



CAA
The Council of
Ambulance Authorities Inc.



Health and Wellbeing Strategy – a resilient workforce and healthy workplace

The Council of Ambulance Authorities (CAA), Ambulance New Zealand and the National Council of Ambulance Unions (NCAU) recognise the essential role of mental health and wellbeing in achieving a resilient workforce and healthy workplace and are committed to ensuring that the mental health and wellbeing of staff (employed and volunteer) is promoted and supported. To enable this, they have recognised the need for, and agreed to, an overarching strategy to guide initiatives that promote staff psychological health, minimise psychological harm due to workplace factors and support protective factors to develop mental health resilience across the workforce.

The **strategy** is – **To pro-actively provide and strengthen effective leadership across CAA member ambulance services to significantly reduce the likelihood of psychological harm to staff due to workplace factors.**

The **10 steps** below provide a high-level framework to underpin the strategy:

1. **Promote** a positive mental health culture in the workplace through leadership, communication, policy/procedure, environment, work/job design, resource balancing, rest and recovery.
2. **Reduce** stigma around mental health conditions and psychological stress in the workplace
3. **Improve** the mental health literacy of the workforce
4. **Develop** the capability of staff to interact with and help someone experiencing a mental health crisis, from identification through to return to work e.g. using peer support networks and provide ready access to professional clinical services
5. **Ensure** that an integrated approach to mental health and wellbeing is woven through the workplace and that leadership at all levels model behaviours and practices that promote a mentally healthy workplace culture
6. **Implement** examples of best-practice and effective initiatives between services e.g. the beyondblue guide for first responders
7. **Seek** internal/external specialist expertise to achieve improved mental health and wellbeing outcomes for the workforce.
8. **Collaborate** to ensure staff, during each phase of their career have adequate self-awareness, knowledge and support in relation to managing their personal mental health and psychological stressors
9. **Implement** systems that provide the service with early notification of potential psychological harm related risk
10. **Collect, monitor and respond** to data that evaluates the mental health and wellbeing of the workforce and the possibility of psychological harm occurring e.g. using data to validate Mental Health Workcover claims and supporting ongoing ambulance/emergency service specific research into the prevention and management of mental health injuries

These 10 steps provide high level guidance and need to be interpreted and implemented in a manner that best suits the strategic purpose, operational and legislative environment and culture of each organisation. Importantly, these 10 steps clearly signal that the ambulance sector believes in cultivating an emotionally safe workforce and is committed to an organisational culture that allows both good physical and mental health to flourish. This investment will better enable the staff of our members to provide the best service to their community and deliver optimum care.

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Signed:

Chair of CAA

CEO of AMBNZ

President of NCAU