



# SOCIAL SUPPORT





Balance in the Workplace is designed to equip organisations in the health and community services sectors with practical tools and resources to mitigate **psychosocial hazards** and create safer, healthier work environments. These freely available documents, which can be used in digital formats or printed as needed, aim to address challenges such as **workload management**, **work-life balance**, and mental health monitoring.

The mission of this initiative is to foster workplaces where health and wellbeing workers feel **safe** and **supported**, enabling them to provide effective care to those who depend on their services. By adopting these resources, organisations can actively promote a culture of care, **resilience**, and **sustainability** within their teams.

Queensland  
Workforce Strategy  
2022–2032



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# OVERVIEW

Social support in the workplace is essential for employee well-being, engagement, and productivity. A supportive environment fosters trust, collaboration, and inclusion, reducing stress and preventing burnout. Strengthening workplace relationships ensures employees feel valued and empowered. This document provides practical strategies and tools to help organisations enhance social support while complying with Queensland's workplace health and safety regulations. It outlines legal responsibilities, key strategies, and monitoring tools to create a psychologically safe and inclusive work environment.

## Legal Responsibilities

Under the Work Health and Safety (WHS) Act 2011 and the Managing the Risk of Psychosocial Hazards at Work Code of Practice 2022, employers must identify and manage social support risks. A lack of workplace support can lead to stress, isolation, and lower job satisfaction.

## Key Strategies & Tools

This document outlines strategies for improving workplace social support by strengthening workplace relationships through open communication and teamwork. Encouraging peer support and collaboration is essential, achieved through mentoring programs and team-building initiatives. Leadership support plays a critical role in fostering engagement and psychological safety. Providing access to mental health and well-being resources ensures employees have the support they need to manage workplace stress. Additionally, fostering workplace inclusion for diverse employees helps create an environment where all workers feel valued and respected. To assist with implementation, this document includes practical tools such as the Employee Support Network Map, Social Support Feedback Form, Workplace Social Inclusion Checklist, and the Well-being and Peer Support Action Plan.

## Why It Matters

A strong social support system improves job satisfaction, reduces stress, and increases retention. Prioritising workplace support enhances engagement, productivity, and compliance with workplace health and safety laws, fostering a healthier and more effective workforce.

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# Legislation and Code Reference

Social support in the workplace is a key component of psychosocial well-being and is explicitly referenced in workplace health and safety laws. Under the Managing the Risk of Psychosocial Hazards at Work Code of Practice (2022) and WHS Regulation, employers are required to manage risks related to social support deficiencies that may impact workers' health.

## Key Legal Requirements

### Employers must implement strategies that:

- Foster a supportive work environment where employees feel safe, respected, and valued.
- Provide clear communication and collaboration channels to ensure employees have access to workplace relationships that promote well-being.
- Identify and mitigate social isolation risks by implementing workplace inclusion and engagement strategies.
- Train leaders in trauma-informed management approaches to support staff effectively.
- Ensure compliance with anti-discrimination laws to prevent workplace bullying, exclusion, or isolation.
- Monitor and respond to psychosocial hazards that arise from lack of social support, including bullying, harassment, and cultural exclusion.

## Legislative References

### The requirement to manage social support risks in the workplace is guided by:

- Work Health and Safety Act 2011 (QLD) – Employers have a duty of care to identify, manage, and reduce psychosocial risks in the workplace.
- Managing the Risk of Psychosocial Hazards at Work Code of Practice (2022) – Explicitly includes social support as a workplace hazard that must be controlled.
- Fair Work Act 2009 – Outlines protections against workplace bullying, harassment, and social exclusion.
- Queensland Anti-Discrimination Act 1991 – Requires workplaces to promote inclusion and prevent discrimination against individuals based on ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, disability, or religious beliefs.
- Queensland Trauma Strategy 2024–2029 – Encourages organisations to adopt trauma-informed practices that ensure psychological safety in workplaces.



## Employer Responsibilities Under WHS Legislation

### **To remain compliant with Queensland's WHS laws, organisations must:**

- Conduct regular psychosocial risk assessments focusing on workplace relationships.
- Implement structured feedback mechanisms to allow employees to express concerns about workplace culture and relationships.
- Establish support networks such as mentoring programs, peer support groups, and leadership engagement activities.
- Provide leadership training to managers on mental health awareness, inclusivity, and effective team management.
- Monitor workplace discrimination, bullying, and harassment reports to track the effectiveness of social support strategies.

## Key Actions to Strengthen Social Support

A workplace with strong social support fosters a sense of belonging, trust, and collaboration. Social support acts as a protective factor against workplace stress, burnout, and disengagement. The Managing the Risk of Psychosocial Hazards at Work Code of Practice (2022) and WHS Regulation identify deficiencies in workplace social support as a key psychosocial hazard that must be mitigated.

### **To strengthen social support in the workplace, four key action areas should be prioritised:**

1. Building Supportive Workplace Relationships
2. Encouraging Peer Support and Collaboration
3. Leadership Support and Positive Management Practices
4. Providing Access to Mental Health and Well-being Resources

## Building Supportive Workplace Relationships

A positive workplace culture is built on strong relationships between employees, teams, and leadership. Supportive relationships create a psychologically safe environment where employees feel valued, heard, and motivated to contribute.

