



# **STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH IN THE POLICING WORKFORCE**

**A Principles-based Approach**

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# Overview

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## Background

It is well documented that effective prevention and management of mental health issues requires a comprehensive, multilayered approach with coordinated action by multiple stakeholders.

Policing organisations currently use different systems and methodologies in response to occupational and psychosocial risk factors.

As part of the ANZPAA Safety and Wellbeing Working Group Action plan (2014-15), this strategic framework was developed to establish a set of cross-jurisdictional Guiding Principles for managing the broad spectrum of mental health in policing.

The Guiding Principles incorporate evidence-based components drawn from various fields and perspectives including the World Health Organisation (WHO), public health, preventative medicine, occupational health and safety, health productivity, health promotion and organisational psychology.

## Aim

This strategic framework has been developed to:

- provide a basis for developing a set of management standards that underpin a strategic approach to the prevention and management of mental health
- manage and support employee mental health in the workplace and facilitate treatment and referral
- encourage individual responsibility to ensure good employee mental health
- ensure jurisdictions to identify and invest in strategies to reduce the stigma about mental health
- promote positive physical and psychological health
- encourage jurisdictions to develop and implement strategies to address mental health issues in their workplace.

## Guiding Principles

The strategic framework includes two essential components for ensuring the effective management of mental health across the employee lifecycle. The first is to establish the Guiding Principles. The second is to briefly outline the purpose of each Guiding Principle and provide relevant sample activities and initiatives required. These include methods, systems and processes that underpin the Guiding Principles.

The Guiding Principles and activities developed within the strategic framework represent a compilation of systems and methodologies currently being used across jurisdictions. The Guiding Principles provide an overview of the basis necessary for the successful implementation of a mental health management system within police workplaces to effect a positive culture regarding employee mental health.

The scope of these Guiding Principles provides examples of key activities that may assist in the effective management of the broad spectrum of mental health in policing. They are informed by the WHO Healthy Workplace Framework and Model.

## Outline

**Guiding Principles 1–3** address the organisational requirements that determine the direction of mental health within the organisation.

**Guiding Principles 4-5** outline the activities necessary to identify organisational mental health priorities, as well as planning activities to take into account in a range of programs.

**Guiding Principles 6-8** form part of the continuous improvement process that includes implementation, evaluation and review. These are essential for reviewing the effectiveness of critical success factors post implementation, managing mental health and ensuring that a quality assurance system is embedded.

## Definitions

<b>Psychologically healthy and safe workplace</b>	A workplace that promotes employees' psychological well-being and actively works to prevent harm to employees' psychological health including through negligent, reckless, or intentional ways. <sup>1</sup>
<b>Mental health</b>	A state of well-being in which the individual realises his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to his or her community <sup>2</sup> .
<b>Health promotion</b>	Health promotion generates living and working conditions that are safe, stimulating, satisfying and enjoyable.
<b>Psychosocial factor</b>	Interaction among job content, work organisation and management, and other environmental and organisational conditions, and the employees' competencies and needs <sup>3</sup> .
<b>Psychosocial risk</b>	Likelihood that psychosocial factors have a hazardous influence on employees' health through their perceptions and experience and the severity of ill health that can be caused by exposure to them <sup>4</sup> .

<sup>1</sup> CSA Z1003/BNQ 9700-803, Psychological health and safety in the workplace - Prevention, promotion, and guidance to staged implementation

<sup>2</sup> World Health Organisation - <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs220/en/>

<sup>3</sup> World Health Organisation - [http://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/10665/44428/1/9789241500272\\_eng.pdf](http://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/10665/44428/1/9789241500272_eng.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> Ibid

# Guiding Principles

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<b>Guiding Principle One:</b> <b>MOBILISE</b>	<i>Mobilise organisational commitment and senior leadership support (Organisational Culture)</i>
Purpose	To establish a positive organisational culture through genuine organisational commitment to employee mental health. This Guiding Principle sets the foundations in establishing an environment that facilitates a supportive mental health culture at all levels within the organisation and throughout the employees' lifecycle.
Sample Activities	Apply organisational level principles of ethics, values, vision, and strategy that are fundamental in providing and maintaining the direction and context of the overall systems and methodologies. Examples of this may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• statements from the executive level on the commitment to a positive culture</li> <li>• inclusion of mental health in organisational strategies, mission statements and values</li> <li>• inclusion of mental health as a regular executive agenda item.</li> </ul>

