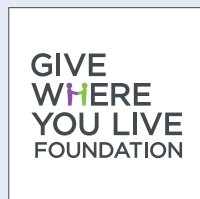




WorkCareFactor co-designed website

Case study



in partnership with:



WorkWell



Overview

1. Background —→
2. Method —→
3. Real stories —→
4. Employee lifecycle tools —→
5. Tools for young workers —→
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The Give Where You Live Foundation was funded by WorkSafe’s WorkWell program to lead a [WorkWell Learning Network](#) to devise tools and resources to help create mentally healthy and safe workplaces, especially for young employees. In partnership with [Management Governance Australia](#) and [Barwon Adolescent Taskforce](#), we collaborated with 20 small and medium businesses from across the G21 Region, as well as young workers, to co-design solutions.

We began in 2019 by talking to employers and young workers from the construction, transport, manufacturing and health sectors, to understand their experiences of workplace mental health.

While the COVID-19 pandemic has posed many challenges, it has also increased recognition of the benefits of a mentally safe and healthy workplace and also the risks, especially in terms of legislation.

The small and medium businesses involved in the project identified the need for support around policies and procedures that contribute to mental health and wellbeing, as these businesses often lack time, capacity and resources.

In response to these learnings, we asked mental health experts and human resources professionals to help us to co-design <https://workcarefactor.com.au>. This website includes audio and flowchart stories to build awareness, exploring the ‘work related factors’ that can contribute towards emotional health and wellbeing.

Using engaging formats, the website offers tips and scripts for workplace conversations to improve communication, trust and mutual understanding.

There are also policy and procedure templates, in clear and practical language, so that businesses can easily access the resources they need to meet their legal obligations, all in one place.



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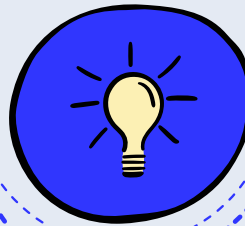
7. Next Steps →

CO-DESIGN PROCESS...

- Technical Advisory Group
- - - Small and medium businesses
- · · Young workers



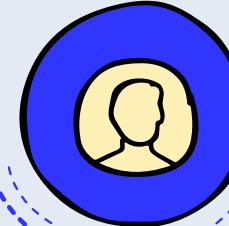
1. Problem identification



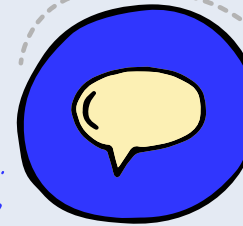
2. Problem solving



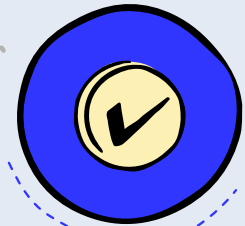
3. Technical advice



4. Prototyping testing & feedback



5. Technical refinement



6. Resources developed

Three iterative cycles of co-design were undertaken which involved individual consultations and workshops with small and medium businesses, young workers and experts in mental health, human resources, employment and young people.

CO-DESIGN 1: How do we normalise and create awareness of (youth) mental health in the workplace?

SOLUTION = WorkCareFactor Prototype 1: real stories to build awareness and start conversations in the workplace.

+

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 the values and/or behaviours of supervisors and managers (and young workers)?

SOLUTION = WorkCareFactor Prototype 1/2: web-based tools for effective conversations, and policies for throughout the employee lifecycle.

CO-DESIGN 3: What changes are needed to the prototype so it is activated and/or implemented, and how do we embed these resources into organisations for longer term sustainability and engagement?

SOLUTION = WorkCareFactor final version: updated in response to feedback, new tools added for young workers to support them to ask questions and negotiate workplace issues. Sustainability model developed and implemented.



