



Executives, decision-makers and mentally healthy workplaces

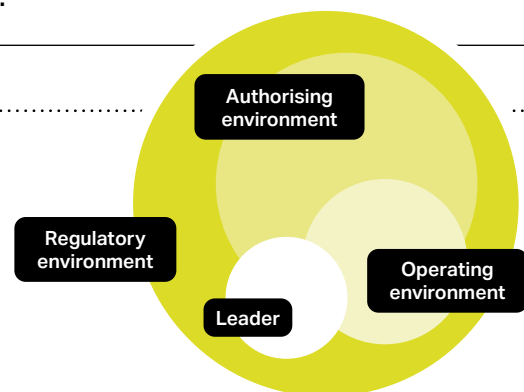
Executives and decision-makers face unique work pressures—such as public scrutiny and decision fatigue—that can affect their mental health. At the same time, effective leadership is vital for building mentally healthy workplaces. So, supporting the mental health of executives and decision makers benefits people in those roles and the whole organisation.



Key takeaways

- * People in executive and decision-making roles face unique challenges that can affect their mental health.
- * The mental health of executives and decision-makers is influenced by factors in the regulatory, authorising and operating environments.
- * Executives and decision-makers also need to recognise, consider and act to protect the mental health of others and themselves.

How the system can support executives and decision-makers



Regulatory environment

Peak or industry bodies, government departments, regulatory bodies and others in the regulatory environment can support the mental health of executives and decision-makers by:

- Promoting and referring people to industry-specific resources
- Advising on and fostering best practice standards and guidelines, innovative strategies, initiatives and peer networks
- Normalising conversations about mental health.

Authorising environment

Boards, governing bodies, shareholders and others that affect an organisation's authorising environment can support executives and decision-makers by:

- Providing appropriate governance—e.g. reporting structure, financial framework
- Planning for succession—e.g. co-designing roles that suit the individual and the organisation
- Promoting a positive board culture—e.g. ongoing team building, routine training
- Equipping individuals to navigate public scrutiny—e.g. providing media training, and developing crisis management skills, and access to communications expertise.

Operating environment

People in executive teams can support each other's mental health by:

- Shaping roles to protect mental health—e.g. roles with variety, responsibility and autonomy
- Designing executive teams to promote mental health—e.g. consider factors such as team size, structure, skill mix
- Tailoring induction processes—e.g. training on managing challenges, mentors, peer support
- Enabling flexible working arrangements—e.g. changing hours, pattern or location of work
- Investing in relevant resources, supports and training—e.g. Employee Assistance Programs, mentoring, coaching, peer support.

How executives and decision-makers support mentally healthy workplaces



Executives and decision-makers must recognise, consider and act to protect the mental health of others and themselves.



Recognise your influence on and obligations for creating a mentally healthy working environment:

- Know your legal obligations to create a psychologically safe workplace and mitigate psychosocial risks.
- Be aware of the operating environment, through continual measurement and analysis.
- Recognise the forces that drive change, affect the organisation and individuals, and shape strategic decisions so you know where to invest time, effort and attention.



Consider your actions, habits and approaches and how they affect workplace culture and wellbeing:

- Use your influence to create mentally healthy workplaces—e.g. ask for feedback and take steps to change.
- Explore ways to learn, build and incorporate this core capability into your work and performance measurement.



Act to lead effectively for wellbeing:

- Make visible, actioned and long-term commitments to a mentally healthy workplace strategy.
- Consult and communicate extensively and often.
- Commit resources to measuring mental health, which may include indicators of worker satisfaction.
- Show your commitment to a mentally healthy workplace and act as a positive role model.
- Set clear cultural standards and have a holistic definition for wellbeing.



How executives and decision-makers can support themselves



Executives and decision-makers can support their own mental health by:

Manage decision fatigue

e.g. prioritise decisions, make important decisions early in the day, create a decision-making process, delegate low-priority decisions, ask for advice

Manage moral injury

e.g. discuss moral and ethical dilemmas with trusted colleagues or peers, share concerns with the board, engage independent supports

Avoid burnout

e.g. delegate tasks, schedule time for yourself, set and maintain work-life boundaries, take leave

Address loneliness

e.g. seek ideas and opinions from others, deliberately interact with others, engage with peers

Prioritise a healthy lifestyle

e.g. eat healthy food, exercise regularly, prioritise sleep, and enjoyable activities

Seek professional support or advice

e.g. coaching, counselling, psychological therapy



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