

**Healthier
Work.**



Workplace Support

June 2023



What is workplace support?

It's about supporting your people, especially in challenging times.

When an employee is injured or unwell, they need to know they're supported to recover and get back to work. Instil clear processes for supporting your people. Regularly check in with them. Let them know that there are ways to access temporary or longer-term support or variations to their job to suit their current health issues. Create options for reasonable adjustments, flexible work hours or work-from-home options. Seek external support services for your injured or unwell employees sooner rather than later.

Become a healthier workplace

This information sheet is designed to explain how to build your workplace support 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 support 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)

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Work adjustments

Be open to changes or supports that can be put in place to keep people working when they face health issues.

PROTECT	SUPPORT	PROMOTE	PHYSICAL	MENTAL	PLACE	PEOPLE
Keep your employees working when they have a health condition (in line with medical advice) by allowing flexible work arrangements, reduced hours or changes to duties.		   				
Modify an employee's tasks to meet their current capacity, while still enabling them to use skills relevant to the role.		   				
When it is appropriate, provide returning employees with a modified physical environment to accommodate their recovery.		   				
Provide information in easily accessible formats for employees with a disability or from a culturally diverse background.		  				
Adjust equipment to enable employees to easily access and use equipment and technology. Implement software to assist where required (e.g. text to speech, speech recognition, screen reading, screen magnification).		 				



Response and support

Provide accessible ways for your employees to tell you when their illness or injury is affecting their work.

	PROTECT	SUPPORT	PROMOTE	PHYSICAL	MENTAL	PLACE	PEOPLE
Promote the benefits of good workplace health and wellbeing.							
Provide regular and current information about how to access support programs.							
Do regular wellbeing check-ins with employees and follow up with anyone who may need information or support.							
Encourage employees to seek help early if they are injured or have an illness.							
Develop processes for reporting an injury or illness in the workplace.							
Give employees flexible hours and time off to attend appointments with a health professional or the employee assistance program. Remind employees where they can seek advice, support or a referral.							
Give leaders training in employee assistance program services and their role in facilitating employee access to the program.							
Give training to supervisors about referral or support options for employees experiencing conflict or difficult situations.							
Set up an employee assistance program and promote the option of confidential counselling services to employees for both work and non-work issues.							
Provide ergonomic assessments to check for any strain on the musculoskeletal system.							
Provide accessible support and debriefing opportunities after an employee who has made a difficult decision or is facing negative consequences to their decision.							



Response and support (cont.)

Provide accessible ways for your employees to tell you when their illness or injury is affecting their work.

PROTECT	SUPPORT	PROMOTE	PHYSICAL	MENTAL	PLACE	PEOPLE
Offer an employee assistance program to help employees improve lifestyle-related health and wellbeing concerns (such as substance abuse, alcohol consumption, gambling, weight management, chronic disease).		 				
Regularly promote employee assistance program services online and in person.		 				
Promote telephone and online support services offered by external providers.		 				
Offer access to individual or group counselling programs both onsite and out of the office.						
Using financial incentives or subsidies, offer access to nicotine replacement therapy, such as patches or gum.		 				
If an employee is directly or indirectly involved in a traumatic event or emotionally demanding work, provide access to psychological support.			 			
Provide support for employees and managers after a critical incident or stressful event.			 			
Give employees access to support structures and resources during a change process to manage impacts.		  				
Provide information for employees who may be concerned about their alcohol use, or that of family or friends.		  				
Provide opportunities for lived experience stories to be shared safely in the workplace to destigmatise mental health concerns.						



Response and support (cont.)

Provide accessible ways for your employees to tell you when their illness or injury is affecting their work.

PROTECT	SUPPORT	PROMOTE	PHYSICAL	MENTAL	PLACE	PEOPLE
Regularly review your workplace support services (such as the employee assistance program), superannuation and insurance providers to take advantage of new health and wellbeing support services. Before implementing a new initiative or support program, see what is offered under your current contract/arrangement or discuss possible customised programs.		  				
Ask employees to complete workstation assessments regularly to assess their needs.			 			
Use induction to inform new employees of the employee assistance program and how to access services.		   				
Use mental health resources from your employee assistance program provider and internal HR/WHS to provide general or customised preventative support.		  				



Injury management

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Make access to confidential external services easy, especially for injury management and return to work programs.

PROTECT	SUPPORT	PROMOTE	PHYSICAL	MENTAL	PLACE	PEOPLE
Have a clear process for injury management with specific requirements for employees with mental health conditions.		  				
Make the employee the centre of their injury management plan. Engage with their treatment providers and workplace stakeholders.		   				
Make sure a returning employee's manager understands the return-to-work process, including providing support and checking in regularly.		   				
Involve a returning employee in their entire return-to-work process.		   				
Use the principles of good work design to create challenging and meaningful work for a returning employee.		   				
For an employee who is returning to work, carefully assess if their tasks are well designed and suitable to their needs.		   				
Check in frequently with an employee to make sure their return to work is facilitating their recovery.		   				
Create a process for reimbursing employees for medical treatment or property damage as a result of a workplace incident without needing to lodge a claim.		  				
Create an appropriate workload for a returning employee.		   				
Give a returning employee adequate job control.		   				
For employees with a mental health condition, give them the option to stay at home or return to the office.		 				



Injury management (cont.)

Make access to confidential external services easy, especially for injury management and return to work programs.

PROTECT	SUPPORT	PROMOTE	PHYSICAL	MENTAL	PLACE	PEOPLE
For employees with a physical condition, give them the option to stay at home or return to the office.						
Have conversations about supporting colleagues returning to work.						
Review data (such as sick leave, injuries, claims, staff survey results, training participation and exit surveys) to identify priority areas for workplace support and health and wellbeing initiatives.						



Flexible work

Give employees flexibility so they can continue to contribute during challenging times or changes in life.

PROTECT	SUPPORT	PROMOTE	PHYSICAL	MENTAL	PLACE	PEOPLE
Recognise work-life balance with flexible work policies that accommodate working from home, attending medical appointments or looking after family.			  	  	  	  
Give employees the IT and training needed to support flexible work arrangements.		  	  	  	  	  
Train/upskill managers to meet safety, health and wellbeing expectations when they are supervising employees who are working flexibly offsite.		  	  	  	  	  
Regularly review flexible work arrangements to make sure they continue to meet organisational and individual needs.		  	  	  	  	  
Create leave policies that promote health and wellbeing by considering work-life balance, flexible work, and encouraging employees to take leave.		  	  	  	  	  
Allow flexibility in the timing of breaks consistent with the requirements of the role.		  	  	  	  	  
Be aware of non-work-related stressors and allow flexible work arrangements where practicable.		  	  	  	  	  
Introduce flexible work options for employees to attend appointments with mental health and medical professionals.		  	  	  	  	
Provide a hybrid work environment where employees have flexibility to work in the office, at home or offsite.		  	  	  	  	



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.



ACT
Government

Healthier
Work.

For further assistance, please
contact the Healthier Work team.

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