# Workplace Wellbeing Policy

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| ***🖌Note\****  *Reduced productivity, high staff turnover, poor health and high stress levels are just some of the issues affecting today’s workplaces. Workplace wellbeing programs offer a wide range of benefits. For every dollar invested in workplace health, there is a return on investment of between three and six dollars.*  *This policy template has been developed in consultation with* [*Meredith Turnbull Coaching & Consulting*](http://meredithturnbull.com.au/)*. It is intended as a starting point to help organisations articulate their workplace wellbeing policy.*  *When developing your policy, please consider the following:*   * *All material provided is for guidance purposes only. Not all content will be relevant to your service. Please review the material in relation to your organisation’s individual circumstances and policies and edit, add and delete content to ensure relevancy.* * *Prompts have been provided in [brackets] for you to individualise the policy. Simply relace the bracketed words with the information requested.* * *All notes (including this one) should be considered and deleted before finalising the policy, and the contents list should be updated as changes are made and when content is finalised.* * *This policy contains links to other websites. The links are provided for convenience only and may not remain current or be maintained. NADA is not responsible for the content or privacy practices associated with linked websites.*   *Please see NADA Policy Toolkit User Guide for further development advice.*  *\*Please delete note before finalising this policy.* |

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| ***🖌Note\****  *To update the Contents, right click on the contents list and select ‘update field’, an option box will appear, select ‘Update entire table’ and ‘Ok’.*  *To use the contents list to skip to relevant text, use Ctlr and click to select the relevant page number.*  *\*Please delete note before finalising this policy* |

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## SECTION 1: POLICY FRAMEWORK

### 1.1 Purpose and Scope

[insert name of organisation] is committed to providing a safe, healthy and supportive workplace.

This is achieved by creating a workplace environment, culture and practices that are responsive to workplace stressors and which encourage staff to take responsibility for, and actively participate in, strategies to optimise their wellbeing and build resilience.

The purpose of this policy is to outline the organisation’s commitment to workplace wellbeing, to ensure that all work practices, the work environment and workplace culture promote, protect, and support the wellbeing and resilience of all employees.

This policy applies to all program staff, management and the Board of Directors (collectively referred to as ‘workers’ throughout the policy).

This policy does not provide detailed guidance on:

* General work health and safety or injury management – refer to the Work Health and Safety Policy and First Aid Policy.
* General human resources management – refer to Human Resources Management Policy and Staff Performance and Development Policy.

### 1.2 Definitions

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| ***🖌Note\****  *There are many different terms for describing the impact of stress and trauma on workers. Sometimes these terms are used interchangeably. It is important to differentiate between these terms as they each have distinct causes and effects which need to be managed.*   |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | |  | *Stress* | *Burnout* | *Vicarious Trauma* | *STS* | | ***Cause*** | *Work demands exceed the person’s ability and/or resources to manage and cope* | *Prolonged exposure to workplace stressors resulting in feelings of stress and frustration* | *Ongoing exposure to a variety of clients/others traumatic experiences or material* | *One or more occasions of relating to another person who has undergone a traumatic experience/s* | | ***Onset*** | *Develops over a discrete or short-term period* | *Develops over long period of time* | *Develops over extended period of time* | *Can be immediate and triggered by single exposure, and/or by ongoing exposure* | | ***Symptoms*** | *Persistent minor physical and cognitive issues, and negative emotional states. Diminished performance and unhelpful behaviours* | *Physical and emotional exhaustion, depersonalisation and reduced accomplishment* | *Permanent, pervasive change in physical, mental, character and beliefs* | *PTSD-like symptoms similar to those experienced by the client. Often share the same triggers as the client* | | ***Treatment*** | *Diagnose stressors and provide support and/or training to address causal factors* | *Adjustments to role or working conditions and/or time away from the workplace* | *Intensive trauma-informed individual therapy for the affected person* | *Intensive trauma-informed individual therapy for the affected person* |   *\*Please delete note before finalising this policy.* |