### **Key Strategies to Strengthen Workplace Relationships:**

#### **Foster Open Communication:**

- Implement structured team meetings and feedback loops where employees can raise concerns.
- Train employees and leaders in active listening and respectful communication.
- Use anonymous pulse surveys to check in on workplace relationships regularly.





### **Develop a Culture of Inclusion and Respect:**

- Encourage inclusive work practices such as rotating meeting facilitators and team decision-making.
- Provide cross-cultural awareness training to foster understanding between diverse teams.
- Recognise and reward team collaboration and social support behaviours.

### **Prevent Workplace Isolation and Exclusion:**

- Assign mentors or peer guides to new employees to assist with integration.
- Promote interdepartmental collaborations to prevent silos.
- Ensure remote workers have equal access to workplace communication and support networks.

### **Implement Conflict Resolution Processes:**

- Provide structured mediation for interpersonal conflicts.
- Offer training on de-escalation techniques and workplace diplomacy.

## **Encouraging Peer Support and Collaboration**

Peer support builds trust, reduces stress, and enhances teamwork. When employees support each other, productivity and job satisfaction improve, and workplace resilience strengthens.

### **Key Strategies to Foster Peer Support:**

#### **Formal Peer Support Programs:**

- Implement a structured peer mentoring program where employees support one another's professional and personal development.
- Offer buddy systems for onboarding new employees to improve social integration.

#### **Encourage Cross-Team Collaboration:**

- Establish team-based projects that require collaboration across different departments.
- Use collaborative platforms (e.g., Trello, Slack, Asana) to improve teamwork on shared tasks.

#### **Create Safe Spaces for Peer Interaction:**

- Organise regular social check-ins (e.g., morning tea, team lunches).
- Establish peer-led support groups to discuss workplace challenges.
- Develop anonymised peer feedback channels to allow employees to raise concerns about team dynamics.

#### **Recognise and Reward Peer Collaboration:**

- Develop a peer recognition program where employees can acknowledge each other's contributions (e.g., "Colleague of the Month").
- Integrate collaboration and teamwork as a performance evaluation criterion.



## Leadership Support and Positive Management Practices

Leadership plays a critical role in fostering a socially supportive work culture. Employees with supportive managers experience less stress, higher engagement, and stronger job satisfaction.

### Key Strategies for Leaders to Strengthen Social Support:

#### **Provide Proactive Leadership Support:**

- Conduct regular one-on-one check-ins with employees to assess well-being.
- Actively listen to employee concerns and take visible action to address them.

#### **Implement Trauma-Informed Management Approaches:**

- Train managers on trauma-informed leadership principles to recognise signs of stress and burnout.
- Avoid punitive or reactive management styles that discourage employee engagement.

#### **Lead by Example:**

- Model healthy workplace relationships by demonstrating inclusivity, collaboration, and active listening.
- Encourage flexibility and work-life balance to create a supportive work culture.

#### **Develop Support-Oriented Policies:**

- Ensure all policies include a commitment to social support and inclusion.
- Require managers to complete training on conflict resolution, communication,

## Leadership Support and Positive Management Practices

### Providing Access to Mental Health and Well-being Resources

Ensuring employees have access to mental health and well-being resources strengthens workplace social support by promoting psychological safety.

### Key Strategies for Enhancing Mental Health Support:

#### **Establish Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs):**

- Provide confidential, free mental health counselling services for employees experiencing workplace stress.
- Regularly promote EAP services to ensure employees are aware of them.

#### **Train Employees in Mental Health First Aid (MHFA):**

- Offer certified mental health first aid training for team leaders.
- Identify “Mental Health Champions” within teams who can provide informal peer support.





### Create Anonymous Support and Feedback Channels:

- Establish whistleblower-protected reporting mechanisms for employees experiencing workplace bullying or harassment.
- Use online mental health check-ins to monitor well-being trends within the workplace.

### Ensure Flexible Work Arrangements for Well-being:

- Allow employees flexible hours or remote work options if they are experiencing high stress or burnout.
- Provide mental health leave days separate from general sick leave.

### Promote Workplace Well-being Activities:

- Implement stress management workshops and mindfulness training.
- Develop structured well-being programs, such as group fitness classes or guided meditation sessions.

## Summary of Key Actions to Strengthen Social Support

ACTION AREA	KEY STRATEGIES
Building Supportive Workplace Relationships	Open communication, team meetings, social integration programs, conflict resolution training
Encouraging Peer Support and Collaboration	Peer mentoring, buddy systems, safe spaces for discussion, teamwork recognition
Leadership Support and Positive Management	Trauma-informed leadership, proactive engagement, support-oriented policies
Providing Access to Mental Health and Well-being Resources	EAPs, MHFA training, flexible work, anonymous support channels



# Fostering Inclusive Social Support

A truly supportive workplace fosters an inclusive and psychologically safe environment where all employees, regardless of cultural background, gender identity, sexual orientation, or religious beliefs, feel valued and respected.

Social exclusion, discrimination, and cultural insensitivity are psychosocial hazards that contribute to workplace stress, isolation, and disengagement. To mitigate these risks, workplaces must proactively implement inclusive social support strategies.

**This section provides best practices for supporting:**

- Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) Employees
- First Nations Employees
- LGBTQIA+ Inclusion and Allyship
- Religious and Faith-Based Inclusion

## Supporting Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) Employees

Culturally diverse employees bring unique perspectives, skills, and insights to the workplace. However, language barriers, unconscious bias, and lack of cultural understanding can impact their sense of belonging and workplace experience.

Key Strategies for Supporting CALD Employees:

### **Cultural Awareness Training:**

- Provide regular workshops on cultural awareness and unconscious bias.
- Train leaders and employees on inclusive language and communication.

### **Ensure Equitable Access to Workplace Resources:**

- Offer translated materials for workplace policies and mental health resources.
- Use language support services or interpreters where needed.

### **Create Safe Spaces for Discussion and Connection:**

- Establish multicultural employee resource groups (ERGs) for peer support.
- Recognise cultural holidays and events to promote cultural awareness.

### **Promote Leadership and Career Progression Opportunities:**

- Ensure CALD employees have equal access to leadership programs and mentoring.
- Implement targeted leadership development initiatives for underrepresented groups.



## Supporting First Nations Employees

First Nations employees bring deep cultural knowledge, community connections, and resilience to workplaces. However, institutional barriers, racism, and a lack of cultural safety policies can hinder their career progression and well-being.

### Key Strategies for Supporting First Nations Employees:

#### Cultural Safety Training:

- Ensure all employees complete cultural competency training on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures, and experiences.
- Promote respect for cultural protocols, such as Sorry Business and community obligations.

#### Recruitment and Career Development Pathways:

- Implement First Nations-specific recruitment and mentoring programs.
- Support First Nations leadership development initiatives.

#### Cultural Leave and Workplace Flexibility:

- Provide paid cultural leave for employees participating in ceremonial or community obligations.
- Offer flexible work arrangements to accommodate cultural and family responsibilities.

#### Engage with First Nations Communities:

- Partner with First Nations community organisations to support recruitment and workplace inclusion.
- Ensure workplace programs are co-designed with First Nations employees and leaders.

Organisations without identified First Nations employees should seek external support and guidance from First Nations advocacy organisations. Engaging with Indigenous-led groups, cultural advisory bodies, and reconciliation networks ensures that workplace strategies are culturally appropriate, respectful, and inclusive. These organisations provide expert advice on policy development, cultural safety training, and effective engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, helping workplaces foster a culturally safe and inclusive environment.



LGBTQIA+ employees often experience higher rates of workplace discrimination, exclusion, and stress. Creating a safe, supportive, and affirming work environment improves mental health outcomes, productivity, and retention.

### Key Strategies for LGBTQIA+ Inclusion:

#### **Establish LGBTQIA+ Allyship Programs:**

- Train employees on inclusive language and gender diversity.
- Create LGBTQIA+ workplace allyship groups.

#### **Ensure Gender-Affirming Workplace Policies:**

- Implement gender-neutral facilities and allow employees to use facilities that align with their identity.
- Support name and gender marker changes on workplace records.

#### **Zero-Tolerance Approach to Discrimination and Harassment:**

- Ensure anti-discrimination policies explicitly include LGBTQIA+ protections.
- Provide anonymous reporting mechanisms for discrimination.

#### **Celebrate and Recognise LGBTQIA+ Inclusion:**

- Acknowledge LGBTQIA+ awareness events, such as Pride Month and IDAHOBIT.
- Support participation in community-based LGBTQIA+ initiatives.

Organisations should proactively foster an affirming workplace by implementing inclusive policies, allyship training, and gender-affirming practices, ensuring LGBTQIA+ employees and clients feel safe, respected, and accepted. As gender and sexuality can be private or hidden, creating an inclusive environment benefits all individuals, regardless of visibility.

Partnering with LGBTQIA+ advocacy organisations, diversity consultants, and community networks provides expert guidance on best practices, policy development, and fostering a discrimination-free workplace. Engaging with external expertise helps organisations implement meaningful strategies that promote equity, psychological safety, and long-term cultural change.



## Religious and Faith-Based Inclusion

Employees from diverse religious backgrounds should feel comfortable practicing their faith without discrimination or exclusion.

### Key Strategies for Religious Inclusion:

#### **Recognise and Respect Religious Practices:**

- Provide accommodations for prayer times, fasting periods, and religious observances.
- Allow flexible work schedules for major religious holidays.

#### **Provide Faith-Friendly Workplace Spaces:**

- Create multi-faith prayer or quiet spaces.
- Ensure dietary options reflect religious food requirements (e.g., halal, kosher).

#### **Foster Interfaith Understanding and Dialogue:**

- Offer interfaith awareness training to reduce stereotypes and promote respect.
- Recognise important faith-based celebrations in the workplace calendar.

#### **Protect Against Religious Discrimination:**

- Ensure workplace policies explicitly prohibit religious discrimination.
- Provide safe reporting mechanisms for religious harassment.

Organisations should foster a workplace culture that respects and accommodates diverse religious and faith-based needs, ensuring employees feel safe to practice their beliefs without discrimination or exclusion. Providing prayer spaces, dietary accommodations, and flexible scheduling for religious observances promotes inclusivity and respect.

As faith identities may not always be visible, proactively implementing policies that protect against religious discrimination and offering interfaith awareness training can help reduce stereotypes and create a more understanding workplace. Engaging with faith-based advocacy groups and diversity consultants ensures that workplace practices are informed, equitable, and supportive of all employees, fostering psychological safety, inclusivity, and cultural understanding.



