



volunteering
TASMANIA

Innovation Series: Well-being Workshop

One in five Australians are likely to be living with a mental health condition, and untreated mental health conditions cost Australian employers around \$12.8 billion a year through absenteeism, reduced productivity and compensation claims. For volunteers specifically, along with reduced productivity and absenteeism the risk of disengagement is much higher. Studies show that mentally healthy workplaces have better staff and volunteer retention rates. Analysis shows that businesses will, on average, achieve a positive return on investment of \$2.30 for every \$1 spent creating a mentally healthy workplace.

For more info:

- [Creating a mentally healthy workplace](#)
- [Indicators of a thriving workplace survey](#)

So how do we support the wellbeing and mental health of our volunteers?

Well-being and mental health is so important, and we all need to get better at practicing self-care and self-preservation personally and in the workplace. When you start to think about what well-being programs you could implement in your organisation consider inviting the volunteers into the conversation. Send out a quick survey, or have a conversation and let them help guide you with what they need.

Check in

If you notice a volunteer who looks like they might be struggling, follow the steps outlined in this R U OK? [Video](#) and check out the [resources](#) that support the R U OK? conversation model.

Best Practice

Supporting the well-being of volunteers could include the following practices:

- Investing in a volunteer wellbeing program like [Ten Lives](#) or consider including volunteers in an Employee Assistance Program.
- Debriefing or checking in with volunteers after shifts (and when you haven't seen them in a while) to see how they are doing and give them an opportunity to be heard.
- Buddy scheme – pairing people up for regular check ins, walks, sharing food, etc.
- Have conversations with volunteers to find out if / what supports they may like in place to provide the best support for them while volunteering.
- Be flexible – offer more flexible times, durations and activities to suit the needs of volunteers.
- Have a quiet chill out area / safe space that volunteers can access when needed.
- Information - have posters and handouts available for people to access when needed.





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Well-being Programs

Employee Assistance Programs are a wonderful part of many organisations well-being programs, but we understand that not every organisation can afford this expense for their volunteers. So here are some different workplace well-being activities that are either free or have minimal costs associated with them.

- Lemonade – sharing in group sessions/meetings something positive that has happened outside of work/volunteering.
- Learn and lunch or Crafternoons – building connection and sharing passions. During lunch a team member teaches everyone something (how to make sauerkraut, knit a scarf, tie knots, etc.).
- Gardening club - work together as a team to tidy up the workplace outdoor area and bring some plants into the office.
- Moving/stretch class - stretch or do yoga together, either lead by a team member or hire someone to teach everyone how to look after their bodies.
- Dance/singing or music class – bring music into the group.
- Team building activities – hula hoop, egg race, etc.
- Meditation/mindfulness sessions – these could be done as a group or encouraged as individuals.
- Walking groups – at lunch organise regular walking groups to help with physical health and social cohesion.
- Massage – hire a massage therapist to come in and do 15-minute shoulder and neck massages in a massage chair. Everyone will love you for it!
- Social events – morning teas or lunches to bring people together to chat informally and organically.

