

Healthier  
Work.



# Workforce capability

October 2023



# What is workforce capability?

*It's about encouraging professional learning and personal growth.*

Help your employees deliver organisational goals. Together you can uncover individual strengths and build learning into everyday job tasks. Create a learning culture and encourage employees to reflect on their performance. Train managers to supervise and communicate with staff.

Explore your team's capabilities through training, coaching and professional development. Recruit to fill known role gaps and support your team's culture.

## Become a healthier workplace

This information sheet is designed to explain how to build your workforce capability in a practical way, offering a variety of strategies and actions you can take to achieve a healthier workplace. The breadth of options is extensive. Not all suggested activities will be relevant to your workplace, but it's important to cover workforce capability deficiencies identified in your gap assessment report.

*Suggested actions and strategies listed in the following pages are labelled with icons to show what aspects of healthier work they address.*

### Take an integrated approach



#### Protect

Prevent and minimise physical and psychological harm



#### Support

Provide services, interventions and resources



#### Promote

Build a positive and meaningful health culture

### Look at complete health



#### Physical

Create physically safe environments



#### Mental

Create psychologically safe environments



#### Place

Make your workplace safe and healthy



#### People

Build awareness of healthy behaviours



# What you can do (actions and strategies)

## Recruitment

Make recruitment and promotion processes fair and transparent.

	PROTECT	SUPPORT	PROMOTE	PHYSICAL	MENTAL	PLACE	PEOPLE
Recruit using a fair, transparent and consistent selection process. Appoint and promote based on merit and performance. Review recruitment processes regularly to check policies are being followed.							
Determine which roles need a pre-employment medical assessment by doing a task analysis to understand the physical and psychological requirements for each role.							
Create a formal induction process and train managers to implement it and track completed steps.							
Make induction about the business and the employee's role so they understand their role within the broader organisation.							
Avoid assigning roles that conflict with an employee's personal needs and values; instead, follow a best 'fit' recruitment strategy that considers the needs of the organisation, the role and the individual.							
Establish a peer support program as part of the induction process for new starters.							
Check references and validate qualifications/licences effectively to support a fair and equitable recruitment process and engage competent people.							



# Training

Offer training to support both individual and team competency.

	PROTECT	SUPPORT	PROMOTE	PHYSICAL	MENTAL	PLACE	PEOPLE
Look at the training needs of each role by understanding if employees have the knowledge, skills and abilities to do their work and/or operate any plant or equipment. Consider reviewing this regularly, perhaps at each performance review.							
Give employees regular training on key policies such as diversity/inclusion, bullying/harassment, code of conduct, WHS and risk management.							
Provide a training program for all employees (as well as board members) to meet WHS requirements specific to your business (fire, emergency, first aid, etc.).							
Create a system for training records, including a reminder option to keep training and competencies up to date.							
Train HR staff, WHS teams and managers on how to identify physical and psychological hazards and indicators of ill-health, including common mental health issues.							
Create a formal manager training program about workplace recognition and its value.							
Make sure employees have the skills to manage their time. Offer training where needed.							
Give training options to part-time, casual and shift work employees, and those who work in remote locations.							
Provide education and training about your drug and alcohol policies.							
Provide access to mental health first aid training if required.							



## Training (cont.)

Offer training to support both individual and team competency.

	PROTECT	SUPPORT	PROMOTE	PHYSICAL	MENTAL	PLACE	PEOPLE
Offer training and support to employees in roles that require greater emotional demands, such as those required to interact frequently with clients, patients, customers, children, passengers or guests.							
Train employees in conflict management so they can diffuse difficult or confronting situations.							
Provide leadership training to support positive leadership behaviours, where leaders delegate, encourage participation and welcome new ideas.							
Regularly train employees working in client-facing roles to manage personal interactions and de-escalate situations.							
Train managers and employees to support positive relationships such as how to have difficult conversations, how to deal with difficult people and how to manage conflict.							
Train managers to understand the impact of the work environment on social and emotional wellbeing.							
Offer training if an employee's job demands or role changes.							
Offer diversity and inclusion training with topics relevant to your workplace, such as cross-cultural training.							
As part of induction, explain the code of conduct and expectations of appropriate work behaviours, including consequences for non-compliance.							
Train employees to develop their skills when organisational change presents new or challenging work.							



# Training (cont.)

Offer training to support both individual and team competency.

	PROTECT	SUPPORT	PROMOTE	PHYSICAL	MENTAL	PLACE	PEOPLE
Train leaders and employees about the signs and symptoms of work stress and how to offer support.							
Train leaders and HR in injury management with respect to workplace mental and physical health, including the workers compensation process.							
Train leaders and the HR team on how to respond to a mental health crisis situation.							
Train leaders in how to have meaningful, strengths-based development conversations.							
Train leaders to understand the requirements of consultation and participative decision making, and how to undertake it successfully.							
Train managers and employees in communication skills to increase their awareness of other people's points of view and how to negotiate solutions to resolve conflict.							
Train managers in what to do when they notice an employee showing signs or symptoms of physical or mental ill health (such as how to access the employee assistance program, a local GP or other mental health professionals). For mental ill health, this can also be called mental health first aid.							
Train managers or supervisors to support employees and communicate effectively through periods of change.							
Train supervisors and managers in people management skills appropriate to roles and responsibilities.							
Offer training programs in the recognition of physical and mental ill health in the workplace.							



