work and return-to-work process to support recovery.

Healthy people – strategies to promote and support mental health within the workplace

Protect

●	Make sure that workers understand their responsibilities relating to psychological safety in the workplace.
●	Involve workers and make sure you consult and communicate with workers and their representatives to increase psychological safety and identify and manage work-related stressors.
●	Provide effective training and supervision across the organisation on psychological safety and ways to minimise harm of psychosocial hazards.

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●	Provide information, instruction, and training on expected workplace behaviour and conduct, including all relevant policies and procedures (to prevent bullying, harassment, racism, and violence at work).
●	Ask managers to assess whether they have identified the behaviours that effectively prevent and reduce stress at work. Help managers reflect on their behaviour and management style. You can use the line manager competency indicator tool at hse.gov.uk .
●	Provide coaching, mentoring, and/or training to build supportive and capable managers. When managers can be respectful, responsible, manage and communicate existing and future work, manage the team, and manage difficult situations, they can reduce work-related stress and promote positive mental health.

Promote

●	Support mental health first aid and suicide prevention awareness training.
●	Provide employees with information and education on evidence-based strategies that can enhance positive mental health (e.g. resilience, mindfulness, meditation).
●	Promote the principles in the Five Ways to Wellbeing. ¹⁰ These are easy ways to think about how you can create good mental wellbeing.
●	Engage workers in co-design to support ways of working that will help them reach their potential.
●	Provide seminars or workshops on financial planning, stress reduction techniques, organisation and time management, and improving sleep and reducing fatigue.
●	Include a regularly updated social calendar and volunteering opportunities in staff induction materials along with other relevant wellbeing policy and information.

●	Leave a list of referral sources and information in staff rooms, newsletters, emails and/or on the intranet to raise awareness of the mental health support available.
●	Celebrate cultural and gender diversity through participating in relevant activities

Respond

●	Promote mental health support services. This may include employee assistance programs as an option to confidentially discuss any concerns.
●	Provide information, education, and training to recognise and respond to the signs of mental ill health and distress and discuss methods of supporting others in distress.
●	Consider implementing a peer support program.
●	Promote and provide research-supported early intervention initiatives.
●	Take an individual-focused approach to recovery.
●	Promote help seeking and pathways to treatment.

MORE RESOURCES TO HELP YOU TAKE ACTION:

Healthy workplaces has easy to navigate resources with links to all the relevant websites. Search for the Mental Health Referral Guide at healthyworkplaces.sa.gov.au

SafeWork SA information on mental health and psychosocial hazards as does Safe Work Australia. safework.sa.gov.au and safeworkaustralia.gov.au

The National Workplace Initiative has produced a series of resources to support mental health at work. mentalhealthcommission.gov.au

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Create incentives and rewards

Now that you've created your action plans and are working towards creating a healthy workplace, it's important to keep your workers' momentum going.

Incentives rewards and recognition can motivate people that participate in workplace health and wellbeing activities, provide purpose behind behaviour change, reinforce positive values-based behaviour, role model a healthy workplace, and perhaps provide a little friendly competition between people or teams. Research has shown that programs offering rewards and incentives have stronger participant involvement and a greater number of sustained health behaviour changes.

If you are offering incentives or rewards, think about how you will:

- gain management approval to use program funds
- decide who will receive the rewards. Will all attendees be rewarded or only dedicated 'active' participants?
- allocate incentives or rewards. Will they be required for all activities and events or only a selection?
- communicate your expectations. Will participants have to attend 100% of sessions or is a 10% attendance rate acceptable? Are participants encouraged to submit feedback before they receive their incentive?
- recognise and reward dedicated and outstanding participants, such as event organisers and other champions.

Incentives don't necessarily need to have a large financial value attached but they should recognise people's level of involvement and contributions as well as celebrate significant milestones. If you're considering a financial reward, set incentives at a level desirable to the wider employee group.

Rewards such as refunds or suitable cash incentives may be challenging to set to a wide range of employees and income levels. Your incentive budget might be better spent on activities, merchandise or something that benefits the worksite for all employees.

LOW OR NO COST INCENTIVES

- **Recognition of participation:** Provide regular progress updates to workers about plans, progress and achievements, set up a noticeboard highlighting involvement, include efforts in newsletters and look for ways of announcing involvement.
- **Monthly lucky draw or lunchtime prizes** for program participants.
- **Celebration event (formal or informal)** Individual participation certificates could be printed and distributed.
- **Guest speakers:** Does a staff member know a guest speaker who could come and talk to the workplace, like a local sports person or a motivated community or business leader?
- **Merchandise:** Do you have access to freebies such as industry specific merchandise or regularly get invitations to industry/sporting/arts events that are highly regarded by employees?
- **Fruit package:** Provide a weekly or fortnightly fruit package to a winning team or, even better, to all staff based on participation targets. Alternatives could include small value local grocer or butcher vouchers to put towards weekly food shopping.
- **Local events:** Negotiate with local sporting clubs or community halls for sole use of the venue on a given day – run a fun exercise activity or host an engaging seminar.

