



**Victorian  
Public Sector  
Commission**



# Taking care of your mental health

## **How to take care of your mental health and support your team to prevent harm or injury.**

Employers in Victoria must take reasonable steps to provide and maintain a safe workplace. This includes mental health and safety, as well as physical safety.

The World Health Organisation defines mental health as:

“Mental health is a state of wellbeing in which every individual realises their own potential, can cope with normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to their community.”

Everyone has the right to feel safe, secure and happy when they come to work.

## **Your role as an employee**

Caring for yourself is about having good physical and mental health to come to work every day.

Throughout our lives, our mental health can change.

When we manage our mental health effectively, it helps us do well in our life, work and relationships.

When you come to work, you're responsible for:

- taking reasonable care of your mental health
- taking reasonable care of the mental health of the people you work with
- doing your mandatory occupational health and safety training
- following occupational health and safety policies and procedures
- using equipment properly
- not doing anything at work that can impact someone's health and safety (intentionally or recklessly).

When we can effectively manage our mental health we can better:

- manage and cope with stress
- handle challenges
- be more productive, engaged and creative
- make decisions.

## **Employees with a pre-existing mental health condition**

If your mental health condition doesn't affect your ability to do your job, you have no legal obligation to tell your employer about it.

One in five Australian adults experience a mental health illness every year.

## **Tips and resources you can use**

It's important to be aware of and do things that support your mental health and wellbeing.

Here are some tools and resources you can use to get started:

- [How to build a self-care strategy](#)
- [VPSC Wellbeing toolkit](#)
- [Employees with disability, VPSC Wellbeing toolkit](#)
- [11 self-care tips to improve your wellbeing](#)
- [Mental health training videos | Innovation Network.](#)

## Your role as a health and safety representative (HSR)

[Health and safety representatives](#) (HSRs) help improve occupational health and safety (OHS) outcomes by representing the views and interests of their colleagues in OHS matters.

As an HSR, you have responsibilities in addition to your regular role. This can have an impact on your mental health and wellbeing.

It's important to speak to someone you trust if you need any support or training.

For example, you could set up regular meetings with your manager to discuss the role or speak to a [Health and Safety Representative Support Officer](#) (HSRSO) from [WorkSafe](#).

HSRSOs can:

- meet with you to provide advice and support
- help you interpret and understand Part 4 – Duty of employers to consult with employees and Part 7 – Representation of employees of the [OHS Act 2004](#)
- help employers understand their obligations to HSRs
- accompany an inspector where appropriate.

You can contact an HSRSO by emailing [HSRSO@worksafe.vic.gov.au](mailto:HSRSO@worksafe.vic.gov.au).

## Your role as a manager or senior leader

As a manager or senior leader, you look after both your own wellbeing and the wellbeing of your team.

Good mental and physical health means you will be more alert, motivated, attentive and resilient. These are all qualities a manager needs every day.

In your role, you may face a lot of challenging situations.

If your physical and mental health is in good shape, you will be able to manage these better. This also has a positive impact on your team.

## Tips and resources you can use

As a manager or senior leader, never forget that you can ask for help too.

You can use our [Wellbeing toolkit](#) for practical tips, tools and activities for you and your team.

Speak with your own manager or HR if you need support.

Individual activities and organisational supports can help your mental wellbeing. Here are just a few tools and approaches to try:

- get help from your manager or access your organisation's employee assistance program, which may be called EAP
- identify what has a negative impact on your wellbeing and what you can do to improve it
- schedule time in your calendar each week to do something that helps your wellbeing
- speak with another manager about how they support their wellbeing
- talk with your GP or healthcare provider for help.