

National Communications Charter

Action Guide

The National Communications Charter (The Charter) will help guide ongoing efforts to improve mental health and wellbeing, and the way mental health and wellbeing is spoken about within an organisation and with key stakeholders.

Below are some practical examples of how organisations can embed the eight principles into practice:

The Charter principles

Example activities

<p>1</p> <p>Make mental health, wellbeing and suicide prevention a priority issue</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote mindfulness and worksite physical activity programs. • Create flexibility around working arrangements (e.g. start times, rostered days off). • Encourage staff to work together on tasks, share skills and ideas, and get involved in social activities. • Build a safe workplace culture i.e. anti-bullying policies in place. • Provide resources to staff about self-care and positive coping strategies. • Actively engage in R U OK? Day and World Mental Health Day.
<p>2</p> <p>Share nationally consistent information and messages</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update organisational social media guidelines to reflect The Charter principles. • Regularly review all printed and online content (e.g. eNewsletters, website, brochures, posters etc.) to ensure all messaging that touches on mental health, mental illness or suicide is safe and responsible.
<p>3</p> <p>Base advocacy and awareness-raising efforts on clear, consistent and evidence-based messages</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage stakeholders and other partnering agencies to become signatories of The Charter. • Collaborate with others to action and support community awareness campaigns. • Provide resources that support positive messaging, and break down common myths and stereotypes about mental ill-health and suicide (see SANE Australia for fact sheets). • Utilise evidence-based resources as a guide to increase staff confidence when it comes to talking about suicide (see YouCanTalk for resources).
<p>4</p> <p>Respect the diversity of experience for those affected by mental ill-health or suicide</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider staff who may be at a higher risk of experiencing stress or mental ill-health and provide additional support as needed. • Have support processes in place for if/when a staff member indicates they are impacted by or experiencing mental ill-health or suicidal crisis. Support staff to stay at work, or return-to-work programs that might include modified job, work schedule or duties. • Consider conducting wellbeing checks as part of regular reviews with staff.

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Use appropriate, respectful and person-centred language in all communication

- Provide avenues for staff and customers to have input into safe communication practices and information sharing.
- Embed aspects of The Charter and [language guides](#) into staff orientation processes.
- Incorporate a strength-based approach in any communication to both staff and customers regarding mental health and suicide prevention.

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Work together to maximise efforts and resources

- Foster collaborative partnerships and promote The Charter principles to other organisations, customers and the broader community (e.g. hosting an R U OK? Day event, World Mental Health Day morning tea).
- Facilitate regular collaborative planning days etc. with staff on actioning workplace mental health initiatives, and tracking progress.
- Provide staff the opportunity to attend mental health and suicide prevention training and/or community-based activities (e.g. Mental Health First Aid, local charity events etc.).

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Acknowledge those with lived experience of mental ill-health and suicide and incorporate into policy and service design

- Develop or review policies and guidelines that support staff with a lived experience of mental illness and suicide (e.g. flexible working hours).
- Incorporate acknowledgements of the importance of the voice and role of lived experience at the start of meetings, and in relevant workplace policy documents.
- Organise information sessions or training for staff on co-design principles (e.g. from [Roses in the Ocean](#) or [LGBTIQ+ Health Australia](#)).
- Incorporate a peer support group within the workplace (see [SuperFriend Peer Support Booklet](#) for further information).
- Develop flexible sick leave policies that encourage staff to feel comfortable to use their leave for mental health and physical health issues.

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Promote crisis services and help-seeking information

- Develop capabilities of management and staff by offering Mental Health First Aid training and suicide prevention training (such as ASIST or QPR) to provide the skills to assist someone experiencing a mental health problem and identify the warning signs of someone at risk of suicide.
- Develop appropriate policies to respond to traumatic incidents that may arise.
- Provide internal and external mental health supports (e.g. EAP, HR, peer supporters), promote the confidentiality of these programs and ensure the pathway to accessing support is clear.
- Make help-seeking information visible for staff and in public areas, such as waiting rooms.
- Make staff aware they can access a mental health care plan through a GP, which entitles them to Medicare rebates for allied health mental health services.