

Principles for Mental Health and Wellbeing in Policing

These Principles represent policing's commitment to our people, to their health and wellbeing and to the safety of the communities we serve. They provide guidance for the development, implementation and evaluation of policing and practices which promote a safe and supportive work environment.

Key Principle: Health and wellbeing is a shared responsibility requiring a genuine and ongoing commitment from leadership, the organisation and individuals themselves.

Protect:

Physical and psychosocial work-related risks and hazards are identified and managed to protect staff health and wellbeing.

Promote:

Positive and protective aspects of work that contribute to optimal health and wellbeing are promoted, enhanced and educated.

Respond:

Signs of ill-health or declining wellbeing are identified and responded to, with appropriate supports provided to aid recovery and rehabilitation.

Police Organisations will:

- proactively identify risks to the mental health and wellbeing of staff.
- actively mitigate identified risks to health and wellbeing as required under relevant legislation, regulations and Codes of Practice.
- build and promote primary prevention strategies to support health, fitness and wellbeing.
- prioritise evidence-informed leadership training to build supportive capabilities and practices of leaders.
- prioritise evidence-informed education which provides staff with an understanding of their own wellbeing needs and the skills and confidence to support their peers.
- set and promote a positive culture to reinforce organisational values and shared purpose.
- facilitate the shared responsibility between the organisation and the injured individual in supporting recovery to best possible health.
- identify options and support the transition of injured staff to suitable duties.
- regularly evaluate the services of clinical providers to ensure they are effective and align with evidence-informed practice.
- work to understand individual needs and empower individuals to play an active role in their recovery process.

Organisational systems and policies should:

- ensure systems and policies optimise the collection and analysis of data to identify and track exposure to psychosocial hazards.
- be informed by accurate workforce data and evidence-informed practices.
- ensure procedural fairness and organisational justice across all business processes.
- integrate a wellbeing focus across all business practices.
- support health and wellbeing considerations into job design and performance evaluations.
- create and use a consistent language for mental health and wellbeing across all business practices.
- support effective communication to promote optimal health and wellbeing.
- amplify and promote positive aspects of work and engender wellbeing.
- enable the collection and analysis of data to continuously strengthen prevention and intervention responses.
- prioritise reporting and management of psychosocial hazards, consistent with reporting processes for physical hazards in the workplace.
- prioritise the development of response systems and services that are trauma-informed, person-centric and user-friendly.

Organisational culture should:

- promote respect and value for each other and the work police do to protect the communities we serve.
- build a strengths-based approach that focuses on skills, knowledge and wellness.
- promote a holistic approach to health and wellbeing.
- support flexibility and adaptation of new and emerging evidence-informed practices to optimise health and wellbeing.
- evolve and adapt to both lessons learned and the changing health and wellbeing needs of the police workforce.

Police Leaders will:

- engage in leadership training and apply knowledge to build a healthy team culture which encourages help-seeking.
- recognise and respond to stressors experienced by staff and provide emotional and organisational support.
- destigmatise health and wellbeing concerns through ongoing and open discussions with individuals and teams.
- visibly and actively model consistent and positive workplace behaviours.
- promote protective factors to maintain the wellbeing of individuals throughout their career.
- identify and ensure appropriate support options are available for staff.
- proactively facilitate response options or providers when support is sought from staff.
- support individuals in their recovery back to best possible health including their transition back to work.

Individuals should be encouraged to:

- understand, protect and maintain their own health and wellbeing.
- identify psychosocial risks and hazards across the organisation and report in accordance with jurisdictional policies and processes.
- build productive and collaborative relationships with peers to positively support each other in the workplace.
- seek information to understand psychosocial risks, protective actions and support options.
- consistently engage with clinical and support services provided to maximise treatment and recovery options.