



Nurturing minds: building mentally healthy workplaces in early learning services.

Early learning educators play a pivotal role in the development and well-being of young minds. As you prioritise the mental health of the children in your care, it's equally important to create an environment that supports the mental well-being of the dedicated educators in your service.

Mental health is integral to overall well-being, and creating a mentally healthy workplace is crucial for the happiness, productivity, and job satisfaction of staff. A positive work environment not only benefits individuals but also enhances the quality of the service provided.

Strategies for mentally healthy workplaces

Open communication: foster an environment where open communication is encouraged. Staff should feel comfortable discussing their concerns, ideas, and feelings with supervisors and colleagues.

Training and education: provide mental health training and resources to staff members. This includes workshops on stress management, coping strategies, and recognising signs of mental health issues. Check companies in your area that can provide this or access free resources from organisations such as SafeWork Australia, whose resources can be found at safeworkaustralia.gov.au/safety-topic/managing-health-and-safety/mental-health/resources

Work-life balance: encourage a healthy work-life balance by setting realistic expectations for work hours and breaks. Avoid overloading staff with excessive responsibilities.

Team building: promote a sense of camaraderie among staff through team-building activities and events. Strong interpersonal relationships contribute to a positive work atmosphere.

Recognition and appreciation: regularly acknowledge and appreciate the hard work and dedication of staff members. Recognition boosts morale and fosters a positive work culture.

Flexible schedules: offer flexible scheduling options when possible. This can help staff manage personal commitments and reduce stress associated with rigid work hours.

Mental health support services: provide access to mental health support services, such as counselling or employee assistance programs. Ensure that staff members know how to access these resources confidentially.

Training on child development and behaviour: equip staff with the knowledge and skills to understand and manage children's behaviour effectively. This can reduce stress and frustration

in the workplace. One option is to access the free resources available from ACECQA at [acecqa.gov.au/resources/resource-finder](https://www.acecqa.gov.au/resources/resource-finder)

Designated break areas: create designated space where staff can relax and recharge during their breaks. These spaces should be comfortable and conducive to relaxation.

Conflict resolution procedures: establish clear procedures for resolving conflicts in the workplace. Encourage open communication and provide mediation services if needed.

Regular check-ins: conduct regular check-ins with staff members to gauge their well-being and address any concerns they may have.

Workplace surveys: periodically conduct surveys to assess the overall well-being and job satisfaction of staff. Use the feedback to make improvements to the work environment.

Mental health awareness: organise awareness activities to reduce the stigma associated with mental health. Provide educational materials and resources to promote understanding. One place to find this information is at [ruok.org.au](https://www.ruok.org.au)

Leadership support: demonstrate leadership support for mental health initiatives. Leaders should be approachable and actively participate in creating a positive workplace culture.

Timely notification to our claims team

Should an employee experience a mental health condition that may result in a workers compensation claim, it's crucial to notify us as soon as possible at our website [guildinsurance.com.au/claims/workers-compensation-claims](https://www.guildinsurance.com.au/claims/workers-compensation-claims) Early notification helps us provide prompt support and allows us to work with you to manage the claim efficiently, ensuring both your organisation and the employee receive the assistance needed.

Information about your reporting obligations is available at [sira.nsw.gov.au/workers-compensation/what-to-do-if-a-worker-is-injured](https://www.sira.nsw.gov.au/workers-compensation/what-to-do-if-a-worker-is-injured)

In summary...

Creating mentally healthy workplaces in early learning services is a shared responsibility that benefits staff and the children. By implementing these strategies, early learning services can cultivate environments that support the mental well-being of their dedicated staff, ultimately contributing to the overall success and quality of care provided to the children. Remember, a mentally healthy workplace is the foundation for nurturing both the minds of the staff and the young minds under their care



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