



Safe and Empowering Workplaces

Case study



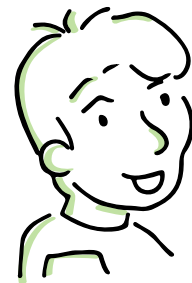


Why?

The vision

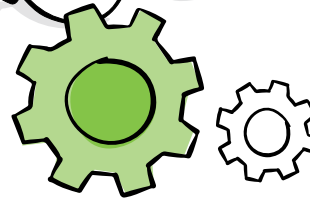
The 'Safe and Empowering Workplaces' (Give Where You Live Foundation Learning Network) is a co-design process with small and medium businesses and young workers, together with mental health and human resources experts. The co-design will create affordable, accessible and adaptable tools to help these businesses to become mentally healthy and safe workplaces. Our aim is to enhance inclusive leadership in the G21 Region.

INITIAL THEORY OF CHANGE (JANUARY 2020):

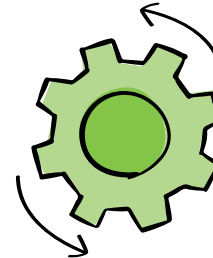


IF we support young people and ensure they have inclusive employers with tools and resources

THEN this will assist mentally healthy workplaces and eliminate work-Related Factors



EVOLVING THEORY OF CHANGE (DECEMBER 2020):



IF

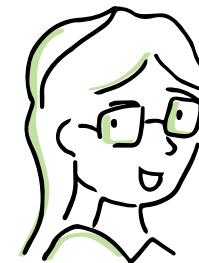
1. employers are aware of what impacts the mental health of their young workers,
2. have access to appropriate tools and resources,

RESOURCES

3. are engaged / invested in the solutions for their specific business, and
4. are supported to implement these



THEN this will assist mentally healthy workplaces and eliminate work-Related Factors



Our key cohorts are 1) small and medium businesses in G21 Region and 2) young workers. The consultations commenced in August 2019 and three Key Challenges emerged, Leadership, Resources, and Capacity. These challenges have been regularly reinforced through ongoing workshops, emails, and conversations.

Who?

Key challenges

- leadership
- resources
- capacity

SMALL MEDIUM ENTERPRISE (SME) EMPLOYERS TOLD US:



YOUNG WORKERS TOLD US:

we just need to wait until we are in charge, then we can CHANGE the culture

You don't complain, no point, as there are PLENTY of people who are willing to jump into your job

SEXISM in the workplace is not only with guys, sometimes the older women don't like us and think the boss only hires us because we're young and pretty

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Who?

Key challenges

- leadership
- resources
- capacity

SMALL MEDIUM ENTERPRISE (SME) EMPLOYERS TOLD US:



Lack of time and resources.
So much paperwork that sometimes can get in the way of getting the WORK DONE

- Community service



TOO MUCH
PAPERWORK

WORK-RELATED FACTORS:

- High and low job demands
- Poor support

RESOURCES

(time, policy and
procedures,
tools, supports)



A sense of BELONGING within an organisation is hard to capture, however knowing where you can go for assistance and / or support would be advantageous

- Construction employer

YOUNG WORKERS TOLD US:

People who supervise apprentices AREN'T trained teachers so they don't really know how to teach, and they especially haven't been taught how to teach girls so that makes it hard for us girls on worksites



You get the feeling they don't want to TRAIN us up because they don't think we'll be around for long, that they think it's just a stepping-stone for us

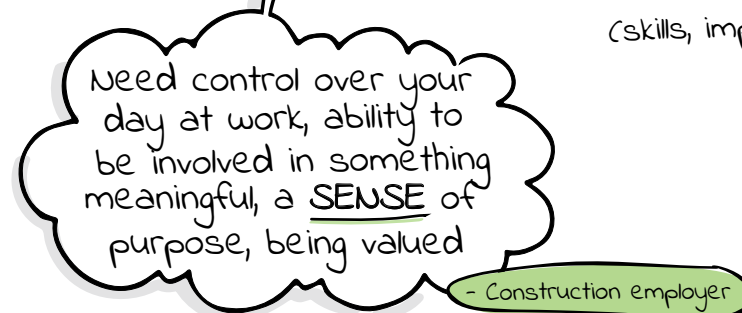
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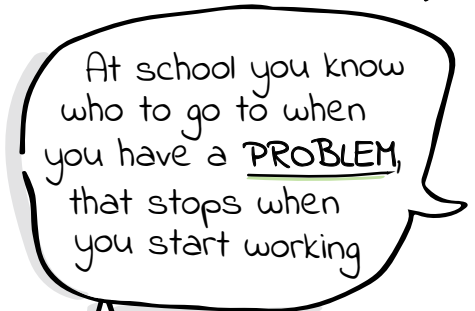
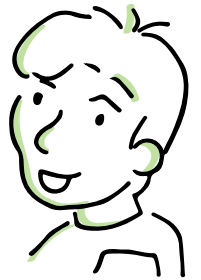
Key challenges

- leadership
- resources
- capacity

SMALL MEDIUM ENTERPRISE (SME) EMPLOYERS TOLD US:



YOUNG WORKERS TOLD US:



WORK-RELATED FACTORS:
• Low job control
• Low job clarity

CAPACITY

↓
(skills, implementation of tools)



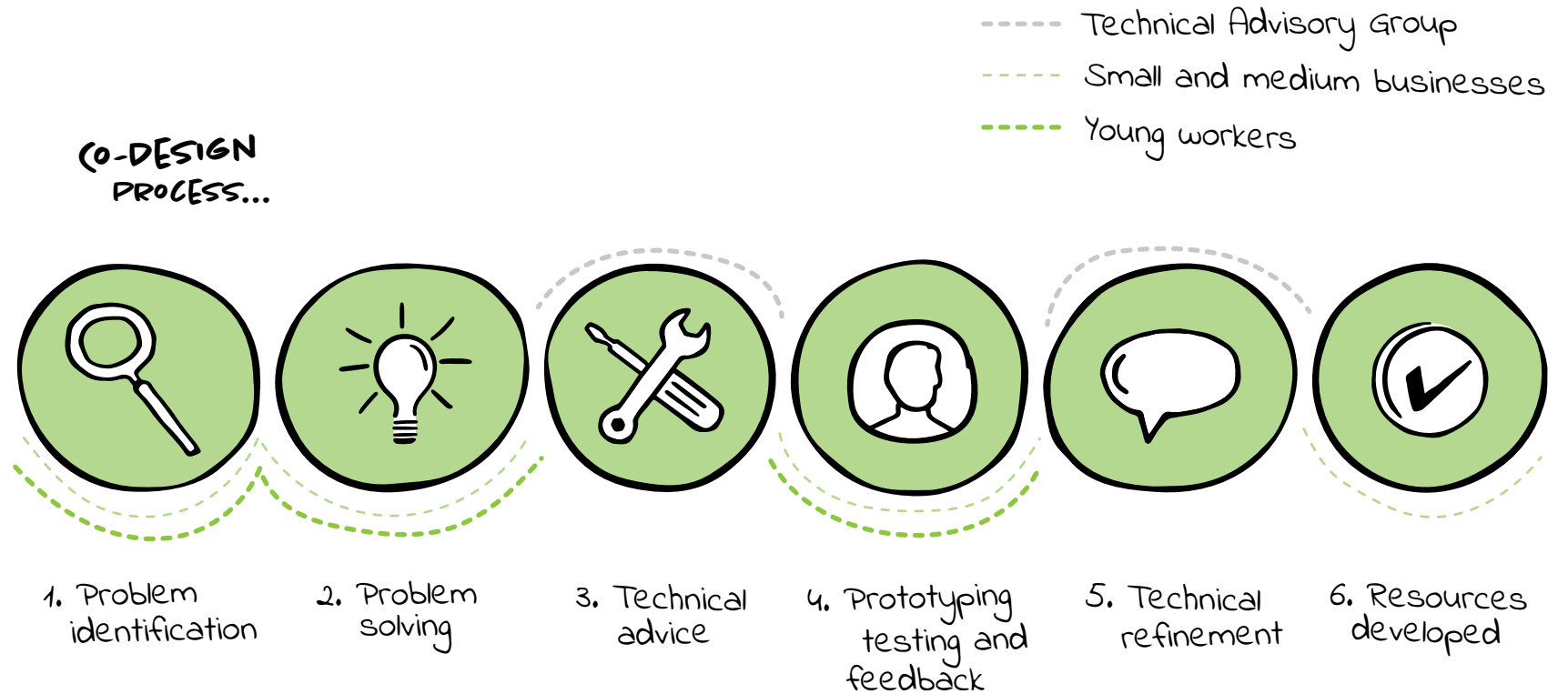
Co-design offers the space to continuously 'try, test and learn' based on lived experience. The tools and resources, developed and validated through the co-design, will be embedded into workplaces to achieve long-term policy, practice and culture change. Each of the three co-design cycles has six stages:



How?

The process

- co-design 1
- co-design 2





How?

The process

- co-design 1

- co-design 2

Co-Design 1

We commenced the process back in August 2019, with 18 Small/Medium employers selected from the GROW (G21 Region Opportunities for Work) initiative, exploring the barriers and enablers for mentally healthy workplaces. Through workshops and surveys, we found recurring themes: connection and trust; lack of time, resources and capacity of managers; complexity of policies and procedures; need for individualised solutions and empowering leadership; and overall lack of awareness and understanding.

Thanks to WorkSafe funding, we formalised the Learning Network, and held a workshop 1 March 2020, to explore short- and long-term solutions to these issues. Priority actions, selected via survey vote, showed we needed to start right at the beginning, with education. We needed to develop tools to normalise the discussion of mental health within the workplace and which ensured young people's voice is incorporated.

Thus the problem for Co-Design 1:

How do we normalise and create awareness of (youth) mental health in the workplace?

Supported by Management Governance Australia (MGA) as lead contractor, and BATForce as youth experts, we consulted with the Small/Medium businesses and Young Workers, across May-June 2020 to explore how to best engage and inform. We held multiple online workshops, individual phone conversations, as well as broader consultation with community services.