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| **Burnout** | Burnout is a specific form of psychological distress that is characterised by emotional exhaustion, de-personalisation, and reduced feelings of personal accomplishment and commitment to the profession. Burnout is caused by exposure to general workplace stressors rather than exposure to traumatic materials. |
| **Clinical Supervision** | Clinical Supervision is a formal structured alliance between two or more practitioners. The aim is to develop the practitioner’s professional functioning through an ongoing process of reflection, review and goal setting resulting in increased self-awareness and professional competence. It is distinct from administrative supervision, which is a job-task focussed process that is driven by the organisation’s policy and demands. |
| **Resilience** | Resilience is the ability to thrive in situations of high demand and ongoing pressure. It involves being able to cope with and adapt to significant challenges, difficulties and setbacks and then use these for learning and professional growth in the workplace. |
| **Secondary Traumatic Stress (STS)** | Secondary traumatic stress refers to the presence of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) symptoms that result when an individual is exposed to the firsthand trauma experiences of another. It manifests as intrusion, avoidance and hyper arousal. |
| **Self-care** | Self-care refers to activities that workers can engage in on a regular basis to reduce stress and maintain and enhance short- and longer-term wellbeing. Self-care is necessary for worker’s effectiveness in honouring their professional and personal commitments. |
| **Stress** | Work-related stress describes the physical, mental and emotional reactions of workers who perceive that their work demands exceed their abilities and/or their resources (such as time, help/support) to do the work. It occurs when they perceive they are not coping in situations where it is important to them that they cope. |
| **Vicarious trauma** | Vicarious trauma is the enduring alteration of a worker’s consciousness and sense of self as a result of cumulative exposure to another’s traumatic experiences and/or materials. It is a profound and pervasive experience that can disrupt an individual’s key beliefs about themselves, other people and the world. |
| **Wellbeing** | Wellbeing encompasses the physical, mental and emotional, social, spiritual and other aspects of one’s life that shape an overall sense of positive functioning. |
| **Workplace wellbeing** | Relates to all aspects of working life, from the quality and safety of the physical environment, to how workers feel about their work, their working environment, the climate at work and work organisation. The aim of measures for workplace wellbeing is to complement WHS measures to make sure workers are safe, healthy, satisfied and engaged at work. |
| **WHS** | Workplace Health and Safety |

### 1.3 Principles

[insert organisation name]:

* Is committed to establishing a workplace environment, culture, and practices that enhance the wellbeing and resilience of our workforce.
* Recognises that enhancing workforce wellbeing requires both an organisation-wide response, and action from individual workers.
* Recognises that wellbeing is a WHS issue and is committed to providing safe systems of work and a suitable working environment, equipment and facilities.
* Recognises that it is also the responsibility of individual workers totake reasonable care of the health and safety of themselves and others in the workplace, and actively participate in wellbeing and self-care strategies.
* Is committed to providing opportunities for workers to take responsibility for, and actively participate in, strategies to optimise their wellbeing and build resilience.

### 1.4 Outcomes

* The workplace environment, culture and practices proactively enhance workforce wellbeing and resilience.
* Workplace stressors are proactively managed.
* Staff are encouraged and supported to take responsibility for, and actively participate in strategies to optimise their wellbeing and build resilience.

### 1.5 Functions and Delegations

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| **Board of Directors** | * Endorse and ensure compliance with the Workplace Wellbeing Policy. * Ensure compliance with relevant legislation. * Model wellbeing good practice in all Board activities. |
| **Business services/**  **Management** | **CEO and Executive**   * Communicate, implement and comply with the Workplace Wellbeing Policy. * Manage and monitor compliance with relevant legislation. * Consult with staff to identify and take reasonable action to eliminate or control wellbeing risks. * Provide training and support to managers and supervisors on good management practice and WHS. * Ensure there are adequate resources available for wellbeing strategies. * Ensure ongoing monitoring and evaluation activities are occurring. * Encourage workers to practice wellbeing, self-care, and help-seeking strategies. * Model wellbeing good practice in all work activities.   **Managers and supervisors**   * Ensure good communication between management and staff, especially where procedural or organisational changes are concerned. * Ensure staff are fully trained and resourced to discharge their duties. * Ensure staff are provided with meaningful growth and development opportunities. * Monitor workloads to ensure staff are not overloaded or underutilised and take action when required. * Discourage work-related contact with staff outside of normal working hours. * Monitor working hours, breaks and overtime to ensure staff are not overworking. * Monitor leave to ensure staff are taking their full entitlement. * Attend training, as required, in good management practice and WHS. * Model wellbeing good practice in all work activities. * Be vigilant and offer additional support to staff experiencing diminished wellbeing. * Provide staff in need of assistance with information about avenues of support (e.g. EAP). * Provide employees with flexibility and support to return to work after periods of health-related absence. |
| **Program services/ Clinical** | * Understand and comply with this policy and seek clarification and support where required. * Raise any concerns with their line manager or other senior staff member. * Be proactive in managing their own health, wellbeing and self-care. * Take reasonable care to not adversely affect the health, wellbeing and safety of others in the workplace. * Participate in ongoing monitoring, prevention and maintenance processes as required. |

