

C-4

MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING



POLICY STATEMENT

The purpose of this policy is for TWOOSH to establish, promote and assist in maintaining the mental health and wellbeing of all educators through workplace practices, and encourage educators to take responsibility for their own mental health and wellbeing. This policy applies to all TWOOSH employees including contractors and casual educators.

TWOOSH believes that the mental health and wellbeing of our educators is key to organisational success and sustainability. Promoting positive mental health at work goes further than focusing solely on eliminating or minimising psychological health and safety risks. Promoting positive mental health focuses on taking a strength-based approach, focusing on opportunities, strengths and resources that help to foster a healthy, positive and supportive workplace culture.

Workers who feel positive in the workplace environment and culture are less likely to experience work-related stress, sustain psychological harm or leave the workplace, and more likely to have better performance and engage in learning and self-development.

REFERENCES AND CONSIDERATIONS

- Children Services Award 2010
- Safe Work Australia
- Safe Work NSW
- DJMIR Advisory Services
- Relationships Australia Assistance Program

GOALS

- ◆ To build and maintain a workplace environment and culture that supports mental health and wellbeing and prevents discrimination (including bullying and harassment).
- ◆ To increase employee knowledge and awareness of mental health and wellbeing issues and behaviours.
- ◆ To reduce stigma around depression/anxiety etc in the workplace.
- ◆ To facilitate employee's active participation in a range of initiatives that support mental health and wellbeing.

PROCEDURES

Commitment from Management

Management will:

- ◆ show leadership commitment to a mentally healthy workplace
- ◆ develop supportive and capable leaders

- ◆ implement workplace policies that support psychological safety and flexible workplace practices where possible.
- ◆ practise respectful and dignified workplace interactions
- ◆ encourage open, honest, effective communication and consultation
- ◆ build organisational awareness of mental health and wellbeing.

Employee responsibilities

All employees have a responsibility to:

- ◆ Understand this policy and seek clarification from management where required
- ◆ Consider this policy while completing work-related duties and at any time while representing TWOOSH
- ◆ Support fellow co-workers in their awareness of this policy
- ◆ Support and contribute to TWOOSH's aim of providing a mentally healthy and supportive environment for all workers.

All employees have a responsibility to:

- ◆ Take reasonable care of their own mental health and wellbeing, including physical health
- ◆ Take reasonable care that their actions do not affect the health and safety of others in the workplace
- ◆ Notify employers of any mental health and wellbeing issues that arise to ensure the employer is able to support the employee in an effective manner.

Support measures

Prevention

- ◆ Consult and encourage open communication between employees and employers to assess each individual's mental health and wellbeing.
- ◆ Control any risks that arise within the workplace environment, making changes and reasonable adjustments to enable employees to perform their duties more effectively, provided the educator can fulfil the core requirements of the position, and the education and care regulations are met.

Early intervention

- ◆ Early recognition and intervention of mental health and wellbeing issues is critical to providing a safe workplace.
- ◆ TWOOSH pays for an Employee Assistance Program (EAP). Educators are encouraged to access the EAP for free, confidential, third-party counselling and support services via telephone or in person.
- ◆ TWOOSH will offer reasonable modifications or support, provided the educator can fulfil the core requirements of the position, and the education and care regulations are met.

Checking in with employees

- ◆ Compared to a physical condition, managers and fellow Educators may be less confident and certain around what to say or do when a colleague has a mental health issue. There are some simple steps you can take to start a conversation with someone in the workplace.
- ◆ Getting ready to ask:
 - Be ready – to listen and give time if needed
 - Be prepared – to be open minded and understanding
 - Pick a moment – where and when will you approach them.

- ◆ Starting a conversation
 - Ask 'R U Ok?'
 - Listen without judgement
 - Encourage action
 - Check in

Managing disclosure

Educators may or may not disclose a mental health condition to an employer.

Disclosed mental health condition

- ◆ Privacy legislation requires employers to ensure personal information about an Educator's mental health status is not disclosed to anyone, including co-workers, without the Educator's consent.
- ◆ Any information can only be used for the purposes for which it was disclosed, such as arranging modifications in the workplace to support the Educator.
- ◆ Discussion with the Educator is essential in determining the parameters for disclosing a educator's mental health status to their co-workers.

Non-disclosed mental health concerns

If an Educator suspects that a co-worker is experiencing mental health concerns:

- ◆ show concern discretely and ask if there is any support the workplace can offer them
- ◆ encourage them to speak to someone from EAP or other health professionals.

If an Educator does not disclose anything, there is limited further action that be taken, however, the concerned person should continue to check in with that educator to signal their concern for their wellbeing and their availability to support the person if needed.

If an Educator is unsure whether to formally disclose a concern about another Educator, Management will direct them to resources to help in this decision-making process.

Supporting ongoing employment

- ◆ Consider all information and recommendations from health professionals.
- ◆ Allow flexible working arrangements where possible.
- ◆ Consider gradually increasing the Educator's hours over time.
- ◆ Negotiate an appropriate level and variety of tasks for the Educator to achieve; renegotiate as the Educator progresses in their recovery.
- ◆ Recognise and support the growth of the Educator's existing capabilities and strengths.
- ◆ Set clear expectations by articulating roles, responsibilities and expectations.
- ◆ Reinforce the links between the Educator's work and the workplace objectives.
- ◆ Promote and encourage Educator support networks including peer and personal networks, alongside professional involvement, as a way of providing recovery skills, transferring knowledge and supporting change.
- ◆ Encourage the Educator's input in decisions, drawing on external support (eg rehabilitation team) to not only provide a short-term service, but facilitate long-term change.
- ◆ Recognise both gains and setbacks to create a sense of progress for the Educator.
- ◆ Communicate effectively by informing, engaging and involving the Educator.
- ◆ Promote personal skills and encourage other Educators to think critically and develop alternative solutions to workplace problems.
- ◆ Balance effort and recovery for Educators (including time for rest, exercise and adequate nutrition) to maintain workplace resilience and avoid burn out.

Revisions

Date of next review: June 2023

Date	Reviewer	Approved by
10.08.20	MK	Approved by TWOOSH Management Committee
09.11.21	PG	Approved by TWOOSH Management Committee