

**Healthier
Work.**



Workplace Engagement

June 2023



**ACT
Government**

What is workplace engagement?

It's about building a positive culture to be proud of.

Foster positive organisational values, beliefs, behaviours, goals, attitudes and work practices. Communicate your expectations and encourage collaborative relationships. Recognise employees who show positive behaviours in line with your culture. Provide wellbeing activities to boost employee engagement and create meaningful connections. Promote healthy practices so employees can pursue better physical and mental health at work and in their own time. Understand the dynamics of your team by talking about recent events or challenges. Manage change well by listening, refining and empowering new ways of thinking.

Become a healthier workplace

This information sheet is designed to explain how to build your workplace engagement in a practical way, offering a variety of strategies and actions you can take to achieve a healthier workplace. The breadth of options is extensive. Not all suggested activities will be relevant to your workplace, but it's important to cover workplace engagement deficiencies identified in your Gap Assessment Report.

Suggested actions and strategies listed in the following pages are labelled with icons to show what aspects of healthier work they address.

Take an integrated approach



Protect

Prevent and minimise physical and psychological harm



Support

Provide services, interventions and resources



Promote

Build a positive and meaningful health culture

Look at complete health



Physical

Create physically safe environments



Mental

Create psychologically safe environments



Place

Make your workplace safe and healthy



People

Build awareness of healthy behaviours



What you can do (actions and strategies)

Fairness and equity

Manage change transparently and ask employees to provide input. Offer conflict resolution options.

PROTECT	SUPPORT	PROMOTE	PHYSICAL	MENTAL	PLACE	PEOPLE
Offer formal and informal options for the safe, confidential reporting of inappropriate behaviour.		 				
If an employee feels a process was unfair, such as a recruitment or promotion, give them a way to appeal the result of a process.		 				
Give all employees equal and fair access to rewards, recognition, development and advancement opportunities. Make sure policies and processes are followed at all levels and outcomes are transparent.			 			
Create systems for resolving conflict in the workplace and tell employees about them.		 				
When investigating issues of misconduct, give all parties equal opportunity to respond to allegations.			 			
Provide equal access to relevant training programs.			 			



Communication and consultation

Offer clear and ongoing collaborative communication with workers at all levels.

	PROTECT	SUPPORT	PROMOTE	PHYSICAL	MENTAL	PLACE	PEOPLE
Tell your employees about how and why decisions are made. If possible, seek their input to decision-making while also providing feedback about what ideas could and couldn't be taken on board.				  			
Give employees opportunities to be involved in planning change to encourage uptake and ownership.				 			
Encourage feedback and participation in consultation processes.				  			
Communicate through an agreed system (such as email or meetings) so employees are kept up to date with accurate information (to avoid rumours).			   				
Use a variety of strategies when communicating or consulting about change, such focus groups, email/survey or a meeting, as people have different preferences.				 			
Provide a reason for a change in policy or procedure, including background and aims, so employees understand the decision-making process.				 			
Communicate business plans to all employees and explain how the plans connect to individual work.			   				
Talk to employees before making changes to their role or responsibilities.				 			
Talk to employees about shift rosters before rosters are created.			   				
Talk with employees when developing performance monitoring systems.			   				
Offer a way for employees to have input into broader organisational issues (such as a suggestion scheme/box).			  				



Communication and consultation (cont.)

Offer clear and ongoing collaborative communication with workers at all levels.

PROTECT	SUPPORT	PROMOTE	PHYSICAL	MENTAL	PLACE	PEOPLE
Display mental health information posters in lunchrooms, public areas and notice boards that support your policies and work practices. Use lived experience examples to help reduce the stigma of mental illness.						
Communicate the objectives, outcomes and timeframes for any proposed changes.						
Encourage employees to talk to their supervisor or manager early if they are unclear about the scope or responsibilities of their job role.						
Make sure meetings are cancelled or rescheduled within a reasonable timeframe.						
Avoid back-to-back meeting bookings.						
Don't plan meetings during lunch or break times. Ask employees to set break times in their calendar so these are visible to others booking meetings.						
Create clear communication policies so employees understand work-related communication expectations while they're at work, on a break or outside of work hours.						
Create a dedicated information and resource sharing system for the entire organisation in an effort to reduce duplication and share ideas.						
Hold formal and informal team building activities to improve team cohesion.						
Hold regular team meetings or debrief sessions where employees can share concerns and engage in collaborative problem solving.						
Hold regular team meetings to discuss any work pressures or challenges and encourage employees to come up with practical solutions.						



Communication and consultation (cont.)

