Mental health and wellbeing:

education and training framework

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## 1. Summary

### Our commitment

The Victorian public sector is committed to achieving the vision of the Mental Health and Wellbeing Charter (charter) by taking a holistic and inclusive approach to supporting mental health at work; promoting positive mental wellbeing, preventing mental injury and illness and where mental injury and illness occurs, taking action to support recovery.

The charter has a fundamental requirement for the delivery of evidence-based training programs that support the capability of managers, Health and Safety Representatives and workers in identifying, preventing, protecting and addressing mental injury and illness as well as promoting positive mental wellbeing.

The implementation of the charter in the Victorian Public Service (VPS) is occurring through the work of the Interdepartmental Committee (IDC), the IDC Sub-Committee and the department-led working groups.

### Integrated approach

An integrated approach to mental health covers the spectrum of mental health and wellbeing at work:

1. **Promoting positive mental health**: by developing positive aspects of work and worker strengths / capacities through reward and recognition programs and positive leadership.
2. **Protecting mental health**: by identifying and reducing work-related risk factors, e.g. job design, work overload and how this is managed, policy and procedure to prevent and address workplace bullying, etc.
3. **Addressing mental health injury or illness**: by providing pathways to appropriate support, promoting recovery and return to work (LaMontagne et al. 2014).

The mental health and wellbeing training and service offerings listed in this document have been classified as belonging to one or more of these three above approaches to supporting mental health at work.

Figure 1: The integrated approach to mental health



## 2. Education and training framework principles

### Principle 1: Education and training offerings in the Victorian Public Service (VPS) support and advance the Mental Health and Wellbeing Charter for the Public Sector

#### Description

‘Our commitment:

The Victorian Public Sector is committed to achieving the vision of the VPS Mental Health and Wellbeing Charter by taking a holistic and inclusive approach to supporting mental health at work; promoting positive mental wellbeing, preventing mental injury and illness and where mental injury and illness occurs, taking action to support recovery.’

#### Elements

1. Education and training includes reference to, and information about the charter.
2. Education and training offerings are grounded in and focused on one or more of the three elements of the integrated approach to supporting mental health at work:

**Promoting positive mental health**: by developing positive aspects of work and worker strengths / capacities through reward and recognition programs and positive leadership;

**Protecting mental health**: by identifying and reducing work-related risk factors, e.g. job design, work overload and how this is managed, policy and procedure to prevent and address workplace bullying etc.;

**Addressing mental health injury or illness**: by providing pathways to appropriate support, promoting recovery and return to work.

### Principle 2: Education and training offerings are evidence-based, reflective of local needs, have defined learning objectives and are subject to evaluation and continuous improvement

#### Description

‘We will [fulfil the education and training commitment] by:

Delivering evidence-based training programs that support the capability of managers, Health and Safety Representatives and workers in identifying, preventing, protecting and addressing mental injury and illness as well as promoting positive mental wellbeing.’

A system of review is in place to ensure education and training offerings continue to meet the objectives of the Mental Health and Wellbeing Charter.

#### Elements

* 1. Education and training offerings comprise content and delivery modes that are evidence-based. Delivery can be via a blended combination of face to face programs and:
	+ E-learning modules
	+ Individual study materials
	+ Group / peer learning processes
	+ Other effective modes
	1. Education and training offerings may be delivered in different ways to different groups of staff at different locations.
	2. Education and training offerings may be delivered by internal or external providers who possess relevant and appropriate qualifications and experience to deliver the content consistent with the Principles and the charter.
	3. Learning objectives are specified for all education and training offerings.
	4. Consistent with each organisation’s policies processes, knowledge and skills evaluations are conducted before, during and after education and training offerings to measure achievement of learning objectives.
	5. Education and training offerings are reviewed regularly, and updated and improved as required.
	6. Responsibility for the evaluation of education and training offerings is located with the relevant organisational committee / body (e.g. OHS / WHS committee; L&D committee, etc.). Note that this may be in addition to evaluation by any central independent body authorised by the Victorian Government to audit and / or oversee mental health and wellbeing education and training.

