**Mental Health and Wellbeing (MHW) Charter**

**Factsheet for staff**

## Mental Health and Wellbeing (MHW) Charter – Factsheet for staff

## Figure 1 diplays the Investing in Our People Diagram with the Safe and Inclusive Workplaces section enlarged and highlighted.Taking care of yourself and your colleagues at work

**STRESS**

Stress is a normal human response and can be beneficial in short bursts (known as eustress). Stress initially can help us to stay alert and perform optimally. However, prolonged or excessive distress can be damaging to your mental health and wellbeing (MHW) creating a risk of injury, fatigue and burnout.

It is important to recognise the signs of stress/negative MHW so that appropriate corrective actions can be taken to respond to, and alleviate stress before it has a negative impact on your MHW and related life/work balance:

**Signs and symptoms** of excessive workplace stress/MHW distress /MHW distress can include but are not limited to:

***Figure 1*** *– Investing in our People*

 *(Objective 4 – Safe and Inclusive Workplaces)*

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| * feeling anxious, irritable, or depressed
* apathy, loss of interest in work
* problems sleeping
* fatigue
* absenteeism
* loss of confidence
* depression
* aggression/violent challenging behaviours
* frustration
* you against the world mentality
* persistent negativity/everything is too hard
 | * trouble concentrating
* muscle tension or headaches
* stomach problems and nausea
* social withdrawal/disengagement
* presentism
* tardiness/poor time management
* mood swings
* increased intake or reliance on artificial stimulants
* lack of direction/purpose
* closed/blinkered approach to decision making
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If you experience an increase in stress/MHW distress at work, there are a number of things you can do to respond to get yourself back on track:

* find someone to talk to – either a close friend, a trusted colleague, a family member and/or contact the Department of Education and Trainings (the Department) **Employee Assistance Program (EAP)** 24/7, independent and confidential counselling service on **1300 361 008.** For more information about the EAP, visit the [Employee Health, Safety and Wellbeing Services intranet](https://edugate.eduweb.vic.gov.au/sites/i/Pages/School.aspx#/app/content/3106/support_and_service_(schools)%252Fhuman_resources%252Femployee_health,_safety_and_wellbeing%252Femployee_health,_safety_and_wellbeing_services) page
* use the **Lifeworks Health and Wellbeing Online Platform** - this online platform has support, guidance, information and strategies to manage issues relating to family, health, life, money and work. It is a private and confidential service which can be accessed from home. See the [Employee Health, Safety and Wellbeing Services intranet](https://edugate.eduweb.vic.gov.au/sites/i/Pages/School.aspx#/app/content/3106/support_and_service_(schools)%252Fhuman_resources%252Femployee_health,_safety_and_wellbeing%252Femployee_health,_safety_and_wellbeing_services) page for login details
* have a conversation with your manager, who is not expected to be a subject matter expert on MHW, to assist in identifying any contributing factors towards stress/MHW distress such as lack of direction, unclear parameters, job design, work schedule etc. and develop a plan to manage and address the concern/s in a mutually agreed timeframe
* prioritise and organise – create a balanced schedule, plan regular breaks, prioritise tasks, break projects into small steps and be willing to compromise, and delegate if possible
* employ self-care activities for example mindfulness, resilience, emotional intelligence, take lunch breaks, go for a walk, and set aside time for activities you enjoy
* learn to separate work and personal/home life issues
* log an injury/illness/incident report on eduSafe to formalise the issue and initiate an incident investigation process to seek rectification and to help prevent a re-occurrence of the issue.

If you notice any change in your thoughts, feelings or behaviour, or your experience of stress/MHW distress is persistent, or depression is involved, see your GP or health professional to ensure you receive early and appropriate intervention to safeguard your MHW.

#### LOOKING OUT FOR YOUR COLLEAGUES

If you’re concerned that someone you work with doesn’t seem themselves, having a conversation and checking they’re okay can make a real difference. You may notice your colleague is:

* turning up late to work, often off sick or taking unexplained days off
* finding it hard to make decisions, manage multiple tasks or meet deadlines
* losing confidence and having negative thought patterns
* struggling to concentrate
* avoiding colleagues – either socially or in a group situation such as meetings

acting differently including a change in their mood and/or physical presentation

#### SELF-CARE

Caring for oneself is just as important as caring for others and doing so can put you in the best position to ensure your positive MHW is maintained. Some suggested self-care activities include:

* take your annual leave each year and make sure you have a proper break from work
* set aside time for things you enjoy, such as exercising, meditation, reading, walking and patting your dog, gardening, listening to music etc.
* get out of the workplace for lunch – even if it’s just for a 10-minute walk
* resist the temptation to have your lunch at your workstation
* initiate positive, healthy and rewarding relationships
* think of positive activities that make you smile
* learn not to fixate on life’s hiccups and hurdles but have a resilient approach and focus on behaviours and outcomes that you can help control to assist with positive personal outcomes
* never forget the added value and positive impact you bring to your workplace, family and friends
* get moving, regular exercise is a powerful stress reliever, related endorphins are beneficial to one’s MHW
* eat well/healthy and get enough sleep
* balance your schedule and prioritise tasks.

