

**Ambulance
Victoria**



Mental Health and Wellbeing Action Plan 2019-2022

Happy and healthy people delivering great care



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Acknowledgement of traditional custodians

Ambulance Victoria respectfully acknowledges the traditional custodians of the land throughout Victoria and pays respect to their ancestors and elders, past, present and emerging.





Overview

This plan outlines the key components of the Mental Health and Wellbeing Action Plan 2019-2022 which is aligned to the Ambulance Victoria Strategic Plan 2017-2022. This plan supersedes the Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2016-2019.

This action plan will:

- ▶ Consolidate and build on learnings and activities from the first strategy, such as family engagement and the provision of integrated services across Peer Support, Psychological Services and Pastoral Care.
- ▶ Embrace and reflect the broadened focus of the redesigned Wellbeing and Support Services team.
- ▶ Provide access for staff to pilot programs that focus on prevention and early intervention that are considered best practice, and commit to evaluating effectiveness.
- ▶ Ensure programs endorsed and provided by internal and external providers meet rigorous standards and are evidence-based, or at the very least evidence-informed for our people.
- ▶ Improve engagement with a wider network of internal and external stakeholders.
- ▶ Programs delivered will support change in behaviour and attitudes towards mental health and wellbeing to improve the psychological safety climate for our people.
- ▶ Acknowledge the overlap of the Mental Health and Wellbeing Action Plan with the Health and Safety Action Plan to enable an integrated, holistic approach, for our people.



About this plan

Background

The AV Psychological Health and Wellbeing Consultative Committee (PHWCC) was established in 2015, to improve the health and psychological wellbeing of our people and their families.

Whilst working at Ambulance Victoria (AV) is rewarding, it also comes with challenges, which we are addressing as an organisation.

In order to communicate this commitment, the PHWCC, in collaboration with the Executive and the AV Board, endorsed the first AV Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2016-2019. This was the first Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy of its type to be established by any ambulance service in Australia.

This action plan builds on the foundations laid by the 2016-2019 Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy. Incorporating knowledge from the current research, the plan is also aligned with the agency recommendations resulting from Beyond Blue's Mental Health and Wellbeing Survey of Police and Emergency Services. An extensive consultation process has been undertaken within Ambulance Victoria, incorporating internal subject matter expertise to ensure that the actions are relevant to all Ambulance Victoria people.

Strategic fit

This plan is aligned with outcome three of the AV Strategic Plan 2017-2022 – 'A great place to work and volunteer'.

It also aligns with Best Care model pillar: Positive people and practices that ensure everyone has the skills, resources and support they need to do their job safely and well.

Its actions are aligned with goals:

- ▶ Building resilience
- ▶ Intervene early
- ▶ Build on our strengths
- ▶ Partner for success





Our challenges and opportunities

Challenges

- ▶ Providing support to our people at the right time, who provide a 24 hour, statewide service.
- ▶ Stigma, in particular self-stigma related to mental health.

Opportunities

- ▶ New Wellbeing and Support Services structure has introduced more internal expertise and accessibility.
- ▶ Greater engagement with external stakeholders who have experience and knowledge to share that will be of benefit to our people.

