

CHECKLIST FOR RTO SENIOR LEADERSHIP

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Supporting vocational education and training (VET) student mental health and wellbeing

PURPOSE:

Assess and prioritise actions against the eight key areas below to achieve a whole of RTO approach to successfully support VET student mental health and wellbeing:

1. Identify who is responsible.
2. Raise awareness.
3. Build a culture of support.
4. Maintain engagement.
5. Embrace diversity.
6. Upskill trainers and assessors.
7. Develop partnerships.
8. Bring students on board.

This checklist supports the eight action areas (Figure 1) described in the **Senior Leadership Guide** and will help you assess your organisation's progress against the key action areas described in that document.

Once you have read the **Senior Leadership Guide**, use this checklist to highlight actions that are a priority for your RTO to implement in the next 12 months, and mark them off once they have been achieved.

Note:

- As RTOs vary greatly in size, there may be some actions that are more realistic and achievable to implement, and some that will be more appropriate for larger organisations.
- You do not need to do complete the actions in any particular order. Consider actions that work well for your RTO at this point in time or for delivery in the next 12 months.

FIGURE 1: EIGHT ACTION AREAS FOR YOUR ORGANISATION



1. IDENTIFY WHO IS RESPONSIBLE

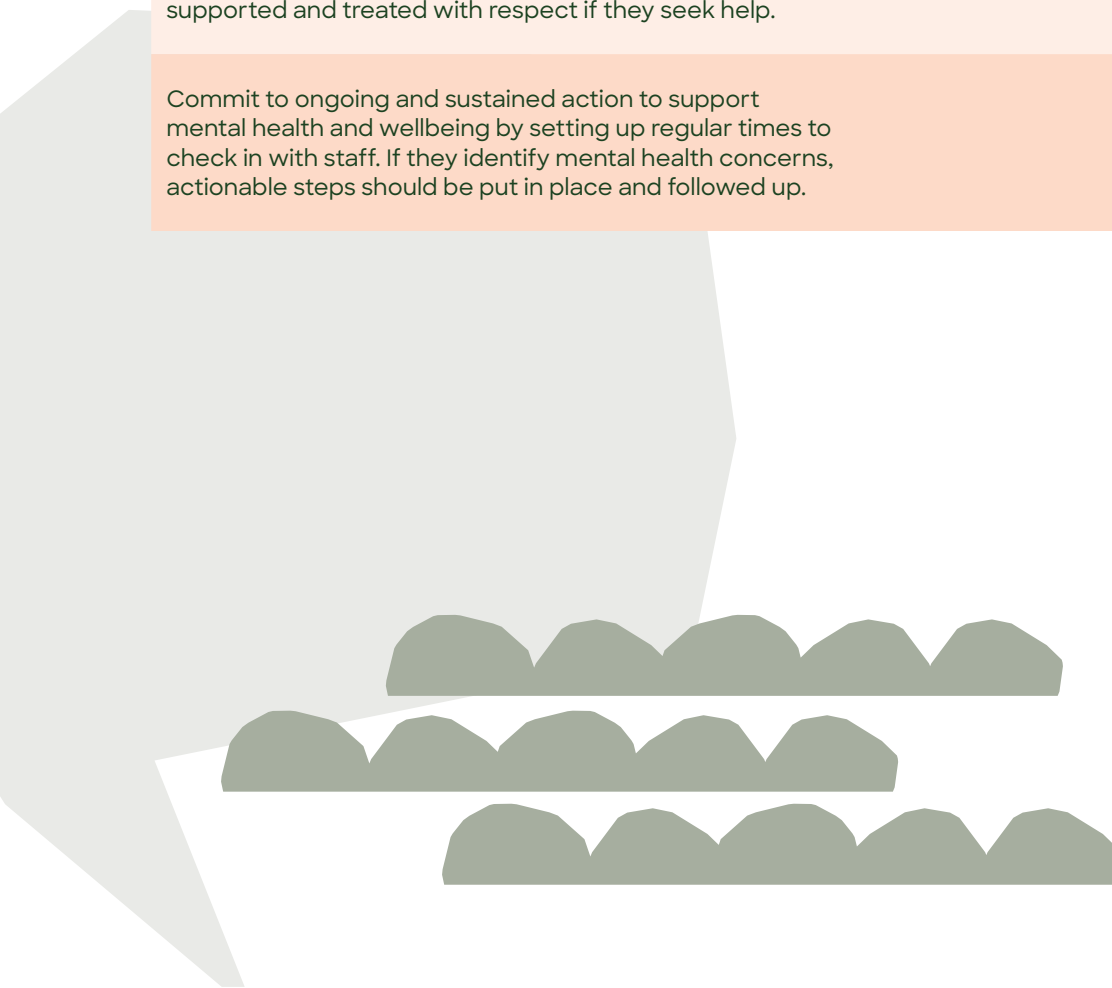
ACTION	PRIORITY	ACHIEVED
<p>Develop a mental health policy and action plan which identifies the key people/positions responsible.</p> <p>In larger organisations, this might be a broader group of staff who are mental health champions. In a smaller RTO, this may need to be your responsibility as a leader.</p>		
<p>Include mental health and wellbeing as a standing item on leadership/team meeting agendas with designated people to speak to the item.</p>		
<p>Develop a policy on working with partner employers on who is responsible for what elements of promoting and supporting student/employee mental health, and how you will work together.</p>		