#### FURTHER INFORMATION

For further information on MHW, including information on the MHW Charter, please visit the [**Charter web page**](https://www.education.vic.gov.au/hrweb/employcond/Pages/MHW-Charter.aspx) **on HR Web**.

### Where to go for additional support

For guidance and support on how to integrate the Department’s MHW Charter and the related Objective 4 – Safe and Inclusive Workplaces from our “Investing in Our People (Idiom)” strategy into your work area and for further advice on staff MHW refer to the [Charter web page](https://www.education.vic.gov.au/hrweb/employcond/Pages/MHW-Charter.aspx) or the [Employee Health, Safety and Wellbeing Services intranet](https://edugate.eduweb.vic.gov.au/sites/i/Pages/School.aspx#/app/content/3106/support_and_service_(schools)%252Fhuman_resources%252Femployee_health,_safety_and_wellbeing%252Femployee_health,_safety_and_wellbeing_services) page. For 24/7, free and confidential counselling support including critical incident response debriefing, the Department’s Employee Assistance Program (EAP) can be accessed by contacting our independent provider, LifeWorks by Morneau Shepell, on 1300 361 008.

#### Additional MHW resources outside of the Department:

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| **MHW EXTERNAL SUPPORT RESOURCES** |
| **Heads up:** | [**www.headsup.org.au**](http://www.headsup.org.au) |
| Heads up provides tools and resources to create mentally healthy workplace  |
| **SuperFriend:**  | [**http://www.superfriend.com.au/**](http://www.superfriend.com.au/) |
| SuperFriend is a national mental health promotion foundation focused on creating mentally healthy workplaces to reduce the incidence of suicide and the impact of mental illness on individuals and organisations. |
| **Sane:** | [**www.sane.org/employers**](http://www.sane.org/employers) |
| Resources and information for better mental health at work. |
| **MindHealthConnect:** | [**www.mindhealthconnect.org.au**](http://www.mindhealthconnect.org.au/) |
| MindHealthConnect features mental health resources, information and online programs provided by a range of organisations, including a guided search tool which helps users to navigate their way to appropriate support.  |
| **HELPLINES** |
| **Lifeline:** | **Ph: 13 11 14** | [**www.lifeline.org.au**](http://www.lifeline.org.au/) |
| A national 24-hour telephone and online counselling service for all ages, featuring an online chat service. |
| **Mensline Australia:** | **Ph: 1300 789 978** | [**www.mensline.org.au**](http://www.mensline.org.au/) |
| A national 24-hour telephone and online counselling service for men.   |
| **Suicide Call Back Service:** | **Ph: 1300 659 467** | [**www.suicidecallbackservice.org.au**](http://www.suicidecallbackservice.org.au) |
| A national 24-hour telephone and online counselling service for those feeling suicidal and those caring from someone who is suicidal, or those affected by suicide.  |