Links to other strategies and plans

Health and Safety Strategy 2019-2022

Workforce Planning Strategy 2019-2022

Best Care Framework 2017-2022

Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2019-2022

AV Strategic Plan 2017-2022

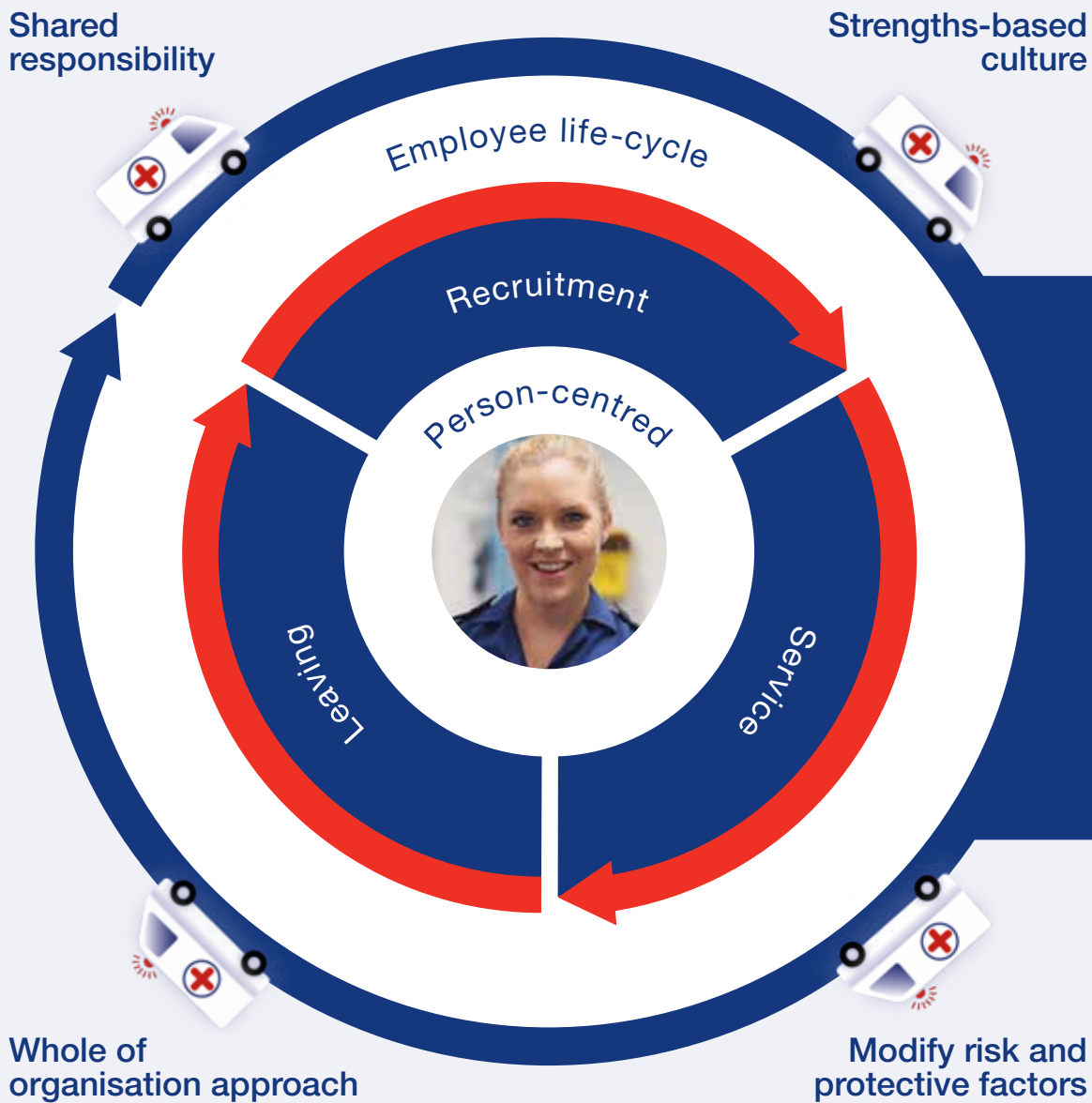
Aboriginal Employment Plan 2017-2019

Cultural Safety and Equity Action Plan

AV Integrity Framework



Our model of mental health and wellbeing



What we do....

1. Person-centred approach – with increased focus on reducing barriers to access and minimizing stigma.
2. Increased oversight around internal and external service provision to ensure best care is offered consistently to all requiring support.
3. Support individuals and their families throughout the life-cycle of their career and beyond – including a focus on recruitment and the retired and former employee groups.

How we do it....

1. Shared responsibility.
2. A whole of organisation approach.
3. Build a strengths-based culture.
4. Protecting mental health (and wellbeing) by modifying risk and protective factors.