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REAL STORIES TO BUILD AWARENESS AND START CONVERSATIONS IN THE WORKPLACE

KEY THEMES:

1. Leadership and values

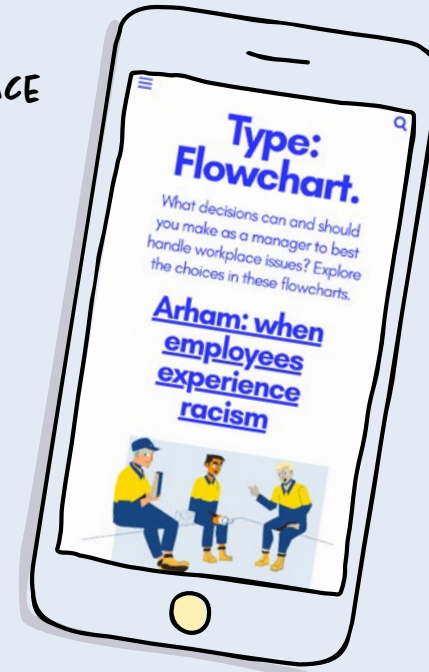
Managers and supervisors can explore stories to help them to understand different perspectives, remember what it was like to be a young worker, and to identify key values for mentally healthy workplaces.

2. Resources and tools

Sharing stories with staff at toolbox talks can start conversations, or supervisors might suggest individual staff review a topic and bring back to discuss.

3. Capacity and skills

The stories suggest new approaches and help managers and supervisors to build new ways to respond to issues in the workplace.



AIM:

To help prevent mental health injury from the following work related factors:

- Job clarity
- Poor support
- Recognition and reward
- Workplace relationships



WORKCAREFACTOR.COM.AU
'BY TYPE' SCENARIOS:

- <https://workcarefactor.com.au/type/audio-story>
- <https://workcarefactor.com.au/audio-wall>
- <https://workcarefactor.com.au/type/flowchart>



Need awareness of bias and what **INCLUSION** should look like

- Employment service





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TOOLS FOR EFFECTIVE CONVERSATIONS, AND POLICIES FOR THROUGHOUT THE EMPLOYEE LIFECYCLE

KEY THEMES:

1. Leadership and values

The extensive list of policies enables leadership to quickly access what is needed to build a foundation for a values-led workplace.

2. Resources and tools ↙

The CLEAR scenarios provide scripts and supports for managers and supervisors to have challenging conversations in the workplace.

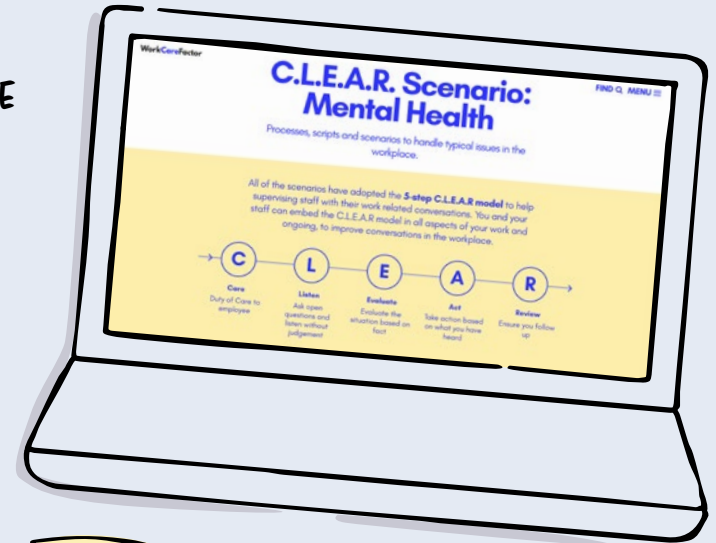
↘ 3. Capacity and skills

The policies and strategies in the Employee Lifecycle help managers and supervisors to find the skills needed at different points in the journey, and locate related scenarios to real issues in the workplace.



Culture is set by the leadership's ACTIONS as well as their intent

- Employment service



AIM:

To help prevent mental health injury from the following work related factors:

- High and low job demands
- Job clarity
- Recognition and reward
- Job control
- Workplace relationships
- Poor support



workcarefactor.com.au
'by type' scenarios:

<https://workcarefactor.com.au/clear-scenario>

<https://workcarefactor.com.au/employee-lifecycle>

<https://workcarefactor.com.au/type/hr-policy>



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TOOLS FOR YOUNG WORKERS TO SUPPORT THEM TO ASK QUESTIONS AND NEGOTIATE WORKPLACE ISSUES

KEY THEMES:

1. Leadership and values

The Workplace Decision Maker helps young workers to negotiate and contribute to building a safer workplace, with strong and supportive values.



2. Resources and tools

The Asking Questions at Work – Q&As for Young Workers gives suggested approaches to the common questions young workers told us they want to ask.

