

Example: Workplace Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy

A mental health and wellbeing policy for:

Effective from:

Next review date:

Policy Statement:

The Employer is committed to the protection and promotion of the mental health and wellbeing of all staff.

The Employer shall continuously strive to improve the mental health environment and culture of the organisation by identifying, eliminating, isolating or minimising all harmful processes, procedures and behaviours that may cause psychological harm or illness to its employees.

The Employer shall continuously strive, as far as is reasonably practicable, to promote mental health throughout the organisation by establishing and maintaining processes that enhance mental health and wellbeing.

Rationale:

- Mental health can be defined as the capacity to feel, think and act in ways that enhance our ability to enjoy life and deal with the challenges we face.
- Mental health problems have causes including stressors within the workplace and the outside world. The most common mental health problems in the workplace are stress, anxiety and depression. These can result in poor working relationships, errors and accidents, absenteeism and high staff turnover.
- Recent trends indicate that mental illness in the workplace is increasing. The United Nations and the World Health Organization have labelled stress a worldwide epidemic. It has been suggested that mental health problems are an increasing cause of injury, illness and absences across New Zealand workplaces (ACC, OSH, CTU).
- The potential benefits of mental health promotion include increased productivity and loyalty, reduced absenteeism and staff turnover. The employee experiences enhanced wellbeing, which also impacts on physical wellness and family life.

Purpose:

To provide a working environment that promotes and supports the mental health and wellbeing of all employees.

Scope:

- This policy will comply with Health and Safety and ACC legislation and best practice guidelines.
- This policy will be developed in accordance with existing organisational policies and practices such as EEO.
- This policy will be owned at all levels of the company, developed and implemented across all departments, evaluated and reviewed as appropriate.

Guiding Principles:

Commitment from employees and employers to the following principles will facilitate the

achievement of this policy.

Individual

- All employees shall have a clearly defined role within the organisation and a sense of control over the way their work is organised.
- Job design will be appropriate to the individual, with relevant training, supervision and support provided as required.
- Appropriate education and life skills training will be provided for all employees in identified areas of mental health and mental health promotion.

Organisational - Physical Environment

- The Employer will provide a physical environment that is supportive of mental health and wellbeing including a sound, ergonomically designed workstation or working situation with appropriate lighting, noise levels, heating, ventilation and adequate facilities for rest breaks.

Organisational - Workplace Structure and Culture

- The Employer will promote a culture of partnership, participation and responsiveness. Open channels of communication will foster positive working relationships and provide clear methods of conflict resolution.
- The Employer will provide systems that encourage predictable working hours, reasonable workloads and flexible working practices where appropriate.

Organisational - Wellbeing and Performance

- The Employer will promote and support opportunities to enhance professional development.
- The Employer will provide and promote ease of access to a range of support mechanisms, including confidential counselling, for those in need of personal assistance.

Implementation Guidelines:

Getting Started (1-3 months)

- Nominate a designated person or department who shall be responsible for the development, implementation and evaluation of the policy.
- Establish systems to assess the mental health of the organisation. This analysis shall be a prerequisite to any new or changed process and will be monitored and reviewed in accordance with evaluation procedures. In assessing the mental health of the organisation, the guiding principles outlined above shall be used as standards against which to measure current organisational culture and practices.
- Formulate objectives that reflect prioritised needs, take account of available resources and provide the baseline for systematic evaluation.

Main Implementation (3-12 months)

- Prevent, or alter processes, procedures or behaviours that may cause psychological injury or illness to all staff.
- Provide clear information, education and advice on mental health issues and sources of health to all employees. This shall be disseminated according to company procedure

and protocols.

- Provide training for designated staff in the early identification, causes and appropriate management of mental health issues such as anxiety, depression, stress and change management.
- Establish systems to promote ease of access to confidential counselling and other appropriate means of support. The development of self-support groups for special needs will be actively encouraged.
- Manage return to work for those who have experienced mental health problems.

Monitoring and Evaluation (6-12 months)

- The policy will be audited, monitored and reviewed in line with existing policies and procedures.
- Evaluation will be conducted by those personnel with overall responsibility for this policy.

Signed:

Date: