



Workplace friendships and mental wellbeing

Did you know that workplace friendships and happiness are directly proportional to each other? This basically means the stronger the bond you have with your colleagues, the higher your chances to stay happy and healthy. Statistics suggest that one in five Australians have taken time off from work in the past 12 months because they felt stressed, anxious, depressed or mentally unhealthy.

Developing camaraderie with your colleagues beyond workplaces can boost mental wellbeing. Having a friend at work may enable you to share things freely - after all a problem shared, is a problem halved! This can help improve your stress levels and mental wellbeing.

R U OK? aligns its 'workplace champion' campaign on a similar theme. It encourages organisations to promote peer-to-peer support and regular meaningful conversations amongst colleagues in the workplace.

Remember, you don't need medical qualifications to just ask your colleagues about how they feel today. Friendship plays a major role. If you have a strong bond with your co-worker, such conversations won't be awkward. It also means that your colleague considers you trustworthy, which is great for a workplace environment.



How can workplaces contribute towards nurturing office friendships?



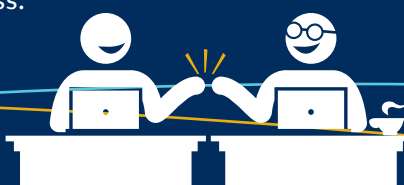
It is a proven fact that workplaces with great employee engagement programs are able to keep their workers not only happy but retain them longer. Studies reflect that 91% workers believe that mental health in the workplace is important; however only 52% of them agree that their workplace is mentally healthy.

▶ Encouraging conversations during coffee breaks can indirectly pump in the required happy hormones that help in dealing with stress.

▶ Giving employees more opportunity to engage in activities, in particular health and wellbeing initiatives.

▶ Workplaces can give the responsibility to established employees to guide and buddy relatively newer ones.

▶ Organisations can conduct team outings, special gatherings, and lunch and dinner opportunities to promote healthy friendship among workers.





Mental health first aid

How can you help someone who might be struggling to cope up with day-to-day life?

The Australian Bureau of Statistics in its National Study of Mental Health and Wellbeing, 2020-21 reported that 15% of Australians aged 16-85 years experienced high or very high levels of psychological distress. In these times, where people are still reeling with the aftereffects of COVID-19, it becomes all the more important to extend a helping hand to people around you, especially in your workplace.

Lets' look at a few steps on how you can make a difference.

- ▶ While speaking to your colleague, look for signs such as mood swings, social withdrawals, negative conversations and lack of interest.
- ▶ If you notice these signs, be empathetic to their feelings.
- ▶ Try having a quiet conversation during coffee or lunch breaks to understand the problem.
- ▶ Take an active listening approach, don't feel you have to "fix" their problem
- ▶ Sometimes just giving a bit of emotional support can resolve half of the issues.
- ▶ If emotional support doesn't help, encourage them to seek professional help.
- ▶ Follow up to show that that you are available for help whenever they need.
- ▶ Lastly, suggest and take part in your workplace wellbeing activities.

If you know someone who's struggling, you can direct them to the following organisations that offer a range of support services:

Beyond Blue: call 1300 22 636 or visit beyondblue.org.au

Lifeline: call for 24/7 crisis support, 13 11 14 or visit lifeline.org.au

Men's Help Line: call 1300 78 99 78 or visit mensline.org.au

Black Dog Institute: visit blackdoginsitute.org.au

Recipe - breakfast veggie frittata

This is the perfect recipe for those looking to add more protein and vegies on their plate. Plus it is great for people dealing with diabetes.

Serves 5/ 15 min prep

Ingredients

- ▶ 1 litre egg whites (frozen or using 12 eggs)
- ▶ Large handful of spinach 2 cups (or more)
- ▶ ½ cup grated cheese (optional)
- ▶ finely chopped vegetables (capsicum, broccoli, zucchini, mushrooms)
- ▶ Pinch of salt, pepper, other spices (turmeric or smoked paprika powder)

Method

- ▶ Mix 1 litre of egg whites, large handful of chopped baby spinach, half cup grated cheese (optional) and thinly diced capsicum, broccoli, zucchini, mushrooms in a bowl. You can also use any veggies you have at hand.
- ▶ Season with salt, pepper and spices as per your taste.
- ▶ Place mixed contents into a baking paper lined tin or loaf tin.
- ▶ Bake in the oven at 180 degrees until cooked through.
- ▶ Serve and enjoy!



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The LGIS WorkCare Services team are specialist health and wellbeing professionals.

Contact the team on 9483 8888 for more information on our health and wellbeing services.