Offer clear and ongoing collaborative communication with workers at all levels.

PROTECT	SUPPORT	PROMOTE	PHYSICAL	MENTAL	PLACE	PEOPLE
Talk to employees when developing policies or systems for performance monitoring.		  				
Encourage 'no eating at desk' and other initiatives to get people away from their desks for a break.		   				
If employees are being impacted by a procedure, listen to all concerns and allow employees to request information or clarification if needed.		  				
Make sure workplace communications are easy to digest and accessible to all employees.		  				
Give employees the time to talk through problems and encourage an 'open door' policy.		 				
Set up an online portal so employees can easily access policies and other workplace information.		 				
Encourage open communication, including sharing concerns about work-related stressors early.		  				
Use open communication during times of change. Be upfront about any significant adjustments that will follow change (for example, a restructure or the need to re-train workers).		 				
Ask senior leaders to promote the employee assistance program and share practical examples of how services can be used.		  				



Recognition

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Provide recognition to those employees who demonstrate positive behaviours.

PROTECT	SUPPORT	PROMOTE	PHYSICAL	MENTAL	PLACE	PEOPLE
When a job has been done well, congratulate individual employees or the team involved. Be specific about what was achieved and provide a formal or informal reward, such as a 'thank you' or 'great work' affirmation, or a gift certificate or bonus.						
Implement a rewards program for employee or team contributions to the organisation's goals.						
Recognise or celebrate exceptional efforts of those supporting a healthier work environment, such as a free healthy barbecue or acknowledgement email to all staff.						
Make sure your Workplace Recognition Program is communicated to all employees and that everyone has an opportunity to benefit from it.						
When rewarding teams for accomplishments, recognise each member of the team for their contribution to team goals.						
Provide rewards that reinforce teamwork (for example, a team dinner or a team trip) and make sure all team members who contributed to the project or task have equal access to the reward.						
Recognise and reward employees for their ingenuity or effort, not just for their contribution or productivity.						
Clarify the objectives and intent of your incentive-based scheme with all employees. Keep decision criteria for rewards simple, fair and equitable, and make rewards achievable with realistic effort.						



Relationships

Encourage a culture of collaboration, respect and support.

PROTECT	SUPPORT	PROMOTE	PHYSICAL	MENTAL	PLACE	PEOPLE
Drive honest, open communication at all levels to create a culture of trust and encouragement.						
Promote educational opportunities and information on positive workplace relationships.						
Encourage employees to check-in with each other throughout the day, either in person or online.						
Get managers to have regular one-on-one meetings with employees to discuss workplace health and wellbeing.						
Give employees opportunities to raise issues or share concerns about work-related conflict early. Encourage open communication and provide a pathway for restoring effective working relationships.						
Have team building days with activities about what positive relationships look like.						
Identify clear reporting lines and roles in your organisational chart and make it easily accessible to all employees.						
Promote a team culture where employees help each other and offer support when needed.						
Encourage friendly and personable behaviour in the workplace while being respectful of personal and professional boundaries.						
Give new employees opportunities to interact with their colleagues.						
Use risk management tools that support a work environment that is free from bullying, harassment, and violence, and minimises interpersonal conflict.						



Wellbeing

Build trust and loyalty through social team interactions. Encourage healthy individual behaviours.

PROTECT	SUPPORT	PROMOTE	PHYSICAL	MENTAL	PLACE	PEOPLE
Create a yearly wellbeing calendar based on employee suggestions and public initiatives such as Movember, Dry July and National Mental Health Week.			   			
Provide multiple options (face to face, virtual and self-directed) for presentations or guest speakers on topics such as positive relationships, signs and effects of stress, financial planning or gambling harm.			   			
Create time for social interactions, shared experiences or check-ins, such as during team meetings.			   			
Offer initiatives that are relevant to your employees, such as physical activities for sedentary roles or sleep strategies for shift workers.			   			
Provide details of physical activity opportunities through your intranet or newsletters.			   			
Set up a physical or digital information resource that provides employees and visitors access to active travel information such as local cycling maps and public transport timetables for frequently used services.			  			
Arrange themed days at work such as activewear day, pyjama day or sports jersey day.			  			
Circulate information such as brochures, fact sheets, intranet links and posters that promote positive mental health.			  			
Offer workplace quit smoking programs to employee families or households.			   			
Offer peer support groups for employees who are trying to cut down, quit smoking or stay smoke-free.			   			



Wellbeing (cont.)

Build trust and loyalty through social team interactions. Encourage healthy individual behaviours.

