

WELLNESS PROGRAM

Coaching program to enable ongoing preventative management of mental health and wellness.

The Wellness Program creates a participatory and guided environment in which to explore mental health and wellness. Led by a coach over a 12-week period, workers are supported to develop achievable and practical solution options for the whole workforce and individual workers.



At WPA's NWA site, the Wellness Program coach shares with workers the importance of actively managing their wellness.

The Situation

Distractions in the workplace reduce performance, affect productivity and pose a significant safety risk. Workforce mental health and wellness are important factors in avoiding distractions and maintaining situational awareness.

A recent survey of Western Program Alliance's (WPA) workers found the top concerns that impacted their performance were:

- Relationships 81%
- Mental health 63%
- Work pressure 59%
- Finances 48%

Increased awareness of psychosocial topics means workers are more likely to look out for and support each other, or to pursue self-guided education. However, guidance regarding the implementation of solutions is not readily available on construction industry sites, and this had been something identified by workers in the same recent survey.

A lack of coaching for workers on how to plan and manage psychosocial concerns was a gap in WPA's suite of wellness support preventative measures.

The Solution

To bolster their wellness support preventative measures, the team at WPA's Webb St Narre Warren Level Crossing Removal Project (NWA) developed and deployed the Wellness Program.

The Wellness Program is a coaching program, easily integrated into standard day-to-day work activities at construction site compounds.

Designed to create worker engagement over 12 weeks, the structured coaching sessions provide relevant lifestyle improvement information to the workforce and tailored strategies for individuals.

During prestart meetings, the coach shares how workers can explore wellness opportunities to assist in improving mood, morale and overall mental health, such as 1-on-1 on site coaching at WPA's Wellness Central.

During 1-on-1 sessions the coach works with workers to find strategies that suit their personal circumstances. This personalised and holistic approach allows the worker to set realistic goals that are relevant to them and implement appropriate strategies to achieve them.

Benefits and learnings

Implementing the Wellness Program at NWA has delivered immediate benefits, with workers actively engaging in coaching sessions and requesting individual support.

We have seen an increase in wellness-related conversations across the site; an important indicator of workforce engagement in mental health.

Key learnings from the Wellness Program's success are:

- Improved mental health and wellness engagement can be built through individual human interaction on site.
- Integrating the program into day-to-day site activities is important to avoid disruption of planned work.
- Having a highly relatable, authentic coach is important for worker engagement.

At launch, educating workers is important to ensure they understand the purpose:

- A wellness support preventative measure, not a reactive resource such as Employee Assistance Programs.
- A program for actively addressing mental health and wellness (not just awareness information).

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Work Package: Western Program Alliance
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