Health and Safety Guideline
HSG 3.4 Wellbeing

1.   Purpose

This guideline provides the University approach to wellbeing. It includes all aspects of working life, physical, psychosocial and environmental. The intent is to develop and support a physical and mental healthy workplace with a focus on prevention; education and training; and promotion of support services.

This document provides guidance on the University's framework for health and wellbeing as aligned with World Health Organisation principles that address mental health, physical health, food for health, environmental, community and work health.

2.   Scope

This Guideline applies to all health, safety and wellbeing activities of staff, students, visitors (including volunteers and contractors), Council members, and other persons interacting with the University of Newcastle (workers); the operations of staff of University aligned Research Centres and controlled entities; and all activities conducted by or on behalf of the University of Newcastle on and outside of the University's campuses.

3.   Guidelines

3.1.   Wellbeing program development

Direction and strategy for health and wellbeing programs and services is evidence informed, utilising data derived from staff engagement surveys and feedback forums, the University Wellbeing Smart Hub (Balance2Life), Employee Assistance Program (EAP) services and other relevant local and international sources and directed by the University of Newcastle Wellbeing, Health and Safety Strategy 2020-2025.

The University's health and wellbeing programs and initiatives are culturally diverse and inclusive and encourage healthy lifestyle choices and active participation. The Health, Safety and Wellbeing – Wellbeing SharePoint page contains wellbeing information, resources,

training, annual wellbeing calendar of activities, and access to the Wellbeing Smart Hub (Balance2Life) and Mental Health First Aid Officer Network.

3.2. Fostering good health

The University is responsible for providing a work environment that minimises the risk of harm to all and strives to create an environment where staff and students can flourish.

Staff and students are responsible for taking reasonable care of their health and wellbeing while working and studying at the University. This will differ from person to person, but may involve:

- maintaining a healthy lifestyle;
- engaging in mental health practices (positive emotion, relationships and connection and meaningful work);
- utilising available prevention and support services (e.g. flexible working arrangements, Wellbeing Smart Hub, mentoring and employee assistance programs (EAP))
- notifying your leader early and engaging in support when physical or mental ill-health is a concern (workplace adjustment, utilising leave, early intervention physiotherapy (EIP).

Staff and students can participate in services offered by the University to develop skills to manage the demands of their work and study; self-care strategies; stress management techniques; and a better understanding of mental health, including Mental Health First Aid.

3.3. Risks to Wellbeing

The University is committed to providing a psychologically and physically safe and healthy place to work and study, and providing wellbeing initiatives to educate and support staff in across the wellbeing continuum.

Initiatives specific to psychological wellbeing include awareness around mental illness and good mental health, preventing ill health by identifying psychological risk and implementing controls and treatment for identified risks, and providing support and a safe environment to recover from mental illness.

KRA 2.11: Identifying and Managing Psychosocial Hazards in the Workplace details the University's commitment to identification, assessment and management of psychosocial and psychological risks that impact the wellbeing of staff and students.

Psychosocial hazards and appropriate controls will vary for every workplace. Whilst it is recognised that a psychosocial hazard may exist in isolation, in most circumstances hazards

will occur with a range of psychosocial and physical hazards. Therefore, it is essential that when physical hazards are identified, the corresponding psychosocial effect on the workplace should also be assessed as part of the University's health and safety hazard and risk identification process outlined in Guideline [HSG 3.1: Health and Safety Risk Management.](#) Further information is also available in the [KRA 2.11: Identifying and Managing Psychosocial Hazards in the Workplace.](#)

3.4. Responding to others experiencing poor mental health

When trying to assist others experiencing poor mental health, staff and students should not feel they need to act beyond their expertise or comfort level.

If it is not a crisis, but a student or staff member appears to be experiencing poor mental health, staff and students should talk to the person and encourage them to seek professional advice or contact a Mental Health First Aid Officer. The Employee Assistance Program (EAP) can also provide manager assist services and critical incident support.

3.5. Support Services

Wellbeing Smart Hub ([Balance2Life](#))
An online hub where staff can access a range of resources relating to personal health and wellbeing to support both their personal and work lives. Staff can log in anonymously with access via mobile and desktops devices.

Fitness Passport
The Fitness Passport programs offers staff and their families the opportunity to access a wide range of sports and gym facilities and pools across Newcastle, Central Coast, Port Macquarie, Sydney and Orange region. The fees are at a reduced rate in comparison to normal gym memberships.

[Mental Health First Aid Officer Register](#)
A list of accredited University staff that can be contacted as a confidential peer support for initial contact, assistance and referral to internal and external supports. Officers can be contacted within business hours (9-5pm). Staff are able to contact a Mental Health First Aid Officer from their own business area or any other area across the University.