## Supporting Employees with Disabilities

Employees with disabilities often face workplace discrimination, exclusion, and barriers to full participation. Many disabilities, including chronic illness, mental health conditions, and neurodivergence such as ADHD or autism, are invisible, meaning some employees may not disclose their disability. Others may struggle to communicate their needs due to social or cognitive differences. Creating an accessible, supportive, and inclusive work environment improves well-being, productivity, and retention.

### Key Strategies for Disability Inclusion

#### Establish Disability Inclusion Programs:

- Train employees on disability awareness, inclusive communication, and neurodiversity.
- Create disability-focused employee resource groups and peer support networks.

#### Ensure Accessible Workplace Policies and Practices:

- Implement reasonable adjustments, including flexible work arrangements and assistive technologies.
- Ensure physical accessibility in all workplace facilities, including ramps, elevators, and accessible restrooms.
- Provide alternative communication methods to accommodate different needs.

#### Zero-Tolerance Approach to Discrimination and Exclusion:

- Ensure workplace policies explicitly prohibit discrimination against employees with disabilities, including neurodivergent individuals.
- Provide clear, confidential, and stigma-free reporting mechanisms for disability-related concerns.

#### Celebrate and Recognise Disability Inclusion:

- Acknowledge disability awareness events such as International Day of People with Disabilities.
- Support participation in disability-focused initiatives and advocacy programs.

Organisations should proactively foster an inclusive workplace by implementing accessible policies, training programs, and workplace adjustments, ensuring that employees with disabilities feel valued, respected, and supported. As some disabilities are invisible or undisclosed, it is essential to create an environment where all individuals, regardless of disclosure, feel safe to access support. Neurodivergent employees and clients may experience challenges in expressing their needs, making it important to provide flexible communication options and proactive support.

Partnering with disability advocacy organisations, accessibility consultants, and inclusion networks provides expert guidance on best practices, policy development, and fostering an equitable work culture. Engaging with external expertise helps organisations implement meaningful strategies that promote accessibility, psychological safety, and long-term cultural change.





## Summary of Inclusive Social Support Strategies

GROUP	KEY INCLUSIVE SUPPORT STRATEGIES
CALD Employees	Language access, cultural training, peer support, leadership pathways
First Nations Employees	Cultural safety, recruitment programs, community partnerships, cultural leave
LGBTQIA+ Employees	Allyship training, gender-affirming policies, zero-tolerance for discrimination
Religious & Faith-Based Employees	Prayer spaces, flexible scheduling, interfaith awareness, anti-discrimination policies
Persons with a Disability	Ensure workplace policies explicitly prohibit discrimination against employees with disabilities, including neurodivergent individuals.

SUGGESTED IMPROVEMENTS?



# Additional Practical Resources

To ensure that social support strategies are not only theoretical but also actionable and effective, organisations should implement structured programs, training, workplace networks, and well-being initiatives.

**This section provides practical tools and initiatives for:**

- Team-Based Support Programs
- Communication and Conflict Resolution Training
- Workplace Social Networks and Well-being Initiatives
- Trauma-Informed Workplace Practices
- Mental Health First Aid and Well-being Programs
- Interactive Activities and Gamification

## Team-Based Support Programs

Encouraging team-based collaboration and peer support helps to create a sense of community, belonging, and workplace cohesion.

**Key Strategies:**

### Establish Peer Mentorship Programs

- Pair experienced employees with new staff to provide guidance, reduce stress, and improve integration.
- Provide cross-team mentorship for employees in remote or isolated roles.

### Encourage Team-Based Problem-Solving

- Hold weekly team meetings to discuss challenges and brainstorm collective solutions.
- Create cross-departmental projects that encourage workplace connection.

### Recognise and Reward Teamwork

- Integrate collaborative behaviours into performance reviews.
- Implement team-based rewards such as bonuses or recognition awards for outstanding collaboration.



## Communication and Conflict Resolution Training

Poor workplace communication and unresolved conflicts can weaken team cohesion and social support. Training employees in effective communication and conflict resolution ensures that teams remain cohesive, respectful, and productive.

### Key Strategies:

#### **Provide Active Listening and Effective Communication Training**

- Conduct workshops on active listening and constructive feedback.
- Train leaders on how to handle difficult conversations effectively.
- Train Employees in Conflict Resolution Strategies
- Offer de-escalation and mediation training to help employees manage workplace conflicts.
- Establish a formal conflict resolution process to ensure all issues are addressed fairly.

#### **Promote Transparent Workplace Communication**

- Use open-door policies to encourage employees to raise concerns.
- Provide structured feedback loops to ensure continuous workplace improvements.

## Workplace Social Networks and Well-being Initiatives

Workplace social networks enhance connectivity, improve employee morale, and strengthen team relationships.

### Key Strategies:

#### **Introduce Employee Resource Groups (ERGs)**

- Create employee-led groups that focus on shared interests, backgrounds, or challenges (e.g., CALD support groups, LGBTQIA+ networks, wellness groups).

#### **Encourage Informal Team-Building Events**

- Organise social meet-ups such as coffee catch-ups, sports teams, or workplace wellness days.

#### **Establish Virtual Social Networks for Remote Staff**

- Use platforms like Slack, Microsoft Teams, or WhatsApp to create virtual communities for remote employees.



## Trauma-Informed Workplace Practices

A trauma-informed workplace acknowledges that many employees have experienced stress, trauma, or adversity that may affect their work performance and well-being. Implementing trauma-informed practices creates a psychologically safe and supportive work culture.