### Principle 3: Education and training offerings are tailored to the requirements of different staff groups and levels

#### Description

The baseline requirement is for each department / organisation to deliver education and training offerings to staff; managers and supervisors; and executives.

Specialised workplaces such as custodial or other secure settings, call centres and public-facing facilities, emergency response functions, etc., require tailored education and training content and delivery approaches.

#### Elements

##### Staff

* 1. Education and training for staff to include:
	+ the importance of workplace mental health and wellbeing
	+ common workplace mental health conditions (depression, suicide, anxiety and trauma)
	+ how to recognise early warning signs
	+ practical intervention and support strategies
	+ introduction to more complex mental health conditions in the workplace (psychosis, drug and alcohol issues and personality disorders)
	+ the impact mental health has on the individual, their family, workplace and community
	+ promoting and contributing to improved individual and organisational resilience and wellbeing
	+ the relationship between workplace behaviour and mental health and wellbeing, and the impact of appropriate and inappropriate workplace behaviour
	+ case studies and additional resources
	+ internal and external support services and resources available to help you and your colleagues

##### Managers and supervisors

* 1. Education and training for **managers and supervisors** to include:
	+ the role of the manager – what to do and what not to do
	+ the impact mental illness has in the workplace and community
	+ how to protect worker mental health and wellbeing
	+ the benefits of work for mental health and wellbeing
	+ more complex mental health conditions in the workplace (psychosis, drug and alcohol issues and personality disorders)
	+ how to recognise early warning signs
	+ the relationship between workplace behaviour and mental health and wellbeing, and the impact of appropriate and inappropriate workplace behaviour
	+ other factors impacting on workplace mental health and wellbeing; for example job design, workloads, fatigue, trauma and vicarious trauma, domestic violence, etc.
	+ how to support employees with recognised pre-existing mental health conditions
	+ accessing available support and emergency contact information
	+ effectively manage return to work situations for workers with mental health conditions
	+ improving the psychological and physical workplace environment so all individuals and those at risk of mental illness or who have a mental illness can flourish
	+ managerial case studies and role plays
	+ internal and external support services and resources available (see above for staff)
	1. People & Culture (HR) staff training aligned to that for managers and supervisors.

##### Executives

* 1. Education and training for **executives** to include:
	+ why it matters – the human and financial cost, productivity and engagement
	+ the impact mental illness has in the workplace and the community
	+ your responsibilities to manage psychological harm
	+ the importance of promoting workplace mental health and wellbeing
	+ the importance of senior leadership in creating a psychologically safe culture
	+ how to support employees – early intervention and support strategies; including how to support employees with recognised pre-existing mental health conditions

### Principle 4: Education and training offerings are embedded in, reference and / or integrate with other OHS and L&D programs / offerings / support structures and mechanisms

#### Description

Education and training offerings are integrated with existing programs / offerings / structures and mechanisms supporting mental and physical health in the workplace, and with learning and development programs.

#### Elements

* 1. Existing programs / offerings / structures and mechanisms supporting mental health in the workplace include:
	+ learning and development (L&D) programs include programs about / related to:
		- leadership
		- management / supervision / team leadership
		- team and self development
		- appropriate workplace behaviours
	+ People & Culture staff with specific wellbeing-related responsibilities (e.g. health and safety staff, L&D staff with this focus in their roles, employee relations staff with this focus in their roles, etc.), who have attended awareness programs on the Mental Health Charter and associated activities.
	+ Health and Safety Representatives (HSRs)
	+ Peer Support Program: a confidential service offered by volunteer staff, trained in Psychological / Mental Health First Aid principles to support staff. The program promotes positive mental health and wellbeing for work-related matters by providing local, trained and trusted peers (who are themselves supported) that can listen and link staff into professional services
	+ Employee Assistance Program (EAP): a professional counselling service offering confidential, short-term and solution-focused support. The service is independent, impartial and confidential. EAP can be provided over the phone or in person off-site.