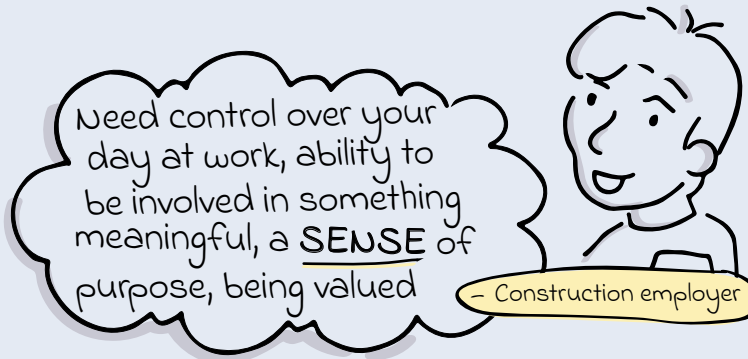
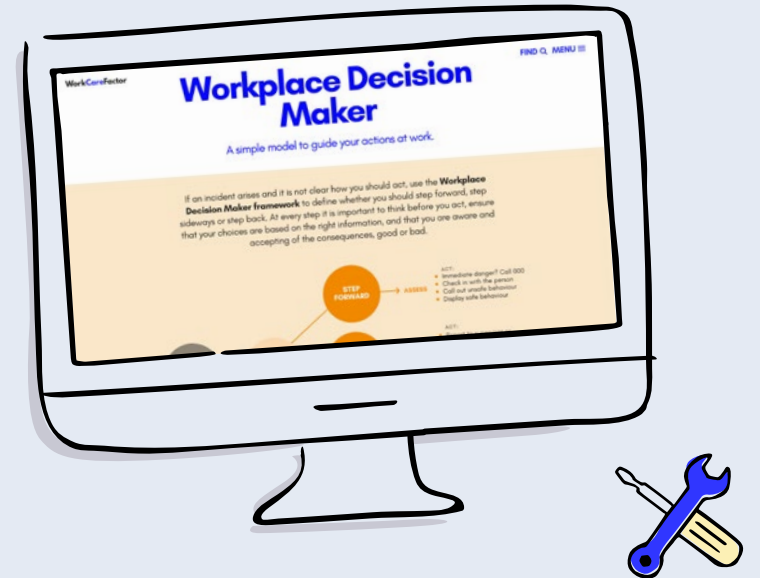
3. Capacity and skills ↓

The Workplace Decision Maker approach builds capacity for making decisions, understanding consequences, that can used for many issues.

AIM:

To help prevent mental health injury from the following work related factors:

- Job clarity
- Poor support
- Workplace relationships
- Job control



workcarefactor.com.au
'by type' scenarios:

<https://workcarefactor.com.au/workplace-decision-maker>

<https://workcarefactor.com.au/asking-questions-at-work-gas-for-young-workers>



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EVALUATION FINDINGS

The draft website, resulting from Co-Designs 1 and 2 combined, was provided to six of the Learning Network businesses for trialling for five/six months within their workplaces from May 2021. The draft website was introduced to each business, without instructions, in order to test the impact of the resource without support or intervention.

Deakin University's School of Psychology was contracted to deliver evaluation of the draft version of the website based on interviews with these businesses, an independent panel of organisational psychologists, and young workers.

[Deakin WorkCareFactor Evaluation Report](#)

While the implementation of the website was inconsistent (some managers shared with their team, others just browsed themselves, and others used some of the practices) the six businesses were generally positive. They suggested they could see potential for where it could be used, or that it would be a useful tool for businesses that lacked policies, procedures, and/or HR practices.

The independent panel identified the lack of instruction about implementation as a key issue, along with lack of youth specific content, although noting "it touches on everything that you want to see in a mentally healthy workplace".

Young workers provided feedback that the website helped them develop awareness around what is good in a workplace, and encouraged them to reflect on their own experiences.

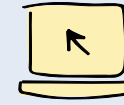




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EVALUATION FINDINGS (CONT.)