Summary

Our Goal

Happy and healthy people delivering great care

Our Vision

Our priorities and actions



Building resilience

- ▶ Deliver evidence-based education, support and training programs to all staff
- ▶ SMART 2.0 rollout – evaluate and increase opportunities to access
- ▶ Pilot wellbeing programs focusing on prevention and early intervention
- ▶ Improve knowledge of best practice workplace design and wellbeing interventions



Intervene early

- ▶ Reduce stigma, including self-stigma
- ▶ Introduce a Wellness app
- ▶ Enhance and strengthen Peer Support program
- ▶ Wellbeing services at all stages of the employee life-cycle



Build on our strengths

- ▶ Pastoral care – broaden access to services offered
- ▶ Strengthen, expand and ensure clinical governance of the contracted service providers that make up the Victorian Ambulance Counseling Unit
- ▶ Expansion of the Peer Support Dog program
- ▶ Provisional Treatment Pilot
- ▶ Collaborate with Health and Safety on initiatives that focus on reduction of psychological injury claims and improving wellbeing



Partner for success

- ▶ Strengthen family engagement through development of a website for families with specific resources to support them
- ▶ Research partnerships
- ▶ Collaborate with key organisations (Beyond Blue, headspace, Black Dog, private hospitals etc.)
- ▶ Retired and Former Employees program (RAFE)
- ▶ Continue to participate in relevant State and National committees and forums

Our principles

1. Person-centred approach
2. Shared responsibility
3. A whole-of-organisation approach
4. Build a strengths-based culture
5. Protecting mental health (and wellbeing) by modifying risk and protective factors
6. Needs of individuals change throughout the employee life-cycle



Objective 1 Building resilience

Our priorities

01

Deliver evidence-based education, support and training programs to all staff. Target education and support around recognition and promotion of good self-care and the role prevention strategies have in maintaining mentally healthy status. This includes recognising the invaluable role family members play in building resilience and supporting staff.

02

SMART 2.0 program – This is a screening tool to assist staff to determine their current wellbeing status. It provides a baseline that guides recommendations for support or treatment options. Included is a self-care action plan to support wellness. This will be evaluated and adapted over time.

03

Pilot wellbeing programs focusing on prevention and resilience – a new initiative that focuses on building resilience and wellbeing will be identified and piloted each year of the strategy.

04

Explore research focusing on best practice interventions and work design initiatives that have wellbeing and resilience outcomes relevant for consideration in the ambulance sector. e.g. Support workforce planning around pre-screening potential employees.

We will know we are successful when

- ▶ More staff and their families receive the right information to meet their needs in regards to resilience and wellbeing.
- ▶ Uptake of SMART 2.0 assessments has increased.
- ▶ Three wellbeing initiatives have been piloted, evaluated and reported on (one per year).
- ▶ We have an improved knowledge base of innovative workplace design practices influencing wellbeing.



Objective 2 Intervene early

Our priorities

01

Decrease stigma - develop and execute a communication, education and implementation strategy to address the stigma surrounding mental health issues, with the aim of increasing support seeking.

02

Peer Support - implement a best practice peer support structure informed by external recommendations and internal experience and knowledge of local needs. Include a clear governance structure, education plan for all peers and clear communication about how they can support our people.

03

Employee life-cycle - engagement and targeting information and support across the life-cycle of all personnel. This includes pilot programs that can be accessed depending on baseline need identified in prevention programs (i.e. SMART 2.0) resulting in a 'stepped' approach to the care of our people.

04

Wellness app - evidence-based application for all AV personnel providing easy access to a range of mental health strategies as part of the stepped approach.

We will know we are successful when

- ▶ Stigma decreases, measured through the next biennial psychosocial survey.
- ▶ Peer review recommendations have been assessed and a new model has been implemented.
- ▶ We have established a baseline of data comparing years of service to services used.
- ▶ The Wellness app is in operation.