(Additional to be added by departments/agencies relevant to own offerings.)

### Principle 5: Education and training offerings are supplemented by mental health promotion activities and events

#### Description

Education and training offerings are supplemented by mental health promotion events.

#### Elements

* 1. Hold a minimum of one health promotion event per year, such as**:**

**Go Home On Time Day** –awareness of work hours, overwork and work / life balance.

**Mental Health Week** – aims to activate, educate and engage Victorians about mental health through a week of interactive events across the state including an official launch, community festivals, art exhibitions, music, theatre and seminars.

**Men’s Health Week** –platform for challenging and debating key issues in men’s health and to raise the profile of men, their health outcomes and health needs. Celebrate the strengths of men, the contributions they make and the role they play in society.

**Movember** – focuses awareness on men’s health, in particular, prostate cancer, testicular cancer and mental health through various challenges and fundraising events.

**R U OK? Day** – promotes suicide prevention and awareness that a small question can make a big difference to those people struggling with life.

**Women’s Health Week** – a week dedicated to all women across Australia to make good health a priority, through various events and activities around Australia.

**World Health Day** – each year a theme is selected that highlights a priority area of public health. The day provides an opportunity for individuals in every community to get involved in activities that can lead to better health.

**White Ribbon Day** – world’s largest movement of men and boys working to end men’s violence against women and girls, promote gender equality, healthy relationships and a new vision of masculinity.

## 3. Implementation plan

### Introduction

The Education and Training Working Group (E&TWG) delivered the Education and Training Framework (ETF) that sets out the core elements of a training program aimed at all VPS staff, managers and executives. The Framework was the basis for further work to develop this implementation plan.

This implementation plan sets out the agreed approach to Mental Health and Wellbeing (MHW) Education and Training (E&T) in the VPS.

### Approach

The agreed approach to MHW E&T in the VPS is flexible and able to meet the specific needs of departments and agencies, and of different workplace types within departments and agencies, while including a VPS-specific tailored MHW E&T package. The approach recognises the significant E&T effort underway in many departments and agencies, and incorporates and builds on that effort to meet the commitments in the charter.

Departments and agencies will:

* utilise the Principles for Mental Health and Wellbeing Education and Training in the Victorian Public Service (the principles) to guide the delivery of MHW E&T programs
* self-assess their MHW E&T offerings against the Principles; and
* identify levels of compliance with the principles, and any gaps in current offerings where revised, updated, additional or new MHW E&T offerings need to be put in place to ensure compliance with the principles.

Where departments and agencies assess their MHW E&T offerings comply with the principles:

* those programs continue to be offered, subject to continuous improvement processes; and
* attendance is reported against the departmental targets.

Where departments and agencies identify gaps in their MHW E&T offerings, they may augment their offerings by one or more of the following actions:

* revise, extend or update existing offerings;
* utilise existing available offerings (free or fee for service) that comply with the principles;
* seek to share / participate in compliant offerings delivered by another department or agency; and / or
* when available – utilise a VPS-specific tailored MHW E&T package, delivered by either internal or contracted resources.

A VPS-specific tailored MHW E&T package that complies with the principles (including being auditable by a central independent body) will be developed under the direction of a Project Control Board. The package will address the executive level as the first priority. The package will include as a minimum:

* detailed session plans
* presentation materials (slides etc.)
* supporting materials (handouts, notes, etc.)
* delivery mode flexibility (face to face, blended, etc.)
* defined learning outcomes based on the principles
* feedback sheets / response forms etc.

The package will be owned by the Victorian Government and enable departments and agencies to use the training materials for delivery internally or sourced through an external provider.

### Accountabilities

The agreed approach acknowledges the overall responsibility of each Secretary (and equivalent) for the implementation of the charter, including the implementation of compliant E&T, within their respective departments and agencies. Secretaries will ensure that clear responsibilities and accountability for compliance, delivery, reporting and continuous improvement are identified. The principles (see Principle 2.7) envisage specific responsibility for E&T to lodge with the relevant departmental committee (e.g. OHS, L&D).