

Mental Health Policy

1.0 Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to guide the development and maintenance of a safe, supportive, and mentally healthy environment for all staff, participants, volunteers, and others engaged with SilaCa Tasmania Pty Ltd. This policy seeks to promote positive mental health and well-being by encouraging a workplace culture that supports early help-seeking, reduces stigma, and prioritises the dignity and safety of all individuals.

Our objective is to foster an inclusive and psychologically safe workplace through proactive strategies that minimise mental health risks and enhance protective factors. These include leadership practices, clear communication, wellbeing-focused protocols, and supportive practices embedded across all levels of the organisation.

2.0 Scope

The policy applies to all staff, participants, and others associated with SilaCa Tasmania Pty Ltd across all service settings. It promotes shared responsibility for mental health, resilience, and safe responses to psychosocial risks and wellbeing concerns.

3.0 Definitions

Term	Description
Mental health	Mental health includes our emotional, psychological, and social well-being. It affects how we think, feel, and act. It also helps determine how we handle stress, relate to others, and make choices. Mental health is important at every stage of life, from childhood and adolescence through adulthood.
Mental illness	Mental illness, also called mental health disorders, refers to a wide range of mental health conditions - disorders that affect your mood, thinking and behaviour. Examples of mental illness include: • depression, • anxiety disorders, • schizophrenia, • eating disorders and • addictive behaviours

Term	Description
	Many people have mental health concerns from time to time. But a mental health concern becomes a mental illness when ongoing signs and symptoms cause frequent stress and affect your ability to function.
Psychosocial Hazards	The things at work that can harm mental health are known as <u>psychosocial hazards</u>, and these hazards can also cause physical harm. Psychosocial hazards include: • <u>job demands</u> • <u>low job control</u> • <u>poor support</u> • <u>lack of role clarity</u> • <u>poor organisational change management</u> • <u>inadequate reward and recognition</u> • <u>poor organisational justice</u> • <u>traumatic events or material</u> • <u>remote or isolated work</u> • <u>poor physical environment</u> • <u>violence and aggression</u> • <u>bullying</u> • <u>harassment</u>, including <u>sexual harassment</u>, and • <u>conflict or poor workplace relationships and interactions</u>
Psychosocial risk	The risk to the health or safety of a worker or other person arising from a psychosocial hazard
Stress	When the term 'stress' is used in a clinical sense, it refers to a situation that causes discomfort and distress for a person and can lead to other mental health problems, such as anxiety and depression. Stress may also contribute to physical illnesses such as cardiovascular disease.

4.0 Policy

SilaCa Tasmania Pty Ltd is committed to protecting and promoting the health, safety and welfare of those we work for and with. We seek to build and maintain an environment and culture that proactively supports mental health and well-being, promotes help-seeking behaviours and prevents discrimination (including bullying and harassment).

SilaCa Tasmania Pty Ltd will:

- Ensure all staff working with participants hold a current NDIS Worker Screening Clearance in line with NDIS Worker Screening Rules 2018
- Prevent all forms of psychological abuse, neglect, bullying, harassment, and exploitation, consistent with the NDIS Code of Conduct
- Promote trauma-informed, recovery-oriented, and culturally safe support for all participants and staff, especially for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and people from CALD backgrounds
- Support staff and participants with co-designed mental health and well-being strategies, ensuring participant choice, control, dignity of risk, and supported decision-making
- Address psychosocial hazards in the workplace, including workload, workplace conflict, exposure to traumatic content, and support staff through reasonable adjustments, reflective practice, and professional development
- Respond to and escalate mental health crises as safeguarding and risk management priorities, in line with Incident Management and Safeguarding policies

Include all mental health-related incidents, feedback, and outcomes in the Continuous Improvement system for review, learning, and quality improvement. Our organisation acknowledges the importance of strategies that support our staff and participants, such as:

- supportive leadership and environmental climate
- developing a responsible culture of support
- increasing morale
- reducing psychosocial hazards through:
 - designing and managing a workplace to reduce physical fatigue and stressors through
 - risk management – health and safety
 - identifying the risk
 - eliminating the risk
 - substituting to a lesser risk
 - consultation
 - monitoring of stressors and triggers
 - establishing workplace protocols that encourage positive interactions and behaviours

This policy aims to promote positive mental health and well-being by creating a sustainable healthy work environment and conditions. As far as possible, we will prevent psychological injury through the following:

- encouragement of staff and participants to seek early assistance;
- discussing issues during annual performance and support plan reviews;
- reducing stigma or discrimination by awareness raising and education, and
- promoting a caring, responsive community for the prevention of circumstances that may affect the well-being of self and others

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4.1 Stress in the workplace

Work-related stress can lead to illness, injury and decreases in performance. Stress can come from many sources, both work and non-work. Our organisation has a legal obligation to minimise workers' exposure to work-related factors that can increase the risk of stress. This obligation is the same for self-employed people and contractors.

Staff have the right to a psychologically safe workplace under WHS laws, and are encouraged to report workplace factors affecting their mental health without fear of reprisal, consistent with Fair Work protections.