MODERATE COST INCENTIVES

- **Events:** Host an event that includes employees' families such as sports day or a picnic. This could be used to celebrate the end of a project milestone.
 - **Subsidies:** Think about subsidising health and wellbeing equipment and activities like sporting equipment (e.g. bikes, running shoes) or gym and club memberships.
 - **Exclusive access:** Invite participants to industry specific forums or workshops that only a small number of people can attend like leader's breakfasts and conference workshops.
 - **Tickets:** Sporting, theatre or festival tickets can be a great reward.
 - **Prizes:** Considers prizes like sportswear vouchers, cooking courses, local fruit and vegetable store vouchers, local gardening store vouchers, health-oriented magazine subscriptions or charity donations.
- Remember though, that there's more to participation than prizes. When people participate in workplace health and wellbeing programs they will:
- improve their health
 - contribute to positive changes in the workplace environment and culture
 - get to know fellow employees and have fun!

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How to choose an external provider

External providers can help you to deliver your health and wellbeing strategy. Providers can tailor their services to different sectors or workplaces and can facilitate information sessions, conduct health assessments, organise workshops or develop your program goals.

If you need an external provider to run elements of your health and wellbeing strategy, it's important to make sure you find the right people for the job who can offer a high-quality service. Service providers will be responsible for nurturing a positive, healthy culture within your workplace, so they must bring the necessary skills and right attitude.

Key questions to ask your service provider

Can you provide the services we need?

Make sure you brief the provider well. Be clear about the services you require and your budget. Outline your specific expectations, performance indicators and timing based on the goals of your program.

Are you accredited and do you have the necessary qualifications?

Ask for evidence of appropriate skills and training. Most professionals also belong to a professional body that requires ongoing accreditation or registration. This helps to make sure that professionals maintain their skills and knowledge.

Is your course accredited?

If you're engaging a service provider to deliver learning modules or training courses, it's important to know if the course is accredited. Accredited courses guarantee quality of information and can help your staff reach professional development goals. Where possible and relevant, look for a course that is accredited through a registered training provider.

Are your services based on sound and healthy practices?

You have a responsibility to provide a safe, quality workplace health program or activities. Avoid fad or gimmick ideas and stick with subjects containing quality evidence.

Can you provide all necessary liability insurance documents?

Make sure your provider holds the required professional indemnity/ liability insurances and that you have prepared appropriate risk management strategies.

Will you use safe, quality equipment?

Seek assurance and evidence. Ask prospective providers if the equipment will be covered by their liability insurance or yours.

How will you support participants with a high health risk?

The contracted organisation should have skills and ability to recognise and mitigate not only participation risk but also advise on available health interventions for those at risk of, or with, health conditions. On a practical level, this might mean first aid qualifications, participation clearances or pre-participation health assessments, and referrals to quality health services when a need is identified.

How will you maintain participant privacy and confidentiality?

Ask for assurance and evidence. The provider should possess and deploy a comprehensive privacy policy.

What information will we receive after you've provided the service?

It is important that you are clear from the start what reporting requirements you want your provider to meet. Ask for a comprehensive report and analysis of any data collected.

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Track your progress

Congratulations! You've reached the end of Step 4 and got your healthy workplace program up and running.

You can chart your progress in the table below and go back through the toolkit to complete any actions you might have missed.



CHECKLIST	SMALL BUSINESS (20 employees or less)	MEDIUM TO LARGE BUSINESS
Priorities have been determined through a needs assessment and your team has been involved (see Step 2 and Step 3)		
An action plan is in place for your identified priorities		
Actions in the plan include a mix of people activities, policy and practice changes, and environmental changes		
Selected actions are resourced appropriately		
Monitoring and evaluation has been considered (see Step 5).		
Management has endorsed the action plan		
Workplace champions are prepared for activities (if applicable)	-	
Activities have been communicated and promoted (see Step 3)		

If you've checked all the boxes you need, it's time to move on to Step 5: Monitor and evaluate.



Step 5: Monitor and evaluate

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IN THIS SECTION YOU'LL LEARN HOW TO:

- ✓ Use different types of evaluation methods
- ✓ Monitor your program
- ✓ Evaluate the impact of your work
- ✓ Collect good data

Once you've got a workplace health and wellbeing strategy in place, it's important to find out how well it's running. How (and how much) you'll monitor and evaluate will depend on the size of your workplace and the complexity of your strategy.

Although monitoring and evaluation sits at the end of the program management cycle, it actually takes place at every stage.