# Development

Allow your employees to drive their own learning and development. Empower people to make decisions.

	PROTECT	SUPPORT	PROMOTE	PHYSICAL	MENTAL	PLACE	PEOPLE
Make time for your employees to talk about their career goals. Talk about pathways and development opportunities.							
Give employees the opportunity to act in higher-level roles for career development.							
Give employees enough time to gain new skills and practise using them.							
Talk to employees about opportunities to broaden the scope of their job by expanding their job tasks and responsibilities.							
Encourage employees to do ongoing self-directed professional development.							
Allocate development opportunities and stretch assignments with consideration of individual and team strengths.							
Bring employees from different teams or workplaces together to work on initiatives.							
Make learning a part of job tasks.							
Encourage teams to share ideas and work collaboratively to solve a business challenge or respond to an opportunity.							
Establish a professional mentoring support system.							
Focus on building capabilities rather than mitigating weaknesses.							
Rotate jobs or offer mentoring to enrich employee interest and motivation while helping them broaden their skills.							



# Performance

Make regular performance feedback two-way and expected.

	PROTECT	SUPPORT	PROMOTE	PHYSICAL	MENTAL	PLACE	PEOPLE
Build individual strengths with a performance and development planning template.							
Make performance reviews constructive, regular and expected.							
Make sure any formal performance management processes align with agreements (such as an enterprise agreement) and obligations (such as Fair Work legislation). Seek legal advice when required.							
Make sure direct supervisors are familiar with each employee's role and tasks so they can provide regular feedback to employees about how they're performing.							
Make sure work demands are achievable and match employee skill levels.							
Give employees the opportunity to respond to issues raised about their work performance.							
Help employees understand their strengths and use them at work.							
Consider the psychological impact of a poor performance review by offering access to employee assistance program services.							
Train managers to be competent supervisors.							
Regularly review employee competencies and capabilities and offer training where needed.							
Give employees enough time to consider and respond to any proposals.							





# Performance (cont.)

Make regular performance feedback two-way and expected.

	PROTECT	SUPPORT	PROMOTE	PHYSICAL	MENTAL	PLACE	PEOPLE
Give employees practical advice and guidance on the areas they need to improve.							
Identify employees who display positive and proactive characteristics and find opportunities to leverage these skillsets to benefit organisational health and wellbeing goals.							
Tell employees about the consequences of continued poor performance so they are aware of the process used to manage this issue.							
Provide a way for employees to review and contribute to the output of monitoring systems.							
Provide employees with objective feedback about decisions made about their work performance.							
Support employees to feel safe to identify and act on knowledge gaps through staff development opportunities.							
Use performance reviews as a time to provide positive and constructive advice for future performance, including opportunities for skill development.							
Where a change in structure or roles occurs, or re-training is required, use the performance review process as a positive opportunity for employees to have renewed input to the way they complete their work.							
Avoid linking performance reviews with discussions about pay as this may distract from or negatively impact the process.							



# Tools and resources

## Templates and information

Our templates and information sheets are designed to work together to make identifying priorities, finding the best strategies and implementing actions easier.

- » [How to build a healthier work team](#)
- » [Healthier Work achievement/plan template](#)
- » [Health and wellbeing policy information](#)
- » [Healthier Work recognition application form](#)
- » [Healthier Work Gap Assessment survey](#)

## Resources





Find resources and information relating to workplace health, safety and wellbeing recommended by Healthier Work. These are only suggested resources. Organisations should consider their own needs when selecting resources to use.

- » **Resource Finder** – search for resources by topic, subtopic, type and industry (Coming soon)
- » **Work design** – [suggested resources](#)
- » **Work environment** - [suggested resources](#)
- » **Workforce capability** - [suggested resources](#)
- » **Workplace engagement** - [suggested resources](#)
- » **Workplace support** - [suggested resources](#)
- » **Workplace leadership** - [suggested resources](#)

## Get help

The Healthier Work Program is a free ACT Government initiative for Canberra businesses. [Get in touch](#) to ask a question or organise a free site visit from our Healthier Work team.

## All category worksheets in this series

					
Work Design	Work Environment	<b>Workforce Capability</b>	Workplace Engagement	Workplace Support	Workplace Leadership





Healthier Places.  
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Work.**

For further assistance, please  
contact the Healthier Work team.

Healthier Work, GPO Box 158, Canberra City,  
ACT 2601 or email: [healthierwork@act.gov.au](mailto:healthierwork@act.gov.au)

[www.healthierwork.act.gov.au](http://www.healthierwork.act.gov.au) | [www.act.gov.au](http://www.act.gov.au)