	PROTECT	SUPPORT	PROMOTE	PHYSICAL	MENTAL	PLACE	PEOPLE
Offer workplace challenges that promote healthy behaviours, such as eat well for a week, try a different fruit or vegetable every day, or step goals.				  			
Display quit smoking resources in tea rooms, foyers, hallways or waiting areas to promote a smoke-free workplace. Update your knowledge about ACT tobacco laws and display no-smoking signs where it's illegal to smoke.				 			
Encourage teams to have 'walking meetings' or 'stand up' meetings.							
Establish a health and wellbeing reimbursement program.				   			
Set up a recipe exchange club or create a healthy recipe book with employee contributions.				  			
Create a formal partnership with a charitable organisation.				   			
Get involved with corporate volunteering and consider if it can be done within paid hours. Partner with a not-for-profit organisation and set clear goals and expectations for participation.				  			
Host cooking demonstrations and tastings of healthy options.				  			
Offer healthy options in your canteen or vending machines. Get advice from a nutritionist.				   			
Introduce corporate social responsibility initiatives such as providing e-bikes for travel or free bus cards paid for by the organisation.				   			



Wellbeing (cont.)

Build trust and loyalty through social team interactions. Encourage healthy individual behaviours.

PROTECT	SUPPORT	PROMOTE	PHYSICAL	MENTAL	PLACE	PEOPLE
Offer walking groups and other group activities that meet before, during or after work.						
Offer positive psychology resources that employees can self-select that promote personal thriving and nurture strengths, such as mindfulness, yoga, goal setting and reflection.						
Organise a corporate rate at the local gym.						
Offer a seminar or Q&A with a qualified dietitian or nutritionist.						
Organise a walking challenge by using existing programs and apps such as Heart Foundation Walking or Conqueror.						
Organise a corporate team for events such as fun runs/walks.						
Organise social functions within the workplace for employees and their families to help build social networks.						
Organise talks and seminars about ways to become more physically active.						
Promote information about local recreation and community clubs and activities such as book clubs, sporting clubs, walking groups, art and craft groups, relaxation and yoga classes. Use email, your intranet or website/s, noticeboards and newsletters to encourage employees to participate. Ask employees what they want promoted.						
Promote physical activity with incentives, such as reimbursements or allowing employees to exercise during work hours.						
Promote nearby healthy food operators that offer nutritious options at reasonable prices.						



Wellbeing (cont.)

Build trust and loyalty through social team interactions. Encourage healthy individual behaviours.

	PROTECT	SUPPORT	PROMOTE	PHYSICAL	MENTAL	PLACE	PEOPLE
Provide information and resources about responsible alcohol use.							
Organise access to physical activity classes such as yoga, Pilates and swimming (free, partially-subsidised or user pays).							
Provide paid and unpaid volunteering opportunities with organisations that connect with your organisation's purpose.							
Register your business for health and wellbeing apps that encourage employees to follow health and wellbeing strategies or participate in activities.							
Support a workplace 'lunch club' where interested employees can contribute and share the cost of lunches. Or hold a 'let's do lunch' meeting where everyone brings a healthy dish to share.							



Tools and resources

Templates

- » How to build a healthier work team
- » Healthier Work achievement/plan template
- » Healthier Work Gap Assessment Survey
- » Health and Wellbeing Policy Template

Helpful resources

Find resources and information relating to workplace health, safety and wellbeing recommended by Healthier Work. Use the Resource Finder or go directly to resources relating to workplace categories.

- » **Resource Finder** – search for resources by topic, subtopic, type and industry
- » **Work Design** – Recommended resources that address Work Design
- » **Work Environment** - Recommended resources that address the Work Environment
- » **Workforce Capability** - Recommended resources that address Workforce Capability
- » **Workplace Engagement** - Recommended resources that address Workplace Engagement
- » **Workplace Support** - Recommended resources that address Workplace Support
- » **Workplace leadership** - Recommended resources that address Workplace Leadership
- » **Healthier Work Booklet** - Learn more about the Healthier Work program

Get help

The Healthier Work Program is a free ACT Government initiative for Canberra businesses. Get in touch to ask a question or organise a free site visit from our Healthier Work team.

All category worksheets in this series



Work Design



Work Environment



Workforce Capability



Workplace Engagement



Workplace Support



Workplace Leadership





Healthier Places. Healthier People. Healthier Work.



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For further assistance, please
contact the Healthier Work team.

Healthier Work, GPO Box 158, Canberra City,
ACT 2601 or email: healthierwork@act.gov.au
www.healthierwork.act.gov.au | www.act.gov.au