You've already been incorporating methods of data collection which are used in monitoring and evaluation in Steps 2 and 3. Table 2 (p. 69) indicates at what stage monitoring and evaluation occurs in each of the steps.



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Table 2

MONITORING AND EVALUATION THROUGHOUT THE PROGRAM MANAGEMENT CYCLE		
When	Description	Data sources
STEP 2 Learn	Gather baseline data to understand the current situation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Organisational data – e.g. injury claims, absenteeism rates, turnover data, staff satisfaction/engagement data• Healthy workplace check• Worker interests survey
STEP 3 Involve	Collect and collate information during consultations with workers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Consultation feedback• Health and safety committee meeting minutes
STEP 4 Plan	Ongoing monitoring of the intervention (process evaluation).	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Participation rates• Satisfaction surveys• Observations, including changes to the workplace environment, work structures, and worker behaviour• Process evaluation questions
STEP 5 Evaluate	Review the data collected in the planning phase and make a comparison. Analyse the data and make recommendations for future interventions or improvements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Organisational data• Healthy workplace check• Worker interests survey• Focus groups to understand why the intervention or change process did or didn't work



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Why evaluate?

Monitoring and evaluation does not need to be complicated.

It closes the loop in the healthy workplace journey (p. 12) and will help you understand if your strategy:

- captured the needs of your workers
- achieved your goals, objectives and strategies
- was efficient and effective
- led to successful action
- could be improved for the future.

When you maintain the appropriate records and complete evaluation you can:

- make reporting to management and other key people much easier
- share success and keep everyone informed and up-to-date
- maintain the momentum of the program when other priorities arise
- prepare for any unexpected issues such as injury, damage to infrastructure, or cost blowouts
- have a foundation to plan for the future
- see the outcomes of your hard work.

TYPES OF EVALUATION

Process evaluation

Involves measuring how a program or activity is implemented in order to control, ensure or improve the quality of delivery. The goal is to discover how employees felt about the program, if they attended, why they attended and if they did not attend, then why?

Impact evaluation

Focuses on the immediate observable effects of a program leading to intended outcomes. Variables include employees' behaviour and risk factors, as well as tracking incidents and injury trends. Impact evaluations also look at cause and effect. That is, are the changes that occurred attributed to the program that was implemented?

Monitor your program (process evaluation)

It's important to monitor the strategies you're using while your healthy workplace plan is in action.

This process (process evaluation) can be completed by keeping good records, just as you would for any project taking place in the workplace.

We've created an **Activity and event log template** to help you capture all the details you'll need to monitor your programs and help plan for the future. Here is a list of common process evaluation metrics that you can incorporate into your monitoring program.

PROCESS EVALUATION METRICS

Program promotion

- Where did they first hear about the program? (include all channels of promotion: email, colleague, flyer)
- What first attracted them to the program? (speaker, topic, general interest in health and wellness)

Program

- Participation rates
- Was the day of the week convenient?
- Was the time of day convenient?
- Were they interested in the topic?
- Was the topic relevant to them?
- Was the topic relevant to a family member/friend?
- Will they make personal changes based on what they learned?

Speaker

- How would they rate the speaker/program coordinator?
- Was the speaker/program coordinator knowledgeable/expert on the topic?

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Evaluate the impact

Once your strategy has been implemented, it's important to evaluate and review whether it has helped you achieve your goals and objectives.

Impact evaluation will help you to determine the value or success of your strategy and guide improvements. Some changes will take longer than others, so it is useful to evaluate every 12 months.

Has your program:

- shown continual improvement or has the quality of individual projects improved? *Could you do it better?*
- changed the attitude, behaviour, knowledge or skill of participants? *Was it effective?*
- shifted the culture, morale and satisfaction level within the workplace? *Has the program contributed to improved workplace relationships and a healthy culture?*
- led to sustained changes in people's health, in particular program participants? *Has the program influenced participant health outcomes?*
- delivered a return on investment? *Did the business get value for money?*

You can use the results of your evaluation to:

- motivate and re-energise people by celebrating their successes
- reward management for their support and leadership
- seek further funding for your program.

As the complexity and size of your health and wellbeing strategy grows, evaluation will be more resource intensive. If you don't have the time or skills to analyse your findings, think about allocating funds to outsource the work. Once again, consult with management and other key members of staff to consider the essential evaluation elements, and those that can simply be monitored, against your action plan.

Collect good data

The objectives you created during Step 4 (p. 30) will be your foundation for evaluation. These should give you the best indication of potential data sources. You don't have to set indicators or collect data on objectives unless it serves a purpose.

When you're evaluating program effectiveness and impact, look for well-maintained data sources that are robust enough to demonstrate the proposed indicator. Note that in some instances it will take some time to measure demonstrable change.