<b>Guiding Principle Two:</b> <b>DRIVE and EDUCATE</b>	<i>Increase active participation across the wide range of stakeholders that represents policing</i>
Purpose	<p>To ensure that senior managers set a positive health, safety and wellbeing culture for the organisation.</p> <p>To build on organisational, managerial and employee capabilities in the management of mental health within policing through engagement and education.</p>
Sample Activities	<p>Establish an overarching policy to direct and resource the management of mental health that covers all aspects of the organisation's physical and psychological safety management systems.</p> <p>Encourage the involvement of Senior Managers, employees and their representatives in the development of programs, systems and methodologies for the management of mental health.</p> <p>Provide education on the management of mental health from individual and organisational perspectives at all levels of the organisation.</p> <p>Include consideration of mental health issues in planning and decision making at all levels.</p>

<b>Guiding Principle Three: ASSESS</b>	<i>Undergo a regular 'organisational' mental health assessment</i>
Purpose	To ensure that the organisation is a psychologically healthy and safe workplace through the employment of best practice in identifying and assessing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• employee needs</li> <li>• current programs</li> <li>• emerging issues.</li> </ul>
Sample Activities	Use a variety of techniques to inform an 'organisational' mental health assessment. Examples of this may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• research of best practice in this area</li> <li>• organisational surveys</li> <li>• longitudinal studies to enhance robust data collection</li> <li>• gap analysis of employee needs, current programs and emerging issues.</li> </ul>

<b>Guiding Principle Four: PRIORITISE</b>	<i>Align priorities with required objectives and outcomes</i>
Purpose	To prioritise issues gathered from the 'organisational' mental health assessment.
Sample Activity	Establish criteria for prioritisation. Considerations may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• provision of a broad spectrum of programs that address employee needs</li> <li>• alignment with organisational strategic priorities and required outcomes.</li> </ul>

<b>Guiding Principle Five: PLAN</b>	<i>Embed interventions into a holistic approach to the mental health of the organisation</i>
Purpose	To develop a holistic approach to mental health management that integrates and aligns with the strategic priorities for the organisation.
Sample Activity	Develop a range of programs that are proactive and reactive in the management of the prioritised issues. Ensure that those programs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• reflect the strategic objectives of the organisation in the provision of a mentally healthy and safe workplace</li> <li>• receive management support to ensure optimal benefit</li> <li>• are able to be delivered in an effective and efficient manner.</li> </ul>

<b>Guiding Principle Six: IMPLEMENTATION</b>	<i>Develop and apply action plans for mental health programs</i>
Purpose	To produce an action plan illustrating the critical steps required to implement programs that will serve as a guide or map that charts the course from thought to action.
Sample Activities	Establish timelines, agreed outcomes and areas of responsibility.  Develop evaluation methodologies for programs.  Develop an appropriate marketing and communication strategy – promotional activities, newsletters and factsheets and strategies to encourage active participation.

<b>Guiding Principle Seven: EVALUATE</b>	<i>Measure and assess the impacts of the approach to the management of the mental health of the organisation</i>
Purpose	To ensure that the effectiveness of programs are measured and reported on in order to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• hold any internal/external services to account</li> <li>• identify any required improvements</li> <li>• guide future efforts and actions.</li> </ul>
Sample Activities	Consider data and feedback captured from the agreed evaluation methodologies and the Organisational Mental Health Assessment.  Assess efficacy of individual programs and their integration with the overall approach.  Produce regular reports on agreed stages including completion of programs.

<b>Guiding Principle Eight: REVIEW</b>	<i>Ensure the effectiveness of the approach to the management of the mental health of the organisation as well as the efficiency of resources used</i>
Purpose	To consider improvements for all factors, related to the management of the mental health of the organisation, on an ongoing basis.
Sample Activities	Determine appropriate membership of review 'group'.  Develop schedule for the regular review of programs and the overall approach.  Consider any evaluation reports and suggestions for improvement, and escalate as appropriate.