

## Organisational wellbeing supports

The social sector is one where many people are exposed to a range of challenging situations at work and it is important to acknowledge that people respond to stressors at work in different ways.

Providing a range of internal and external support options for staff and volunteers can protect their mental health and make the difference between people struggling or thriving.

Support mechanisms may vary according to the type of work undertaken and the type of hazards that staff and volunteers are exposed to.

Refer to this checklist to identify the best approach for your organisation:

- **Employee Assistance Program (EAP)**

An EAP is a voluntary and confidential short-term counselling service to help staff, and in many cases their immediate family members, to resolve a wide range of work and personal issues that may be negatively impacting their work and personal life.

- **Professional or clinical supervision**

Supervision provides staff with safe, confidential external professional support to reflect, debrief and build their professional skills and resilience to support client care. Supervision can be provided by qualified mental health professionals, including social workers, psychologists and specialist nurses.

- **Non-clinical supervision**

Fosters a space to support staff or volunteers to explore work related issues and concerns in a supportive and encouraging environment. Non-clinical supervision can happen as regular meetings between team members/leaders to debrief and support one another and share solutions to common issues.

- **Peer support program**

Trained individuals within an organisation act as the first point of contact to assist and support colleagues with either work-related or personal difficulties, e.g. family violence, bullying or mental health concerns. Peer Support Officers are able to relate to the working environment and provide confidential, short-term assistance, support and guidance to colleagues without bias or judgement and can connect individuals to external professional services if required. More resources on peer support can be found in this module of the Wellbeing Hub.

Peer support doesn't have to be a formal program to have a positive impact. In small organisations or teams, it can be the little things, like having a quick debrief after a stressful situation or sharing a laugh together with your colleagues or community at the end of the day, that provide a psychological boost.

- **Mental health first aid officers**

Accredited mental health first aid officers are members of a team, or volunteers, who can offer initial help to someone who is experiencing a mental health problem or mental health crisis. First aid is given until appropriate professional help is received or the crisis resolves.

- **Vicarious trauma training**

Training for staff or volunteers that covers a range of organisational, interpersonal and personal strategies to address the risks of vicarious trauma and its impacts. It fosters possibilities for post-traumatic growth and vicarious resilience. This video by Adam Blanch shares more information on '[Preventing Burnout and Compassion Fatigue](#)'.

- **Supporting workplace victims of family and domestic violence**

Providing a supportive and safe workplace can ease the emotional, psychological and physical pain that family and domestic violence has on affected employees. Refer to this [Employer guide to family and domestic violence](#) which includes a checklist to ensure you are prepared to manage workplace situations that involve family and domestic violence.

- **Spiritual and pastoral care**

Workplace chaplains are professionals committed to reducing employee stress, helping employees deal with personal and family emotional issues, and easing potential violence and conflict in the workplace. Spiritual support is likely to be of benefit whether or not a family is "religious" or if they belong to a church, mosque or religious tradition.