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| **ANXIETY AND DEPRESSION** |
| **beyondblue: Ph: 1300 224 636** | [**www.beyondblue.org.au**](http://www.beyondblue.org.au/) |
| A national organisation which aims to reduce the prevalence of anxiety and depression in Australia and the stigma surrounding the issues. |
| **Black Dog Institute:** | [**www.blackdoginstitute.org.au**](http://www.blackdoginstitute.org.au/) |
| Expert information on depression and bipolar disorder for the public and professionals, including information on getting help for mood disorders and suggestions on ways of staying well. |
| **BlueBoard:** | [**www.blueboard.anu.edu.au**](http://www.blueboard.anu.edu.au/) |
| An online support group for people affected by depression, bipolar disorder and anxiety disorders. It aims to reduce stigma, and to provide support, hope and opportunities for sharing successful coping strategies. The group is run as a moderated bulletin board with strict protocols to protect safety and privacy. |
| **e-couch:** | [**www.ecouch.anu.edu.au**](http://www.ecouch.anu.edu.au/) |
| A self-help interactive program with modules for depression, generalised anxiety and worry, social anxiety, relationship breakdown, and loss and grief. It provides self-help interventions drawn from cognitive, behavioural and interpersonal therapies as well as relaxation and physical activity. |
| **headspace:** | [**www.headspace.org.au**](http://www.headspace.org.au/) |
| Information, support and advice for young people 12-25, and their families, on general health; mental health and wellbeing; alcohol and other drugs; education, employment and other services. Centres around Australia provide with access to youth-friendly health professionals. |
| **mentalhealthonline:** | [**www.mentalhealthonline.org.au**](https://www.mentalhealthonline.org.au/default.aspx) |
| Information about anxiety disorders, free automated psychological assessment and self-help treatment programs, plus low-cost therapist-assisted programs over 12 weeks. |
| **MoodGYM:** | [**www.moodgym.anu.edu.au**](http://www.moodgym.anu.edu.au/) |
| A popular interactive program which incorporates cognitive-behaviour therapy for depression. MoodGYM has been extensively researched and its effectiveness has been demonstrated in randomised controlled trials. |
| **Partners In Depression:** | [**www.partnersindepression.com.au**](http://www.partnersindepression.com.au/) |
| An innovative information and support group program for people who love, live with or support someone experiencing depression.  |
| **DRUGS AND SUBSTANCE USE** |
| **Australian Drug Information Network:** | [**www.adin.com.au**](http://www.adin.com.au/) |
| A central point of access to quality internet-based alcohol and drug information provided by prominent organisations in Australia and overseas. |
| **headspace:** | [**www.headspace.org.au**](http://www.headspace.org.au/) |
| Information, support and advice for young people 12-25, and their families, on general health; mental health and wellbeing; alcohol and other drugs; education, employment and other services. Centres around Australia provide access to youth-friendly health professionals. |

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| **SUICIDE** |
| **Living Is For Everyone:** | [**www.livingisforeveryone.com.au**](http://www.livingisforeveryone.com.au/) |
| A world-class suicide and self-harm prevention resource, dedicated to providing the best available evidence and resources. The LIFE website is designed for people across the community who are involved in suicide and self-harm prevention activities. |
| **Reach Out:** | [**www.au.reachout.com**](http://au.reachout.com/) |
| A national online youth suicide prevention program, featuring information and resources. |
| **Mindframe:** | [**www.mindframe-media.info**](http://www.mindframe-media.info/) |
| National initiative to provide information and resources to help the media and entertainment industries report on suicide, mental health and mental illness. |
| **TRAUMA AND GRIEF** |
| **Australian Centre for Posttraumatic Mental Health:** | [**www.acpmh.unimelb.edu.au**](http://www.acpmh.unimelb.edu.au/) |
| World-class trauma-related research, policy advice, service development and education. The centre's services help organisations and health professionals who work with people affected by traumatic events. |
| **Australian Child & Adolescent Trauma, Loss & Grief Network:** | [**www.earlytraumagrief.anu.edu.au**](http://www.earlytraumagrief.anu.edu.au) |
| Resources and information for anyone involved in the care of children and youth and interested in the potential impact of trauma, loss and grief experiences. |
| **OTHER RESOURCES** |
| **Australian Pain Society** | [**www.apsoc.org.au**](http://www.apsoc.org.au/) |
| An organisation featuring representatives of many medical specialties such as dentistry, psychology, nursing and general practice, the society aims to relieve pain and related suffering through education, research and public advocacy. |
| **Beacon:** | [**www.beacon.anu.edu.au**](http://www.beacon.anu.edu.au/) |
| Provides consumers and professionals with information about e-health online programs for mental health and physical health disorders. Websites throughout the world are reviewed and ranked by a panel of health experts and by consumers. |
| **Mental Health in Multicultural Australia:** | [**www.mhima.org.au**](http://www.mhima.org.au/) |
| An organisation linking a  range of state and territory mental health specialists and services, advocacy groups and tertiary institutions to promote the mental health and wellbeing of Australia's diverse communities. |
| **Carers Australia:** | [**www.carersaustralia.com.au**](http://www.carersaustralia.com.au/) |
| The national carer organisation that works to promote the recognition of the important role of carers and to empower carers so that they will be better informed and resourced. |
| **National Rural Health Alliance:** | [**www.ruralhealth.org.au**](http://www.ruralhealth.org.au) |
| A national body working to improve the health of Australians living in rural and remote areas. |