We aim to eliminate or minimise staff members' risk of harm from potential stress at work. Our strategies include the following:

- informing staff that if feeling stressed to inform their supervisor
- allocating a staff member to support the person
- monitoring staff for stress
- training any supervisor or management personnel in how to handle a person who seeks assistance and how to refer the stressed staff member to the delegate support person
- actively listening to the person and devising a plan of action to eliminate or minimise their stress
- determine if the stress is a result of work or home:
 - if work-related, then formulate a plan of action to eliminate or minimise their stress
 - if home-related, consult with the person to identify if there are any ways to support the individual

In line with Work Health and Safety Act 2011 and WHS Regulations 2022, SilaCa Tasmania Pty Ltd will undertake psychosocial risk assessments and implement reasonable adjustments for workers impacted by mental health conditions. These may include:

- Adjusting workload or duties
- Modifying work hours or location (e.g., work from home arrangements)
- Providing access to Employee Assistance Program (EAP) and counselling
- Ensuring regular supervision and reflective practice opportunities
- Implementing well-being and resilience initiatives

5.0 Procedure

Our organisation acknowledges differences in our diverse and inclusive community, and all people need to seek timely mental health support when they are experiencing poor mental health. Staff are encouraged to approach someone they feel comfortable talking to about their mental status.

Mental Health Crises and Escalation

In the event of a mental health crisis, acute distress, or threat to life or safety (including suicidal ideation or behaviour), staff must:

- Ensure immediate safety of the participant and others
- Contact emergency services (000) if there is imminent danger
- Notify the Manager as soon as safe to do so
- Document the incident in line with the Incident Management and Reportable Incident Procedure
- Where appropriate, notify family, guardian, or nominated advocate
- Consider referral to specialist services such as mental health crisis teams, GP, hospital emergency department
- Conduct a debrief and post-incident review, and ensure follow-up support, including counselling, if required

All discussions about mental health between staff, participants, and management will be treated with strict confidentiality and respect, in line with the Privacy Act 1988 (Commonwealth) and our Privacy and Confidentiality Policy.

Staff and participants may also raise mental health-related concerns through the Complaints and Feedback Policy and Procedure, and these will be addressed respectfully, confidentially, and in a trauma-informed way.

All mental health-related incidents, issues, or patterns will be reviewed as part of SilaCa Tasmania Pty Ltd's Continuous Improvement Register and quarterly management review meetings to identify service improvements and strengthen well-being supports.

5.1 Staff

Staff experiencing poor mental well-being or work-affecting mental illness will be supported to allow their health to improve. Our Manager will refer them to support mechanisms (if relevant) and work with them using this procedure

1. Notify the relevant people
 - a. Supervisor
 - b. Qualified specialist, e.g. doctor
2. Spend time speaking with the person
 - a. Use active-listening techniques
 - b. Discuss some goals they wish to achieve
 - c. Use the Mental Health Checklist, if viewed as relevant
3. Agree on one or more of the options
 - a. Hear their voice to determine strategies that may assist
 - b. Collaborate to determine how to reach their outcomes

4. Schedule a series of check-ins
 - a. Set timeframes for meetings
5. Discuss reasonable adjustments if necessary
 - a. Discuss what is working and what is not
 - b. Changing work practices
 - c. Working with specific participants
 - d. Make adjustments to suit
6. Help them make an improvement plan
 - a. Setting small goals
 - b. Setting timeframes

Where appropriate, external services such as Employee Assistance Programs (EAP), General Practitioners (GPs), psychologists, or other clinical professionals will be engaged to support participants or staff experiencing mental health challenges.

5.2 Participants

Staff are required to report any changes in behaviour to their supervisor as per the Responsive Support Provision and Support Management Policy and Procedure. This procedure will generally be used to deal with participants' mental health. Below is a guide to assist:

1. Notify the relevant people
 - a. Supervisor
 - b. Complete file notes
2. Spend time speaking with the participant
 - a. Use active-listening techniques
 - b. Discuss some goals they wish to achieve
3. Agree on one or more of the options
 - a. Hear their voice to determine strategies that may assist
 - b. Collaborate to determine how to reach their outcomes
 - c. Record and adjust in the Support Plan
4. Schedule a series of check-ins
 - a. Set timeframes for meetings
5. Discuss reasonable adjustments if necessary
 - a. Discuss what is working and what is not
 - b. Changing strategies to suit
 - c. Working with specific workers
6. Help them make an improvement plan
 - a. Setting small goals
 - b. Setting timeframes

6.0 Related documents

- Responsive Support Provision and Support Management Policy and Procedure
- Human Resource Management Policy and Procedure
- Corporate Governance Policy and Procedure
- Work Health Safety and Environmental Management Policy and Procedure

7.0 References

- NDIS Practice Standards and Quality Indicators 2021
- Fair Work Act 2009
- Work Health and Safety Act 2011
- Work Health and Safety Regulations 2022