### Key Strategies:

#### **Train Leaders on Trauma-Informed Management**

- Provide training on recognising signs of stress, burnout, or trauma-related distress.
- Encourage non-punitive, supportive management approaches.
- Create Safe and Flexible Workspaces
- Design quiet rooms or reflection spaces where employees can de-escalate stress.
- Offer flexible work arrangements to accommodate mental health needs.
- Implement a Confidential Support System
- Provide anonymous channels for employees to discuss mental health or trauma-related challenges.

#### **Foster a Culture of Psychological Safety**

- Encourage employees to speak openly about mental health challenges without fear of stigma.
- Develop peer-led support groups for employees who have experienced work place trauma.

## Mental Health First Aid and Well-being Programs

Mental health first aid equips employees with skills to recognise and respond to colleagues in distress.

### Key Strategies:

#### **Train Employees in Mental Health First Aid (MHFA)**

- Certify managers, HR staff, and designated employees in mental health first aid.
- Provide refresher courses to keep training up to date.

#### **Promote Workplace Well-being Activities**

- Introduce mindfulness programs, stress management workshops, and resilience training.
- Organise physical health initiatives such as yoga, fitness groups, or wellness challenges.

#### **Ensure Easy Access to Mental Health Support**

- Provide free or subsidised mental health services through Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs).
- Offer self-help resources, including online mental health tools and educational



## Interactive Activities and Gamification

Using interactive activities and gamification can encourage workplace engagement and make social support initiatives more accessible and appealing.

Key Strategies:

### **Implement Workplace Recognition Games**

- Use peer recognition platforms where employees can reward co-workers for acts of kindness or teamwork.
- Establish leaderboards for positive behaviours such as teamwork, mentoring, and well-being participation.

### **Create Social Support Challenges**

- Launch a “Workplace Support Bingo” where employees mark off positive social interactions (e.g., “Helped a co-worker with a task” or “Had lunch with a new employee”).
- Organise team-based competitions that encourage collaboration and bonding.

### **Develop Interactive Well-being Check-ins**

- Use anonymous feedback tools where employees can submit workplace well-being ratings.
- Implement monthly well-being surveys and act on employee feedback.



## Summary of Additional Practical Resources

RESOURCE AREA	KEY STRATEGIES
Team-Based Support Programs	<b>Peer mentorship, cross-department projects, team-based problem-solving</b>
Communication & Conflict Training	Active listening workshops, structured feedback loops, mediation training
Workplace Social Networks	Employee resource groups (ERGs), virtual networking, informal team-building
Trauma-Informed Practices	Leadership training, safe spaces, psychological safety policies
Mental Health & Well-being Programs	MHFA training, mindfulness initiatives, flexible work policies
Interactive Activities & Gamification	Workplace challenges, recognition games, social engagement strategies



# Templates

To ensure that social support initiatives are structured, trackable, and effective, organisations should use templates and monitoring tools. These resources help assess workplace relationships, social support structures, and well-being initiatives, while also providing employees with clear pathways for engagement and feedback.

## **This section includes the following ready-to-use templates:**

- 6.1 Employee Support Network Map
- 6.2 Social Support Feedback Form
- 6.3 Team Cohesion Assessment Checklist
- 6.4 Workplace Social Inclusion Checklist
- 6.5 Employee Well-being and Peer Support Action Plan
- 6.6 Workplace Culture and Team Cohesion Survey
- 6.7 Social Support Initiative Progress Tracker

Each template includes instructions for implementation.



# Employee Support Network Map

**Purpose:**

This tool helps employees identify who they can turn to for workplace support and ensures that every employee has access to mentorship, guidance, and peer support.

**How to Use:**

- Each employee fills out the map, listing their key support contacts (peers, managers, HR, mental health resources).
- The HR team or Well-being Coordinator regularly reviews support network maps to identify isolated employees and improve connections.

EMPLOYEE NAME	SUPPORT CONTACT (PEER,MANAGER, HR, ETC.)	PREFERRED SUPPORT METHOD (MEETING,CHAT, EAP, ETC.)



## Social Support Feedback Form

### Purpose:

This form collects employee feedback on workplace relationships, peer support, and leadership support. It helps identify areas of improvement in social support structures.

### How to Use:

- Employees complete this confidential survey every quarter.
- HR or management reviews results to determine whether workplace social support is improving or declining.

1. I feel supported by my colleagues.

☐

STRONGLY  
DISAGREE

☐

DISAGREE

☐

NEITHER AGREE OR  
DISAGREE

☐

AGREE

☐

STRONGLY  
AGREE

2. My manager provides guidance and encouragement.

☐

STRONGLY  
DISAGREE

☐

DISAGREE

☐

NEITHER AGREE OR  
DISAGREE

☐

AGREE

☐

STRONGLY  
AGREE

3. I have access to mental health and well-being resources.

☐

STRONGLY  
DISAGREE

☐

DISAGREE

☐

NEITHER AGREE OR  
DISAGREE

☐

AGREE

☐

STRONGLY  
AGREE

4. My workplace promotes a culture of teamwork and support.

☐

STRONGLY  
DISAGREE

☐

DISAGREE

☐

NEITHER AGREE OR  
DISAGREE

☐

AGREE

☐

STRONGLY  
AGREE

**Follow-Up:** HR should review trends in scores and implement changes to improve low-rated areas.



## Team Cohesion Assessment Checklist

### Purpose:

This checklist is used by team leaders and HR to assess team cohesion and identify any risks related to isolation, lack of collaboration, or conflict.

