Social and emotional wellness

Social and emotional wellness plays an important role in how you perform in your workplace. How you think, feel and relate to others affects your health.

When a workplace is stressful, hours long and morale low, you may find employees with poor social and emotional wellness. This can lead to an increase in employee absences.

Addressing sources of stress is a key strategy to improve workplace social and emotional wellness. Stress-related presenteeism* and absenteeism is estimated to cost Australian employers $10 billion per year (PDF, 1MB).

* Presenteeism describes an employee who is attending work but not performing to their full capacity for health reasons.

About 50% of Australians will experience a mental illness at some point in their life. A psychologically (socially and emotionally) supportive workplace can help reduce the risk of mental illness and aid recovery.

Characteristics of a healthy workplace include: employee loyalty and morale is high; team work is evident; obstacles to optimum mental health are removed; employee turnover and sick or stress leave is low; professional development is supported and encouraged; employees are productive team members.

Ideas for action

- Refer to our organisation’s policy to show management’s commitment to social and emotional wellness and address ethics, diversity and code of conduct.
- In the workplace, clarify role expectations and job descriptions.
- Take advantage of training opportunities to enhance social and interpersonal skills.
- Foster and encourage mutual support and interaction as well as trust and respect with colleagues and managers.
- Contribute to a culture that acknowledges the dignity of others and shows care and consideration.
- Enhance individual wellness by making work spaces attractive and comfortable.
- Welcome and contribute to opportunities for social interaction and networking.
- Participate in employee-training opportunities for managing wellness and stress.
- Take advantage of UQ’s employee assistance program (confidential counselling service) if required. This service provides support for employees and their immediate family.
- Additional support is available through services such as:
  - beyondblue
  - SANE: information on mental health and helpline
  - SuperFriend: information about improving the mental health and wellbeing of industry super fund members
  - The MoodGYM: Innovative interactive cognitive behaviour therapy