2. RAISE AWARENESS

ACTION	PRIORITY	ACHIEVED
<p>Disseminate information about mental health (including information from local mental health services) in written form to both students and staff e.g. newsletters, website updates.</p>		
<p>Acknowledge local, national and international mental health days to normalise conversations about mental health and show your support e.g. R U Ok Day, National Day of Action against Bullying and Violence and World Mental Health Day. You can find these here from the Australian Mental Health Commission.</p>		
<p>Organise appropriate guest speakers and/or training for staff and students on mental health, e.g. through seminars, stalls or events.</p>		
<p>Ensure students know where and how to access support services (both internally and externally). Reminders should be sent regularly and provided by staff.</p>		
<p>Ensure staff know where they can access support if they need it e.g. Employee Assistance Program (if applicable).</p>		
<p>Share and schedule time for staff to read this suite of resources and set a time to discuss the resources.</p>		
<p>Share this suite of resources with employer partners and/or resources from organisations such as those provided by Safe Work Australia and beyondblue.</p>		

3. BUILD A CULTURE OF SUPPORT

ACTION	PRIORITY	ACHIEVED
<p>Include mental health promotion (including approaches to reducing stigma and using appropriate language) in your strategic plan, policies, and decision-making processes.</p> <p>Be explicit with your staff around the messaging and language they should use around mental health (outlined in Mental Health 101).</p>		
<p>Ensure HR/leadership departments have a proactive approach to wellbeing and workplace culture (outlined in the Guide for RTO senior leadership and Guide for administrative staff).</p>		
<p>Create and maintain a safe way for students to disclose mental ill-health prior to commencing study – this may involve a way to indicate they would like to talk to someone privately – rather than putting the details in an enrolment form.</p>		
<p>Create and maintain a supportive and effective process for a student to disclose mental health concerns during their studies and ensure you have policies in place regarding how to respond and offer support.</p>		
<p>Actively encourage staff to ask for support when they need it. Convey that staff mental health is equally important as student mental health, and that staff will be supported and treated with respect if they seek help.</p>		
<p>Commit to ongoing and sustained action to support mental health and wellbeing by setting up regular times to check in with staff. If they identify mental health concerns, actionable steps should be put in place and followed up.</p>		



4. MAINTAIN STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

ACTION	PRIORITY	ACHIEVED
Develop a policy responding to non-attendance/decline in academic performance and communicate this clearly so staff understand their role and required steps.		
Ensure there is a clearly communicated system and process for requesting and making reasonable adjustments to course requirements and task due dates based on student mental ill health.		
Support staff to maintain student engagement by providing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • clear information on how to reach out to, and communicate effectively with, students who are disengaging with learning due to mental ill health • guidance on how to incorporate flexible learning opportunities • adequate time to follow up on students who are disengaging with learning • opportunities to debrief or discuss approaches to follow up with students who are disengaging with learning. 		
Develop and implement a policy on maintaining engagement for students studying remotely.		