Make sure you use a mix of qualitative (feedback, comments and observations) and quantitative (numerical) data and use indicators and data from the three healthy workplaces model areas of vision, places, and people.

Think about including new and unique data sources, such as dedicated surveys or focus groups, but don't discount sources that already exist such as mandatory WHS monitoring, business practice and productivity data, health records, and pre-existing staff feedback.

Other long-term indicators which can be measured include sick leave, injury statistics, productivity, employee engagement and morale, improvements to supportive environments, and or/policy. Just remember to take a baseline measurement of these indicators before implementing your program.

We've prepared a **Monitoring and evaluation quick guide** to help you work out what tools might be right for you at different stages of your program. Getting started is that easy!

MORE RESOURCES TO HELP YOU TAKE ACTION:

Healthy workplace check
healthyworkplaces.sa.gov.au

Worker interests survey | [PDF](#)

Activity and event log template | [PDF](#)

Monitoring and evaluation quick guide | [PDF](#)

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Track your progress

Congratulations! You've reached the end of Step 5.

You are now across all of your options for monitoring and evaluating your health and wellbeing program.

You can chart your progress in the table below and go back through the toolkit to complete any actions you might have missed.

STEP 5 RESOURCES:

Healthy workplace check
healthyworkplaces.sa.gov.au

Worker interests survey | [PDF](#)

Activity and event log template | [PDF](#)

Monitoring and evaluation quick guide | [PDF](#)



CHECKLIST

SMALL BUSINESS

(20 employees or less)

MEDIUM TO LARGE BUSINESS

Planned activities have been continuously recorded and monitored	-	
Ongoing feedback has been sought from staff		
Successes and challenges are reflected on regularly	-	
The healthy workplace check from Step 2 has been repeated after 12 months to assess change		
A regular feedback loop is in place to stakeholders and management	-	

If you've checked all the boxes you need, it's time to move on to Step 6: Celebrate your achievements and recommit.



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Step 6: Celebrate your achievements and recommit

Congratulations! You've worked your way through the healthy workplaces toolkit and created a health and wellbeing plan for your workplace.

It's time to celebrate your efforts and the dedication and energy of people running your programs and activities. You can use some of the incentives outlined in Step 4 (p. 30) to help you celebrate your achievements.

Take a look at the checklists on the next page to see how far you've come. Are there any steps you've missed or action areas you'd like to revisit? Creating a healthy, safe, and thriving workplace is an ongoing process (p. 8) and you'll discover different ways to improve your workplace every time you dive into the toolkit. Recommit to the healthy workplace journey and you'll see the benefits continue to evolve.



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Master Checklist

STEP 1: GET WORKPLACE LEADERS TO COMMIT	SMALL BUSINESS (UP TO 20)	MEDIUM TO LARGE BUSINESS (20+)
Senior leaders are on board	–	
Managers have agreed to business case proposal	–	
Leadership commitment is documented		
Resources are allocated to the strategy		
STEP 2: LEARN ABOUT YOUR WORKPLACE	SMALL BUSINESS (UP TO 20)	MEDIUM TO LARGE BUSINESS (20+)
The information collection approach has been planned		
A workplace needs assessment has been completed	–	
A worker needs assessment had been completed		
Priorities from the workplace level assessment and worker level assessment have been identified		
Privacy and confidentiality has been maintained		

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STEP 3: INVOLVE YOUR TEAM	SMALL BUSINESS (UP TO 20)	MEDIUM TO LARGE BUSINESS (20+)
Your team has been consulted		
A Health and Wellbeing Committee has been established	–	
Wellbeing champions have been selected	–	
Health topics have been placed on meeting agendas		
A communication and promotion mechanism for your team has been established	–	
Your team was involved in identifying 2–5 priorities		
STEP 4: PLAN AND ACT	SMALL BUSINESS (UP TO 20)	MEDIUM TO LARGE BUSINESS (20+)
Priorities have been determined through a needs assessment and your team has been involved		
An action plan is in place for your identified priorities		
Actions in the plan include a mix of people activities, policy and practice changes, and environmental changes		
Selected actions are resourced appropriately		
Monitoring and evaluation has been considered		
Management has endorsed the action plan		
Workplace champions are prepared for activities (if applicable)	–	
Activities have been communicated and promoted		

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STEP 5: MONITOR AND EVALUATE	SMALL BUSINESS (UP TO 20)	MEDIUM TO LARGE BUSINESS (20+)
Planned activities have been continuously recorded and monitored	–	
Ongoing feedback has been sought from staff		
Successes and challenges are reflected on regularly	–	
The healthy workplace check from Step 2 has been repeated after 12 months to assess change		
A regular feedback loop is in place to stakeholders and management	–	

