

EMPLOYER'S GUIDE TO YOUTH'S WELLBEING

WHAT IS WELLBEING?

Wellbeing is a term used to describe how 'good' our lives are, it includes both feeling good and functioning well. It's more than just being happy and instead encompasses a range of both feel-good factors and psychological wellbeing.

This involves how we function on a personal level, including for example our ability to think clearly, have high self-esteem, experience positive emotions and feel optimistic. Wellbeing also encompasses how we function on a social level, such as whether we have positive relationships with others, engage in prosocial behaviours like volunteering as well as whether we are empathetic towards others. Wellbeing also has a significant impact on workplace performance including levels of engagement, feelings of competence and the ability to bounce back following setbacks.

WHY DOES IT MATTER?

Because wellbeing is a global indicator of how well we are feeling and functioning, it makes sense to make it a focus for work, because when individuals do well the communities around them also thrive. Research has demonstrated there are several key benefits of high wellbeing for the workplace:

BETTER PRODUCTIVITY AND ENGAGEMENT

- Where organisations manage employee wellbeing the percentage of engaged employees skyrockets from 7% to 55%.
- Employees with good physical and mental wellbeing are almost 3 times more productive than unhealthy workers and work an extra 94 effective hours each month.

INCREASED CREATIVITY

- Wellbeing has a large influence on how we think, when we have high wellbeing we experience positive emotions which are associated with a better ability to think 'big picture', come up with more ideas and be more creative in our approaches.
- Where workplaces manage employee wellbeing well, self-reported creativity and innovation increases from 20% to 72%.

BETTER PHYSICAL HEALTH

- Higher wellbeing is associated with a lower risk of heart disease, stroke, common colds and increased chance of surviving illness.

- Individuals with high wellbeing have the fewest daily health limitations and are lower in health care utilisation.

- Higher wellbeing in youth has been associated with increased health positive behaviours (such as being a non-smoker, performing physical activity, using sunscreen and eating healthily).

BETTER MENTAL FUNCTIONING

- Individuals with high mental wellbeing have the healthiest psychosocial functioning and are most likely to have clear goals in life, high resilience, high intimacy and low feelings of helplessness.

LOWER ABSENTEEISM, PRESENTEEISM AND TURNOVER

- Workers with low physical and mental wellbeing take up to nine times more sick leave.
- Presenteeism is the act of attending work while ill and performing at a reduced capacity and it is estimated to cost businesses 6.1 billion dollars every year (absenteeism is 4.7 billion).
- Understanding the wellbeing of employees is crucial, because employees with high mental wellbeing have the fewest missed days of work and the fewest work cutbacks.
- Organisations that do not successfully manage employee wellbeing are four times more likely to lose talent within the next 12 months and the cost of replacing an employee is estimated at a minimum of 75% of that employee's wage.

IMPROVING THE WELLBEING OF OUR YOUTH IN THE WORKPLACE

5 WAYS EMPLOYERS CAN BOOST WELLBEING AT WORK

The **2018 Skillsroad Youth Census** of over 25,000 youth demonstrated some simple changes that employers can implement in order to enhance the wellbeing of their young employees:

1. SET CLEAR EXPECTATIONS

Have a clear conversation around what you expect from your employees, they will not be able to succeed in the role if they don't know what that success looks like. For young people, knowing what is expected of them at work leads to significantly higher levels of wellbeing.

2. HELP EMPLOYEES TO FEEL SUPPORTED AND CARED FOR AT WORK

Make an effort to engage with and understand your employees. This could be as simple as asking them how their week has been or showing an interest in something important to them. Youth who feel supported and cared for at work experience much higher levels of wellbeing than those who do not.

3. UPSKILL YOUR MANAGERS

Young people expect managers to care about them, in addition to this young people who rate their managers positively have much higher wellbeing levels than those that rate their manager negatively.

So if you want to invest in any training, train your managers to coach and mentor your younger employees. When apprentices were asked about what would improve the pathway the number one response was employers having better coaching and mentoring skills.

4. CREATE A POSITIVE AND FRIENDLY WORKPLACE

This was the number one expectation of youth in the 2018 Youth Census report. Young Australians want to go to work and feel they are part of a positive and friendly work environment. Make time to get to you know employees and create opportunities to celebrate successes, after all, other people matter.

5. PROVIDE CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR GROWTH

Wellbeing at work requires the sense that you are contributing meaningfully as well as growing and learning.