Employee Assistance Program (EAP)
EAP provider is available for assistance and support. Further information and advice on how to book an appointment can be found on the University's [EAP](#) webpage or in the [KRA 2.9: Employee Assistance Program](#).

Staff and students who are travelling for their work or study with the University are covered by the University's travel insurance policies and can be connected to mental health services during travel by connecting to the University's [Employee Assistance Program](#) (domestic support) or [International SOS](#) (international support).

Well to Work Program

This program involves supporting staff with non-work-related injuries and illness or work-related injuries or illness where the staff member has not lodged a claim for workers compensation. Staff are allocated a designated case manager that can liaise with them, their treatment providers, with their consent, and their supervisor to put a safe and sustainable plan in place that enables them to remain in, or return to, the workplace.

The plans can include things like using leave provisions to work reduced hours, specialised equipment and other reasonable workplace adjustments.

The University supports staff experiencing mental illness by assisting them to take leave from, manage the impact on, and be supported in returning to, work. Further information is available in guideline [HSG 5.5: Non-Workers Compensation Illness or Injury.](#)

Early Intervention Physiotherapy (EIP)

The EIP program was implemented to assist staff who have soft tissue injuries as a consequence of a minor workplace incident or overuse injury. It is not a self-referral service, staff need to contact the Health, Safety and Wellbeing (HSW) team who will refer them for assessment and treatment to a Physiotherapist. The HSW team also work with the staff member to do a root cause analysis and put controls in place where needed.

Job Access

The Job Access Scheme is a federally funded program designed to support individuals with an ongoing disability. The scheme funds equipment and training to support staff to remain in the workplace. They also provide free advice on modifying work areas, how to talk about their disability, training for co-workers, negotiating flexible work arrangements and returning to work. Member of the HSW team can assist staff to apply.

Mentoring program

The Professional Staff Mentoring Program contributes to the achievement of our Inspiring People Strategy by offering participants the opportunity to receive support and guidance from experienced staff to increase their skills and confidence, build networks and navigate their career goals. Open to professional staff employed in any type of contract at any career level.

Volunteering opportunities

As part of the personal leave provision at the University, staff can apply for up to two days per year to participate in volunteer activities in a community based non-profit organisation, charitable group or other group identified in need of services and assistance. Staff are also able to undertake volunteering at the University which can provide opportunities to make new friends and diversify a staff member's experience outside the office.

Chaplains

The University has Chaplains available who can offer compassionate help in all situations and support the spiritual life of the University community –- staff do not need to belong to a religious group to see a chaplain. Chaplains are experienced, credentialed, religious workers who are authorised by their faith tradition to provide support and guidance.

Monthly wellbeing campaigns

The University's Wellbeing Co-ordinator runs monthly campaigns on topical issues impacting on staff. These might include things like workshops or sharing information available.

Flexible Work Arrangements

Requests to work flexibly are about finding a solution that works for everyone. Discussion and compromise are a key part of the process. All arrangements to work flexibly should be entered into on the understanding that they will not affect a staff member's ability to manage the inherent requirements of their position, or impact on other staff workloads.

Such arrangements may include, but are not limited to:

- flexible start, and finish times within core hours of work; or
- working from home or at another location on an ad-hoc basis.

Staff should be prepared to have an open and cooperative discussion with their supervisor that is results-focused. They should also have some alternative ideas if their preferred option is not available. Staff may also apply for flexible work arrangements in certain circumstances as prescribed by the National Employment Standards under the Fair Work Act 2009.

Leave

Staff can access up to 15 days paid leave (pro-rata for part time staff) where they are not fit for work because of a personal illness or injury; or to provide care or support to a family/household member.

The Enterprise Agreements also include the option of Life Leave for staff. Up to 10 days per year will be available to use for a wide variety of life events such as family celebrations and children's school activities and the reasoning can remain confidential unless the leave is for more than three consecutive days. Life Leave is additional to Annual Leave and on top of Personal/Carer's Leave and gives staff the choice and flexibility to take leave that meets their needs.

Under Enterprise Agreements, staff are able to access Compassionate Leave of up to 2 days per occasion without having to access Personal/Carer's Leave in the first instance.

Family & Domestic Violence Support
Under Enterprise Agreements, Staff (other than those in casual employment) will be able to access up to 20 days annually for medical appointments, legal proceedings and other activities related to domestic and family violence and abuse.

Furthermore, there will be a new provision for Casual Staff to access up to 10 days paid leave annually where they are experiencing domestic and family violence and abuse.