### How to Use:

- Managers complete this checklist every six months for each team.
- If a team scores low on multiple criteria, leadership should implement interventions (e.g., team-building exercises, peer mentoring).

#### 1. Team members communicate openly and respectfully.

☐

STRONGLY  
DISAGREE

☐

DISAGREE

☐

NEITHER AGREE OR  
DISAGREE

☐

AGREE

☐

STRONGLY  
AGREE

#### 2. There are regular team check-ins and collaborative discussions.

☐

STRONGLY  
DISAGREE

☐

DISAGREE

☐

NEITHER AGREE OR  
DISAGREE

☐

AGREE

☐

STRONGLY  
AGREE

#### 3. Employees feel comfortable asking for help.

☐

STRONGLY  
DISAGREE

☐

DISAGREE

☐

NEITHER AGREE OR  
DISAGREE

☐

AGREE

☐

STRONGLY  
AGREE

#### 4. Conflicts within the team are resolved effectively.

☐

STRONGLY  
DISAGREE

☐

DISAGREE

☐

NEITHER AGREE OR  
DISAGREE

☐

AGREE

☐

STRONGLY  
AGREE

SUGGESTED IMPROVEMENTS?

**Follow-Up:** If any area scores poorly, leadership should organise communication training, conflict resolution sessions, or peer collaboration programs.



# Workplace Social Inclusion Checklist

## Purpose:

This checklist helps evaluate inclusivity efforts for CALD employees, First Nations staff, LGBTQIA+ workers, and religiously diverse employees.

## How to Use:

- HR and leadership teams should review workplace inclusivity policies using this checklist annually.
- Any gaps in inclusion should lead to new initiatives (e.g., cultural training, mentorship programs).

**1.** Employees feel comfortable expressing their cultural, gender, or religious identity.



NEEDS  
IMPROVEMENT



ADEQUATE



EXCELLENT

**2.** The workplace has cultural awareness and inclusivity training.



NEEDS  
IMPROVEMENT



ADEQUATE



EXCELLENT

**3.** LGBTQIA+ employees feel safe and included.



NEEDS  
IMPROVEMENT



ADEQUATE



EXCELLENT

**4.** First Nations employees are supported through mentoring and leadership pathways.



NEEDS  
IMPROVEMENT



ADEQUATE



EXCELLENT

**Follow-Up:** If any area scores poorly, HR should develop inclusion-focused training, cultural awareness events, or targeted support programs.



## Employee Well-being and Peer Support Action Plan

### Purpose:

This action plan helps employees set well-being goals and identify support systems to reduce workplace stress.

### How to Use:

- Employees complete this form as part of well-being check-ins.
- Managers and HR use it to track progress on employee well-being.

EMPLOYEE NAME	Well-being Goal	Peer/Mentor Support Contact	Action Steps	Review Date
John Deer	[Reduce stress, improve team collaboration]	[Mentor/Peer Name]	[Join peer support group, attend well-being workshops]	DD/MM/YYYY

**Follow-Up:** HR should review and adjust well-being plans every quarter to ensure progress.





# Workplace Culture and Team Cohesion Survey

## Purpose:

This survey assesses how employees feel about workplace culture, teamwork, and overall social support.

## How to Use:

- Employees complete the survey twice a year.
- HR reviews trends and adjusts team-building and social support strategies accordingly.

1. I feel included and valued in my workplace.



STRONGLY  
DISAGREE



DISAGREE



NEITHER AGREE OR  
DISAGREE



AGREE



STRONGLY  
AGREE

2. My team collaborates effectively.



STRONGLY  
DISAGREE



DISAGREE



NEITHER AGREE OR  
DISAGREE



AGREE



STRONGLY  
AGREE

3. Leadership supports open and transparent communication.



STRONGLY  
DISAGREE



DISAGREE



NEITHER AGREE OR  
DISAGREE



AGREE



STRONGLY  
AGREE

4. I have access to workplace mental health resources.



STRONGLY  
DISAGREE



DISAGREE



NEITHER AGREE OR  
DISAGREE



AGREE



STRONGLY  
AGREE

**Follow-Up:** HR and leadership teams should act on survey results by enhancing communication, team-building, and well-being initiatives.

## Social Support Initiative Progress Tracker

### Purpose:

This tracker monitors the progress and effectiveness of workplace social support initiatives over time.

### How to Use:

- HR and management teams update this tracker quarterly.
- If an initiative is not achieving its goals, leadership should adjust or introduce new strategies.

INITIATIVE	IMPLEMENTATION STATUS	EMPLOYEE FEEDBACK	NEXT STEPS	RESPONSIBLE PERSON
Peer Mentor Program	In Progress	Positive but needs more engagement	Expand to additional teams	HR Team
Diversity Training	Completed	Needs more interactive content	Revise training material	DEI Officer
Virtual Coffee Chats	Not started	Employees requesting remote connection opportunities	Develop virtual networking	HR Team

**Follow-Up:** HR should use this tracker to adjust programs based on employee feedback and effectiveness.



# Case Study:

## Implementing Social Support Strategies

### Purpose:

A hypothetical case study can illustrate how social support strategies improve workplace culture, employee well-being, and productivity.