### 1.6 Policy Implementation

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| ***🖌Note\****  *When developing your policy, please consider the following:*   * *All staff should be given the opportunity to review and comment on the policy draft. The engagement of your staff is essential to creating a workplace wellbeing program that is inclusive and responsive to employee needs.* * *Once the policy is finalised and signed off by the Board of Directors, all employees should receive a copy. The policy should also be included in any orientation material that is given to new employees. Processes will also need to be put into place to monitor ongoing compliance with, and effectiveness of the policy, to ensure it remains useful and meaningful to those it affects and the organisation.*   *Please see NADA Policy Toolkit User Guide for further development advice.*  *\*Please delete note before finalising this policy.* |

This policy has been developed in consultation with all staff and is approved by the Board of Directors.

All staff are responsible for understanding and adhering to this policy.

Specific monitoring and support activities undertaken include:

* This policy is to be part of all worker orientation processes.
* This policy should be referenced in other relevant policies, procedures and other supporting documents to ensure that it is familiar to all staff and actively used.
* This policy will be reviewed in line with [insert organisation name]’s quality improvement program and/or relevant legislative changes.
* The implementation and evaluation of this policy will be integrated into staff performance and development activities, and its efficacy assessed via worker feedback, Exit Interviews and as part of the organisation’s quality improvement program.

1.7 Risk Management[insert organisation name] ensures that all workers are provided with wellbeing and self-care knowledge and skills, and that the implementation of these is discussed and monitored on an ongoing basis at both an individual and organisational level.

## **SECTION 2: POLICY DETAIL**

Establishing a safe, healthy and supportive workplace requires proactive management of risk and protective factors at both an individual and organisational level. [insert organisation name] will achieve this through:

* Recognition of employee and employer rights and responsibilities
* Strong and visible commitment from organisational leaders
* Ongoing planning and implementation of strategies to enhance wellbeing practices and address stressors
* Ongoing assessment and monitoring of stressors for individuals and the organisation
* Ongoing monitoring and evaluation.

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| ***🖌Note\****  *Organisational risk factors that can affect the wellbeing of workers and contribute to burnout include:*   * *Heavy workloads and limited resources* * *Demanding deadlines and targets over a sustained period of time* * *Unclear roles and responsibilities* * *Low control over how the job is carried out* * *Challenging work hours* * *High emotional, mental or physical demands* * *Lack of support from colleagues or managers* * *Bullying and harassment* * *Discrimination*   *Risk factors for vicarious trauma and secondary traumatic stress include:*   * *Anyone who has ongoing exposure to traumatised populations* * *Anyone who has ongoing exposure to direct accounts of other’s traumatic experiences*   *Risk is magnified if a worker also has:*   * *Unresolved trauma experiences* * *A high case load or work load and a high frequency of contact with trauma material* * *Limited social and psychological support* * *A perception of being professionally underprepared, undertrained or inexperienced*   *\*Please delete note before finalising this policy.* |

### 2.1 Rights and responsibilities

All employees have a right to a safe and healthy workplace environment and to perform their work without psychological and physical health risks from work-related stressors.

[insert organisation name] commits to meeting its obligations under WHS legislation to take reasonable steps to eliminate work-related stressors where possible and to minimise risks where elimination is not possible, including through:

* Provision of systems of work, including protocols and adequate staffing and skills mix, that are, so far as is reasonably practicable, safe and without risks to health caused by work-related stressors.
* Design and maintenance, so far as is reasonably practicable, of a workplace environment that is safe and without risks to health caused by work-related stressors.
* Provision to employees of information, instruction, training and supervision to enable work to be performed in a way that is safe and without risks to health caused by work-related stressors.

### 2.2 Commitment and leadership

The Board of Directors and senior management of [insert organisation name]will ensure that workplace wellbeing policy and practices are in place and will support and encourage all workers to be proactive in implementing wellbeing and self-care strategies. Organisational leaders will also demonstrate a visible commitment to the importance of wellbeing by openly role-modelling their own wellbeing and self-care practices.