In addition, the following support is available to staff:
- Flexible work arrangements including changes to working times or duties, consistent with the reasonable operational needs of the work unit;
- Changes of work location, telephone number or email address to avoid harassing contact. Removal from staff directory if needed;
- Support from Security with things like responding to requests for assistance, review of the workplace for the purpose of assessing whether any safety protocols need to be implemented, supplying perpetrators vehicle registration for patrols, escorting staff to and from carparks etc;
- The development of a Workplace Personal Safety Plan that includes an emergency contact plan if staff are absent without explanation; and
- Support for staff member's supervisor via the Managers Assist Service with NewPsych. This would include support around their own emotional wellbeing and plan for the team if the disclosure has been or needs to be shared.

Learning and Capability Development

The University recognises that staff development is an important part of providing meaningful work. Below is an example of some learning initiatives.

- Live Learn Lead - Leadership Pathway is a contemporary, unique leadership pathway designed for academic and professional leaders. The program provides all existing and emerging leaders with an opportunity to develop and grow their

leadership and management capabilities, so they can empower their teams to reach their own level of excellence.

- o Women in Leadership - develops senior Academic and Professional women's leadership skills, knowledge and confidence, as well as increasing their opportunity to participate in positions of leadership.
- o Prosci's Change Management Certification Program gives participants the tools, know-how and support they need to drive successful change going forward.
- o LinkedIn Learning delivers online courses for staff to help achieve personal and professional goals. Staff have unlimited access to a vast library of courses designed to advance skills with personalised recommendations based on previous experience.
- o Accidental Counsellor is a short, practical course equipping people with hands-on counselling skills to face issues that can arise when helping others in both their personal and professional life.
- o All About You : Resilience training by Lifeline is a 90-minute online presentation that reminds us to tune into our own needs and whatever restorative experiences we need to enable us to retain our enthusiasm, energy and general wellbeing.

4.   Definitions

In the context of the Health and Safety Management System Framework:

Good mental health	Good mental health refers to a state of wellbeing in which a person realises their own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and is able to make a contribution to their community (Royal Commission Into Victoria's Mental Health System Interim Report, 2019, p. 16).
Hazard	A situation, condition, or event, including a person's behaviour, that exposes a worker to a risk to their health or safety during the course of work in a workplace, that has the potential to cause injury, illness or even death or to damage buildings, plant or equipment.
Leader / Supervisor	Any member of the University who is responsible for supervising staff and/or undergraduate or postgraduate students and/or for leading research projects.
Mental Health First Aid	Assistance provided to a person experiencing poor mental health in the first instance, until professional help is available. Free Mental Health First Aid training is available for all staff and students.
Worker	Includes an employee, conjoint, student on work experience, contractor, sub-contractor, and volunteer. A person is a worker if the person carries out work in any capacity for the University or another person conducting a business or undertaking, including work as: (a) an employee, or (b) a contractor or subcontractor, or (c) an employee of a contractor or subcontractor, or (d) an employee of a labour hire company who has been assigned to work in the person's business or undertaking, or

	(e) an outworker, or (f) an apprentice or trainee, or (g) a student gaining work experience, or (h) a volunteer, or (i) a person of a prescribed class.

5. Responsibilities

A comprehensive list of health, safety and wellbeing responsibilities is provided in Guideline HSG 1.2: Roles and Responsibilities.

Specific responsibilities under this Guideline include:

Supervisors and Leaders

- Recognise the importance that work environment can play in supporting staff in their wellbeing needs by:
    - Talking openly about mental health in the workplace
    - Sharing personal experience of a mental health condition (if comfortable doing so)
    - Encouraging open communication when problems arise and helping to find solutions
    - Respecting other people and celebrating difference
    - Being open to learning about mental health conditions and other people's experiences
    - Respecting the privacy of others
    - Being a positive role model – being genuine in actions and promoting the kind of culture that inspires people to do their best
    - Speaking up when seeing instances of bullying or harassment or discrimination
    - Cooperating with University policies and procedures, and supporting initiatives aimed at improving mental health in the workplace
    - Understanding how the University can provide support and how to access help if needed.

Workers

- Contribute to a positive and supportive workplace in addition to looking after their own mental wellbeing.

6. References & Related Documents

The following documentation is referenced in, or applicable to this Guideline:

HSG 1.2: Roles and Responsibilities

[HSG 3.1: Health and Safety Risk Management](#)

[HSG 5.5: Non-Workers Compensation Illness or Injury](#)

[KRA 2.9: Employee Assistance Program.](#)

[KRA 2.11: Identifying and Managing Psychosocial Hazards in the Workplace](#)

[University of Newcastle Wellbeing, Health and Safety Strategy 2020-2025](#)

7. Amendment History

Version	Date of Issue	Approval	Section(s) Modified	Details of Amendment
1	July 2023	CPCO	-	Original version with latest amendment.

8. Appendices

Nil