5. EMBRACE DIVERSITY

ACTION	PRIORITY	ACHIEVED
Have clear policies around inclusion and diversity and convey these to all staff, including in orientation for new staff and students.		
Have clear policies that address bullying, racism, vilification, discrimination or intimidation and convey these to all staff, including in orientation for new staff and students.		
Ensure signage, posters and artwork are welcoming to everyone. For example, using signage in appropriate languages and explicitly welcoming minority groups.		
Consult with staff and students about what will help them feel included and involved. Invite suggestions through discussion at staff meetings, or through anonymous surveys.		
Use diverse types of resources to communicate with staff, including clear graphics, evidence based, audio or video contributions.		
Celebrate diversity and incorporate celebrations and social activities relevant to all staff and students into event calendars.		
Actively advertise to diverse groups to recruit staff.		

6. UPSKILL TRAINER/ASSESSORS TO SUPPORT STUDENTS

ACTION	PRIORITY	ACHIEVED
Ensure activities to upskill staff in mental health are included in your organisation's relevant policies and in team and staff workplans.		
Embed mental health resources in orientation processes for all new staff to ensure a baseline knowledge of mental health is provided. This could include the Mental Health 101 and Guides for: senior leadership; trainers and assessors; and administrative staff included in this suite of resources.		
Resource appropriate mental health training for staff. For example, organise and/or provide time for staff to read mental health resources, attend relevant webinars, complete online learning or in-person training and embed regular mental health refresher training in work plans for staff.		
Contact your local mental health service to build networks, find out how best to link/refer students to them and to enquire about training opportunities for staff.		
Ensure students and staff know where they can access mental health information and/or support in, and outside, your organisation. Include information about mental health, ill-health and where to get help on your RTO's website and in newsletters and other communication material.		

7. DEVELOP PARTNERSHIPS WITH SERVICES AND SUPPORTS

ACTION	PRIORITY	ACHIEVED
Include activities to develop partnerships with external mental health services in your organisation's relevant policy or plan (e.g. mental health policy or stakeholder engagement plan).		
If your organisation provides dedicated wellbeing and student support services, include activities to build partnerships and links between teaching, administrative areas and these services.		
Assign a responsible staff member/s of the RTO to identify what local services exist and liaise with them.		
Arrange meetings or phone calls with local mental health services and community organisations to learn what they do and how you can collaborate or refer students to them.		
Promote internal and external supports regularly to staff and students, encouraging them to seek support if required.		

8. BRING STUDENTS ON BOARD

ACTION	PRIORITY	ACHIEVED
Seek information from students about their needs and perspectives of mental health and wellbeing, for example through surveys, consultations, focus groups.		
Support a student action group with a focus on mental health and wellbeing.		
Co-design mental health and wellbeing resources, programs or initiatives with students, including students with a lived experience of mental ill-health.		
Ask students to participate in reviewing and evaluating initiatives (including students in designing and conducting the evaluation).		
Establish peer support programs where students can connect with other students to safely share experiences and advice.		

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Disclaimer The 'supporting VET student mental health and wellbeing' resources (the Resources) are designed to assist registered training organisations (RTOs) to understand relevant legislation and policy, as well as the application of that legislation/policy to the provision of vocational education and training to support student mental health and wellbeing.

The information contained in the Resources is intended only as a guide to relevant legislation and policy and does not constitute legal advice, impose additional legal obligations on RTOs or purport to provide binding interpretations of legislative obligations (for example, those under the *2025 Standards for Registered Training Organisation (RTOs) (Commonwealth)*, the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Commonwealth)*, and the *Disability Standards for Education 2005 (Commonwealth)*).

The information contained in the Resources is accurate as at the date of publication. RTOs should seek legal advice specific to their individual circumstances to understand their legal obligations. For any questions about the Resources, please contact the [Department of Employment and Workplace Relations](#).

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