Work-related stressors to be addressed include:

* Job design, such as fragmented work
* Work load and/or work pace, such as work overload, high work rate or time pressures
* Unrealistic expectations by employers or clients
* Role in the organisation, such as role conflict or uncertainty
* Work context, such as trauma exposure, and dealing with difficult behaviours
* Work scheduling, such as shift work, long working hours
* Employment status, such as insecure employment
* Physical work environment and equipment, such as lack of space, poor equipment
* Degree of control over work, such as lack of control over scheduling of work
* Organisational function and culture, such as poor management of organisational change, poor communication within the workplace
* Management of work, such as poor leadership, inadequate instruction and training.

### 2.3 Wellbeing risk and protective strategies

#### 2.3.1 Strategies for enhancing wellbeing and self-care practices

[insert organisation name]will proactively enhance worker wellbeing and self-care practices by:

* Providing new staff with a comprehensive induction and orientation that includes education and promotion of wellbeing risk and protective factors and self-care strategies.
* Consulting with staff to ensure wellbeing strategies meet the needs of the workforce as part of the organisation’s annual staff feedback survey.
* Displaying targeted wellbeing resources, including posters and brochures, throughout the workplace.
* [insert organisational strategy].
* [insert organisational strategy].
* [insert organisational strategy].

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| ***🖌Note\****  *The strategies you are able to implement will depend on the resources you have. Further examples include:*   * *Establishing and supporting a workplace wellbeing committee* * *Establishing a workplace wellbeing program targeting specific health and lifestyle behaviours e.g. smoking cessation, healthy eating, prolonged sitting, etc* * *Implementing an annual workforce wellbeing survey* * *Providing access to flexible work arrangements to enable participation in wellbeing activities* * *Promoting healthy eating at meetings/events through responsible catering practices* * *Implementing a smoke-free work environment and encouraging and supporting staff to quit smoking.*   *\*Please delete note before finalising this policy.* |

#### 2.3.2 Strategies for preventing and reducing stress and burnout

[insert organisation name]will proactively manage risk factors by:

* Ensuring all staff have an up-to-date job description and work plan.
* Ensuring all positions have variety, autonomy and opportunities for collaboration with colleagues.
* Ensuring the organisation has up-to-date policy and procedures for all organisational activities.
* Providing staff with access to, and ensuring active participation in, regular clinical and administrative supervision.
* Adjusting working arrangements and/or workload as required.
* Providing ongoing opportunities for staff to develop their skills and knowledge.
* Ensuring a safe physical and psychological working environment.
* Ensuring effective communication channels are in place for staff to provide feedback and inform organisational decisions.
* Encouraging and supporting workers to identify and manage their levels of stress by developing and implementing a self-care plan.
* Encouraging help-seeking behaviour across the organisation.
* Facilitating access to additional support (e.g. EAP) as required.
* [insert organisational strategy].
* [insert organisational strategy].
* [insert organisational strategy].

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| ***🖌Note\****  *It is key that prevention strategies for burnout are in place before a worker shows signs of distress. If a worker is experiencing elevated levels of burnout, their manager should immediately intervene. Suggested strategies include providing the worker with access to flexible working arrangements, adjusting the worker’s workload/balance to minimise their exposure to traumatic material, and/or referring the worker to further intensive support (e.g. EAP).*  *\*Please delete note before finalising this policy.* |

#### 2.3.3 Strategies for preventing and reducing vicarious trauma and secondary traumatic stress

[insert organisation name]will proactively manage risk factors by:

* Ensuring all staff have access to, and actively participate in, regular clinical and administrative supervision.
* Ensuring all staff have access to additional support as required (e.g. Employee Assistance Program (EAP)).
* Ensuring all staff receive regular training and information on identifying and responding to symptoms of vicarious trauma and secondary traumatic stress.
* Proactively managing workers case/work load, work/life balance and exposure to trauma material.
* Establishing and supporting staff to participate in group-based reflective practice supervision groups.
* Providing all workers with the knowledge and skills to develop and implement a self-care plan.
* [insert organisational strategy].
* [insert organisational strategy].
* [insert organisational strategy].

### 2.4 Self-assessment and monitoring

[insert organisation name]will discuss and monitor worker wellbeing to assist in identifying strategies to enhance wellbeing and self-care practices amongst workers. Appropriate tools and strategies will be integrated into general staff performance and development processes. Individual responses to such tools and strategies will remain confidential between the worker and their manager unless a manager has reasonable concern for the imminent safety and wellbeing of the individual staff member.