Based on the evaluation, the following enablers are incorporated into the website:

Workplace policy, programs and capacity building programs implemented	✓ Employee Lifecycle	✓ CLEAR scenarios	
	✓ Workplace Decision Maker		
	✓ Asking questions at work - Q&As for young workers		
Mental health promotion / prevention knowledge	✓ Audio stories	✓ Articles	✓ Flowcharts
Mental health promotion / prevention attitudes	✓ Audio stories	✓ Articles	✓ Flowcharts
Mental health promoting / preventative workplace culture	✓ Audio stories	✓ Articles	✓ Flowcharts
Mental health promoting / preventative workplace practices	✓ Employee Lifecycle	✓ CLEAR scenarios	
	✓ Workplace Decision Maker		
	✓ Asking questions at work - Q&As for young workers		
Mental health promoting / preventative workplace behaviours	✓ Employee Lifecycle	✓ CLEAR scenarios	
	✓ Workplace Decision Maker		
	✓ Asking questions at work - Q&As for young workers		
Leadership, advocacy and partnerships	✓ Audio stories	✓ Articles	✓ Flowcharts
Leadership capacity confidence commitment and consultation	✓ Employee Lifecycle	✓ CLEAR scenarios	
	✓ Workplace Decision Maker		
	✓ Asking questions at work - Q&As for young workers		





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ACTION RESEARCH STUDY

Sitting alongside the project has been the [WorkCare Factor Action Research Study](#) by Management Governance Australia. The Study has interrogated the available literature on mental health and wellbeing in the workplace, and drawn conclusions about the validity of the approach taken by the project.

The Study summarises current literature about how business owners, leaders and managers can take practical action to strengthen the culture of supporting emotional health and wellbeing in their workplaces. It identifies good practice attributes and suggests a Framework for Action, including four key strategies:

- ONE:** Owners and managers leading the way.
- TWO:** Making communication central.
- THREE:** Addressing the unaddressed (unconscious bias).
- FOUR:** Supporting and responding to management pressures.

The Study outlines how similar feedback was received through the co-design workshops with the small and medium businesses, particularly about raising the awareness of managers and supervisors

about mental health and supporting them to have effective communication with their staff, within a strong policy framework.

Leigh Bartlett, BATForce, led the co-design with young people to explore their experiences of the workforce. The key messages from young workers were aligned to both the literature and the employers, emphasising the need for good communication, effective inductions, and a safe and empowering culture.

An independent assessment was provided by Dr Joy Humphreys, Organisational Psychologist, who suggested that the resources were valuable and practical but to fully adopt the tool and create workplace change, managers need information about the benefit to the business, and a process to support them to introduce change into the workplace.

Learnings from stakeholders emphasised the benefit of building the project from strong existing relationships and trust, which enabled effective and authentic co-design processes.

The key message of the website is that '*caring is good for business*', underscored by the findings from the literature, employers and young workers.

FINAL MESSAGES FROM THE
LEARNING NETWORK, 15 DECEMBER 2021



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NEXT STEPS

Sustainability of the <https://workcarefactor.com.au> website was discussed throughout the project, and many options were explored. In October 2021, the Give Where You Live Foundation decided to seek Expressions of Interest for the ongoing management and sustainability of the website.

The following criteria were agreed for the website going forward:

- WorkSafe will hold a perpetual license for use, reproduction or publication.
- Acknowledgment of the initial funding from WorkSafe to Give Where You Live Foundation as the founding entity, will remain for a minimum of two years.
- All content and materials on the December 2021 version of the website will remain open source for two years.
- Continue the original project aim, to co-design accessible and affordable support to small and medium businesses in the G21 Region, and particularly for their young workers.
- Ongoing website maintenance and new material and content to be added, to meet WorkSafe standards.
- Engage locally to leverage existing relationships in the G21 Region.

Following this process, Give Where You Live Foundation has agreed to contract a consortium led by BATForce with five members who have been involved in the project to take on future responsibility for the WorkCareFactor website. This offers a great opportunity to build and expand on the resource, using local expertise and investment.

For any queries about these next steps, please contact Leigh Bartlett, CEO of BATForce: leigh@batforce.org.au



ENDORSEMENTS:

“The website was handy – it was good. It had different scenarios and we learned more about how to deal with situations that arise.”

- Matthew Drake, GM Innovative Windows Solutions.

[Cara Oliver, Geelong Built](#)

[Lyndal Box, LB Learning](#)

[Nathan Vellin, Encompass and Bernadette Purton, Nicholson Construction](#)