The first online tool developed for testing was titled “*How Safe is Your Workplace?*”. The tool’s graphic flowcharts described scenarios from the workplace, with different pathways showing what might happen if... and audio stories from young people.

Feedback from the network and the young workers suggested we needed to focus more on the business case and the individualisation, and the updated tool put it bluntly:

“Invest in well-being, improve your productivity”.

To support the Learning Network, we collated Trellos of existing online resources.

The Technical Advisory Group provided ongoing advice and references to evidence and practice-based research throughout the process.

MGA are currently finalising the standalone website (workcarefactor.com.au) for testing and trialling by businesses in 2021. The current version involves:

1. *Why invest in Mentally Healthy workplaces?*
– *The Business Case*
2. *Graphic flowchart scenarios – What happens if?*
Best practice suggestions for supervisors
3. *Audio stories – The ways young people feel unsafe in the workplace*
4. *Audio wall – Experiences of employers when they were young workers.*



How?

The process

- co-design 1

- co-design 2

Co-Design 2

The second co-design evolved directly from the first, beginning with online Learning Network workshops via MURAL, plus one to one consultations, in August 2020.

The Network employers (re)confirmed the following barriers: lack of time and resources, or support for implementation of policies and procedures; change being driven by compliance rather than values and care; poor communication, relationships and trust in the workplace. Young Workers revealed issues about lack of communication and investment in their wellbeing.

Out of this workshop we explored practical solutions including:

1. *Changing leadership, values/attitudes, and mentoring (behaviours)*
2. *HR supports, 'plug in' resources, key documents (resources).*

The question for Co-Design 2:

What tools and resources might help employers (and young workers) understand their roles and responsibilities in an accessible and understandable format? How might these tools impact on values and/or behaviours?

The expert team recruited by MGA created a range of tools, based on the workshops, that were tested in October-December 2020.

We heard from Young Workers (online workshops), had individual phone conversations with employers, and focus groups with community services. Through this highly collaborative process we have designed:

1. *10 'must have' policies for Mentally Healthy SME workplaces (all in plain language)*
 - Templates that can be plugged into existing systems,
 - Posters and shareable pictorial representations for reinforcement,
 - Simple self-audit tool.
2. *Tools to assist managers/supervisors have potentially sensitive conversations in the workplace:*
 - Scripts, tips and tricks for engaging with young workers,
 - Workplace initiatives for transition into work (e.g., implementing a robust workplace induction; using mentoring and coaching in the workplace).
3. *Common scenarios across the employee life cycle, to assist businesses and/or young people find and access available services (including identified 'google search' words to help locate what is needed online).*

The test website (workcarefactor.com.au) will incorporate all the tools and resources from Co-Designs 1 and 2 and is due for trialling in February 2021.

Learnings

In the workplace



LANGUAGE MATTERS...

Businesses were focused on mental illness, rather than preventative mental health and emotional WELLBEING

- Language is relevant



SHARED MEANING IS A KEY PART OF THE JOURNEY

AGE IS GETTING OLD

workplaces are changing RAPIDLY. Behaviour, poor culture and unhappy staff are not good for business. The old adage of 'toughen up' and 'get on with it' in the workplace must change but it's not easy



SUPERVISORS AND MANAGERS HAVE FORGOTTEN WHAT IT WAS LIKE TO BE YOUNG AND UNSURE

GENDER IS AN ISSUE

There is a distinctly GENDERED experience of mental health in the workplace. Feedback from male & female workers, and male & female dominated workplaces was very different

YOUNG PEOPLE NEED TOOLS TO REFLECT THEIR EXPERIENCES

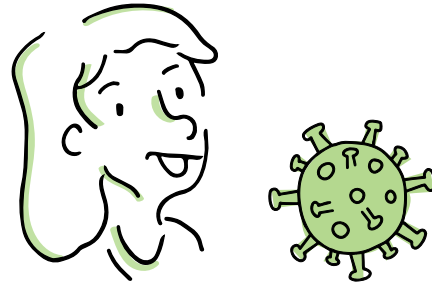


SMALL BUSINESSES THINK DIFFERENTLY

Strong and direct relationships with STAFF allow leaders to know them individually. Small Biz is innovative, flexible but has less time and fewer resources

Learnings

In the workplace



COVID-19 IS AWFUL
BUT THERE IS SOME GOOD

Mental health
impacts of
COVID-19 have
been felt WIDELY

New awareness of the
need to focus on mentally
healthy workplaces has
increased EMPATHY and
provides opportunity

- COVID-19 safe workplaces

BUSINESS AND
WORKPLACE VALUES

**VALUES & WORK
CULTURE MATTER!**

- Huge challenge to change and embed values and culture within business
- Practical messaging

(about improving productivity,
reducing costs and risks will
help shift attitudes towards
a more human approach)

WE'RE ALL IN THIS
TOGETHER

Partnerships
facilitated through
GROW and the
Technical Advisory Group
are enabling us to link
to other local strategies
and initiatives



The mental health space
is crowded with good intentions
so having KEY NETWORKS enables
this project to keep up-to-date
and prevent duplication