### Scenario: Improving Social Support in a Healthcare Organisation

### Background:

A medium-sized healthcare organisation noticed an increase in employee burnout, absenteeism, and turnover. Employee feedback indicated low social support, particularly among new hires, remote workers, and frontline staff.

### Key Challenges Identified:

1. Limited peer support – Employees felt disconnected from their teams.
2. Lack of leadership engagement – Employees felt unsupported by managers.
3. No structured workplace inclusion programs – CALD, First Nations, and LGBTQIA+ staff lacked workplace networks.
4. High levels of work stress – Employees had difficulty accessing mental health support.

### Actions Taken

The organisation implemented a structured social support plan, focusing on four key areas:

1. **Establishing Peer Mentorship and Support Groups**
  - Launched a peer mentorship program for new employees to improve onboarding experiences.
  - Created employee resource groups (ERGs) for CALD, LGBTQIA+, and First Nations employees to foster inclusion.
  - Developed “Well-being Check-in Teams”, pairing employees to provide mutual support during high-stress periods.
2. **Enhancing Leadership Engagement in Social Support**
  - Implemented quarterly well-being check-ins between employees and managers.
  - Required managers to complete training on trauma-informed leadership and active listening techniques.
  - Created a “Manager as a Coach” initiative, where leaders participated in team discussions and mentoring activities.



3. Implementing Workplace Social Networks and Team-Building

- Developed virtual workplace networking spaces for remote and hybrid employees.
- Hosted monthly team-building activities, including cultural appreciation events and interdisciplinary collaboration projects.
- Introduced a peer recognition platform, allowing employees to celebrate and acknowledge co-workers.

4. Expanding Access to Mental Health and Well-being Resources

- Increased promotion of Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs) and mental health resources.
- Provided mental health first aid training to key personnel across teams.
- Implemented flexible work options for employees managing stress or burnout.

Outcomes and Impact

After six months, the organisation evaluated the impact of social support initiatives using employee feedback surveys, retention data, and team productivity reports.

OUTCOME METRIC	PRE-INTERVENTION SCORE	POST-INTERVENTION SCORE (6 MONTHS LATER)
Employee Satisfaction with Peer Support	45%	78% (+33%)
Managerial Engagement in Employee Well-being		
Employee Retention Rate		
Absenteeism Rate		
Reports of Workplace Stress		
Diversity & Inclusion Participation		



# Monitoring and Evaluation

To ensure that social support initiatives are effective, sustainable, and continuously improving, organisations must establish structured monitoring and evaluation (M&E) frameworks.

## Key Metrics for Evaluating Social Support

To measure the effectiveness of workplace social support, organisations should track the following quantitative and qualitative indicators:

OUTCOME METRIC	HOW IT'S MEASURED	TARGET/BENCHMARK
Employee Satisfaction with Peer Support	Annual employee well-being survey	80% or higher satisfaction
Managerial Engagement in Employee Well-being	Leadership participation in check-ins & mentorship	75% of managers engaging monthly
Employee Retention Rate	HR records of employee turnover	Improved retention by 10% annually
Absenteeism Due to Work Stress	HR tracking of stress-related sick leave	Reduce absenteeism by 30%
Usage of Mental Health Resources (EAP, peer support, MHFA services)	Reports on how often employees use available resources	25% increase in resource usage
Diversity & Inclusion Participation	Employee participation in diversity groups and inclusion programs	Increase participation by 40%
Conflict Resolution Effectiveness	Number of workplace conflicts reported & successfully resolved	85% resolution rate within 3 months

## Continuous Improvement Strategies

Social support strategies must evolve based on real-time employee feedback, leadership engagement, and ongoing workplace assessments.

### Key Continuous Improvement Strategies:

#### Quarterly Social Support Reviews:

- Conduct quarterly assessments on peer collaboration, leadership engagement, and inclusivity initiatives.
- Adjust social support programs based on employee feedback.

#### Annual Workplace Culture & Well-being Survey:

- Gather employee insights on workplace relationships, leadership engagement, and team cohesion.
- Compare results against previous years to track improvement trends.

#### HR & Leadership Action Planning Sessions:

- Hold biannual strategy meetings with HR, managers, and employee representatives.
- Review metrics, survey results, and social support effectiveness to refine initiatives.

#### Anonymous Feedback Mechanisms:

- Provide anonymous digital platforms where employees can report concerns about social support.
- Regularly review submissions and implement policy adjustments based on concerns raised.

#### Data-Driven Adjustments:

- If social support scores decline, investigate reasons through focus groups, exit interviews, and one-on-one discussions.
- Use HR analytics to identify patterns in employee turnover, absenteeism, and workplace engagement.





## Early Warning Systems for Psychosocial Risks

Workplaces should implement real-time early warning systems to identify and respond to social support issues before they escalate.