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| ***🖌Note\****  *There are various assessment tools and strategies for monitoring the wellbeing of workers. For example:*   * *Shirom-Melamed Burnout Measure (SMBM; Shirom, 1989): The SMBM includes 14 items which cover physical fatigue, emotional exhaustion, and cognitive weariness.* * *Secondary Traumatic Stress Scale: The STSS is a self-report measure of secondary trauma. It measures three domains of traumatic stress specifically associated with secondary exposure to trauma: intrusion, avoidance, and arousal.* * *Professional Quality of Life Scale (Version 5 (2009)): The ProQOL incldes 14 items which measure compassion satisfaction, burnout and STS.* * *Reachout Professional Self Care Assessment Tool: This is a free, online self-assessment survey designed to give a snapshot of an individual’s current self-care practices, and to help think about all the ways a worker can contribute to their own wellbeing.*   *\*Please delete note before finalising this policy.* |

## **SECTION 3:** REFERENCES

#### 3.1 Internal references

* Work Health and Safety Policy
* Clinical Supervision Policy
* Human Resources Management Policy
* Staff Performance and Development Policy
* Governance and Management Policy

**3.2 External references**

#### 3.2.1 Legislation

* Associations Incorporation Act 2009 (NSW)
* Fair Work Act 2009 (Cth)
* Work Health and Safety Act 2011 (NSW)
* Work Health and Safety Act 2011 (Cth)
* Work Health and Safety Regulations 2011 (Cth)
* Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)
* Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)

#### Policy

#### [NSW Mentally Healthy Workplaces Strategy 2018–22](https://www.safework.nsw.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0006/362274/NSW_mentallyhealthyworkplacesstrategy_2018_22.pdf)

#### 3.2.3 Resources

**Information on workplace wellbeing**

* [Developing a mentally healthy workplace: A review of the literature](https://www.headsup.org.au/docs/default-source/resources/developing-a-mentally-healthy-workplace_final-november-2014.pdf?sfvrsn=8)
* [Preventing and managing work-related stress: A guidebook for employers](https://www.worksafe.vic.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0006/211299/ISBN-Preventing-and-managing-work-related-stress-guidebook-2017-06.pdf)
* [Principles of good work design: A work health and safety handbook](https://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/system/files/documents/1702/good-work-design-handbook.pdf)
* [Reducing stress in the workplace: An evidence review](https://www.headsup.org.au/docs/default-source/default-document-library/chw_stress_full_web_final.pdf?sfvrsn=860e274d_4)
* [Stress and Burnout: A Prevention Handbook for the Alcohol and Other Drugs Workforce](http://nceta.flinders.edu.au/files/2412/5548/1890/EN114.pdf)
* [Workforce Development TIPS for the AOD Field: Worker wellbeing](http://nceta.flinders.edu.au/files/8612/4710/5742/Worker_Wellbeing.pdf)

**Tools to monitor workplace wellbeing**

* [insert organisational tool e.g. ProQOL]
* [insert organisational tool e.g. Worker Self-Care Check]
* [insert organisational tool e.g. Staff Survey]

#### Websites

* [NCETA – Worker Wellbeing](http://www.nceta.flinders.edu.au/workforce/what_is_workforce_development/key-workforce-development-issues/worker-wellbeing/)
* [SafeWork Australia](http://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au)
* [SafeWork NSW](http://www.safework.nsw.gov.au/)
* [Get Healthy at Work](http://www.gethealthyatwork.com.au/)
* [Heads up](https://www.headsup.org.au/)
* [Black Dog Institute – Workplace Wellbeing](http://www.blackdoginstitute.org.au/clinical-resources/wellness/workplace-wellbeing)
* [SuperFriend](http://www.superfriend.com.au)
* WayAhead Workplaces
* [Head to Health](http://www.headtohealth.gov.au)

## SECTION 4: PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT

[insert organisation name]will evaluate the effectiveness of this policy by monitoring data trends over time from:

* Worker feedback
* Worker self-assessment tool data
* Worker turnover rates
* Exit interview feedback
* Internal reports including grievances and WHS reports
* Worker sickness and accident rates
* Worker compensation claims

Evaluation will occur [insert review frequency] and results will be incorporated into the [insert reporting frequency] Board reporting cycle.

Evaluation data will be used to determine if the policy has been effective in meeting its goals and to identify barriers and enablers to ongoing policy implementation as part of the organisation’s quality improvement program.

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| ***🖌Note\****  *Monitoring and evaluation is incredibly important and is dependent on having clear and measurable outcomes. Plan from the start what success look like and what measures you will use to demonstrate success.*  *\* Please delete note before finalising this policy* |