Objective 3 Build on strengths

Our priorities

01

Promote a collaborative approach to the mental health care of our people - recognise the individual strengths that personnel across the organisation can provide to support the wellbeing of our staff. Liaison across peer, pastoral care (chaplains), alcohol and other drugs, health and safety, professional conduct unit, complex care, return to work and human resource partners. Work closely with Complex Mental Health Partner.

02

Improve and broaden Victorian Ambulance Counselling Unit – a comprehensive review and improvement process, including streamlining systems, training the network, expanding the network to cover gaps and expand on the range of mental health professionals offering a current best practice service including telehealth.

03

Broaden pastoral care network and services offered - particularly in regional areas. Utilising volunteers and partnerships with Victorian Council of Churches (VCC – Emergency Ministry) and pastoral care networks. Educate staff in the benefits and role of pastoral care.

04

Continue and broaden the Peer Support Dog program - into regional areas within the coordinated program of peer support.

05

Provisional Treatment Pilot – being led by Health and Safety - government initiative to provide support immediately to people submitting a psychological claim through WorkCover, while decision is pending.

We will know we are successful when

- ▶ A collaborative approach has been established to work across teams for the best interest of the the individuals requiring support.
- ▶ Through the improvement and broadening of VACU services, the utilisation data of face-to-face, 1800MANERS, telehealth and internal psychology services will be reviewed to ensure equity of service access.
- ▶ There is a graded increase in pastoral care visits by region.
- ▶ The Peer Support Dog program is providing improved contact across the state.
- ▶ Reportable KPI's for Provisional Treatment Pilot.



Objective 4 Partner for success

Our priorities

01

Family engagement- provide opportunities for collaboration with and education for the families of our people. Ensure education and support is accessible for families / primary carers of staff via electronic, face-to-face, and group and individual modalities. Engage with external agencies to promote the importance of prevention and early intervention.

02

Connecting with key external stakeholders - a broader network of key wellbeing stakeholders will be established and where relevant leverage sharing of skills, expertise and services. This will be broader than the emergency services sector.

03

Research partnerships - Explore opportunities to partner with and in research projects that are specifically relevant to the mental health and wellbeing of our people and are in line with the 2019-2022 action plan.

04

Retired and Former Employees (RAFE) Peer Support program offered and evaluated to continue to support all former staff.

We will know we are successful when there is an

- ▶ Increase in families accessing services and the number of family education sessions implemented.
- ▶ Increase in external stakeholder engagement/collaboration.
- ▶ Increase in the number of former employees accessing supports.



Our performance

Performance and success

Achievements of this plan will be measured against six key performance indicators.

KPI 1: Increase in use of counselling services: internal face-to-face, VACU network, 24/7 counselling line and telehealth in areas of need - demonstrating improved equity of service access

KPI 2: What percentage and what stage of career are our people using support services

KPI 3: Increased uptake of SMART 2.0 assessments

- ▶ Corporate
 - ▶ Operational
 - ▶ Peer Support
-

KPI 4: 10% reduction in incapacity duration, for both physical and psychological injury over the three year action plan

KPI 5: Graded increase of pastoral care visits by region and percentage of workforce

KPI 6: Increase in families accessing services and number of family education sessions implemented



Monitoring and reporting on our performance against this plan

Ambulance Victoria already reports on its performance through a detailed set of indicators aligned with our legislative priorities and related Statement of Priorities.

Measuring our progress on the achievement of our objectives and priorities in this plan will be undertaken through regular monitoring against our existing indicators.

The KPI's will be measured using our Internal Health Management Database and via the biennial AV Psychosocial Survey and already established regular surveys of each service.

This plan also includes a series of success statements, which will be tracked by:

- ▶ Allocation of clear accountability and responsibility for achievement of each of the objectives and priorities. All activities delegated to a lead.
- ▶ Establishing a relevant baseline for each priority.
- ▶ Regular reporting and lessons learned activities through existing governance arrangements.





If you're an employee or volunteer at AV and you are concerned about your own safety or the safety of someone else, please seek help immediately via the VACU 24-hour counselling service on 1800 626 377 or call 000 for immediate assistance.