### Key Early Warning Indicators:

WARNING SIGN	WHAT IT MAY INDICATE	RECOMMENDED ACTION
Increased Workplace Complaints	Poor team cohesion, lack of leadership support	Conduct managerial training and employee feedback sessions
High Employee Turnover in Specific Teams	Poor team relationships, ineffective leadership	Review exit interviews, assign mentors, and adjust team structures
Employees Avoiding Team Meetings	Workplace conflicts, exclusion issues	Implement team-building initiatives and conflict resolution strategies
High Absenteeism in Certain Groups (e.g., CALD, LGBTQIA+, First Nations employees)	Workplace discrimination or exclusion risks	Strengthen Diversity & Inclusion programs, hold confidential focus groups
Low Engagement with Mental Health Support Services	Lack of awareness or stigma	Increase promotion of EAPs, MHFA services, and well-being check-ins
Surveys Indicate a Drop in Support Scores	Employees feel unsupported	Introduce new peer support initiatives and increase managerial engagement

## Summary of Monitoring & Evaluation Strategies

MONITORING ACTIVITY	PURPOSE	FREQUENCY
Quarterly Social Support Reviews	Identify strengths & gaps in peer support, leadership engagement	Every 3 months
Annual Workplace Culture Survey	Assess long-term trends in workplace relationships & social inclusion	Yearly
HR & Leadership Planning Sessions	Develop new strategies for social support & employee engagement	Twice per year
Anonymous Feedback System	Provide employees with a confidential way to report concerns	Ongoing
Data Analytics on Social Support Metrics	Track absenteeism, turnover, well-being resource usage	Every 6 months

**Final Action:** If data indicates ongoing challenges, HR should work with leadership to revise policies, launch new support initiatives, and ensure social support structures are reinforced.

# Conclusion

A workplace with strong social support structures is a workplace where employees feel valued, respected, and empowered to perform at their best. Effective peer support, leadership engagement, inclusivity initiatives, and well-being programs are essential for reducing psychosocial hazards and improving overall workforce well-being.

## Key Takeaways

This guide has outlined practical, evidence-based strategies for strengthening social support in the workplace. **The key takeaways include:**

**Social support is a fundamental factor in workplace well-being.**

- Employees who feel connected, included, and supported are more likely to be engaged, productive, and satisfied with their work.

**Leadership plays a critical role in fostering a positive culture.**

- Managers must be trained in active listening, trauma-informed leadership, and well-being support strategies.

**Workplaces must prioritise inclusion and diversity.**

- Employees from CALD, LGBTQIA+, First Nations, and religious backgrounds need structured support networks to feel safe and valued.

**Proactive mental health and well-being initiatives improve employee retention.**

- Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs), mental health first aid training, and well-being check-ins should be widely promoted and easily accessible.

**Regular monitoring and evaluation ensure continuous improvement.**

- Organisations must track key metrics, respond to early warning signs, and adjust social support strategies based on employee feedback and workplace trends.



## Final Recommendations

For workplaces aiming to build long-term, sustainable social support strategies, the following final recommendations should be prioritised:

### **Make Social Support a Leadership Priority**

- Senior leaders must actively champion workplace well-being, diversity, and inclusion.
- Structured leadership engagement (e.g., mentoring, well-being check-ins) should be a standard management practice.

### **Ensure Social Support Initiatives are Well-Resourced**

- Dedicated funding and HR support must be allocated to ensure mentorship programs, peer support networks, and well-being resources are sustainable.

### **Embed Social Support into Organisational Policies**

- Workplace policies should formally recognise social support as a key component of psychological safety.
- Clear procedures must be in place for handling social exclusion, discrimination, and workplace conflicts.

### **Foster a Continuous Feedback Culture**

- Employees should regularly provide input on workplace relationships through surveys, feedback forms, and focus groups.
- Anonymous reporting mechanisms should be available to address social support concerns.

### **Commit to a Trauma-Informed Approach**

- Workplaces must acknowledge the impact of workplace stress and trauma and create psychologically safe environments.
- Managers and HR teams should be trained in trauma-informed leadership and de-escalation strategies.



## Call to Action: What Organisations Should Do Next

Organisations must take immediate action to ensure that workplace social support strategies are embedded in daily operations.

### **Review Current Workplace Social Support Strategies**

- Conduct an internal audit of peer support, leadership engagement, and well-being resources.

### **Use the Templates and Tools Provided in This Guide**

- Implement the social support tracking tools, inclusion checklists, and progress monitoring templates.

### **Develop an Action Plan for Strengthening Social Support**

- Identify key areas for improvement and assign responsible leadership teams to implement changes.

### **Schedule the First Social Support Review Meeting**

- Hold a team discussion or leadership roundtable within the next month to review existing challenges and solutions.

### **Engage Employees in the Process**

- Encourage employees to provide feedback and actively participate in social support programs.

### **Monitor Progress and Adapt Strategies as Needed**

- Set quarterly review cycles to measure the effectiveness of social support initiatives.

## Final Thought:

### **The Importance of a Connected Workplace**

A workplace that prioritises social support is a workplace where employees thrive. By investing in structured support programs, promoting inclusivity, and ensuring ongoing well-being initiatives, organisations can create an environment that is safe, resilient, and empowering for all workers. Social support is not just a benefit—it's a necessity for a healthy and productive workforce.





**Balance in the Workplace** is an Employee Assistance Program developed by **Centacare FNQ**, a local organisation committed to delivering quality **Mental Health and Wellbeing Services** since 1981.

For more information about Balance in the Workplace and how it can support you or your team, please contact:

Daniel Gouge - Project Officer

**Phone:** 4044 0130

**Email:** [daniel.gouge@centacarefnq.org](mailto:daniel.gouge@centacarefnq.org)  
**centacarefnq.org**

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