

BSB 7.0

BSBPPEF201

**SUPPORT
PERSONAL
WELLBEING
IN THE
WORKPLACE**

BSBPEF201

Support personal wellbeing in the workplace

Release 1

Learner Guide

Aspire Version 1.2



Copyright Warning

**This product is copyrighted to Aspire Training & Consulting
(ABN 51 054 306 428).**

Aspire Training & Consulting owns all copyright to its products. Except as permitted by the Copyright Act 1968 (Cth) or unless you have obtained the specific written permission of Aspire Training & Consulting, you must not:

- reproduce or photocopy this product in whole or in part
- publish this product in whole or in part
- cause this product in whole or in part to be transmitted
- store this product in whole or in part in a retrieval system including a computer
- record this product in whole or in part either electronically or mechanically
- resell this product in whole or in part.

Aspire Training & Consulting:

- invests significant time and resources in creating its original products
- protects its copyright material
- will enforce its rights in copyright material
- reserves its legal rights to claim its loss and damage or an account of profits made resulting from infringements of its copyright.

Aspire also has learning resources available in these areas:

- Foundation skills
- LLN and employability skills (non-competency)
- Community services
- Early Childhood Education and Care
- Allied health

Aspire is committed to developing quality resources that meet the needs of our customers. However, occasionally Aspire finds, or is notified of, errors. Please refer to our website at www.aspirelr.com.au to see if there are any updates that may be relevant to you.

Every effort has been made to ensure the information in this book is accurate; however, the author and publisher accept no responsibility for any loss, damage or injury arising from such information.

Except where an information source is acknowledged, the names and details of individuals and organisations used in examples are fictitious and have been devised for learning purposes only. Any similarity to actual people or organisations is unintentional.

All websites referred to in this unit were accessed and deemed appropriate at time of publication.

Aspire Training & Consulting apologises unreservedly for any copyright infringement that may have occurred and invites copyright owners to contact Aspire so any violation may be rectified.

BSBPEF201 Support personal wellbeing in the workplace, Release 1

© 2020 Aspire Training & Consulting
Level 1, 464 St Kilda Road
MELBOURNE VIC 3004 AUSTRALIA
Phone: (03) 9820 1300

First published October 2020
Reprinted (with amendments) April 2022

Cover design: Anne-Marie Reeves Design
Printer: Doculink Australia Pty Ltd, 1d/28 Rogers Street, Port Melbourne VIC 3207

e-ISBN 978-1-76075-749-6 (PDF version)
ISBN 978-1-76075-748-9

Contact details

Participant
Name:
Start date:
Phone number:
Email:
Work location
Name:
Address:
Postal address:
Workplace supervisor name:
Phone number:
Fax:
Email:
Registered Training Organisation (RTO)
Name:
Address:
Postal address (if different):
Phone number:
Fax:
RTO contact name:
Mobile:
Email:

CONTENTS

Before you begin	vi
Topic 1 Recognise personal wellbeing factors	1
1A Determine personal factors affecting wellbeing.....	2
1B Determine work factors affecting wellbeing	6
Summary	11
Learning Checkpoint 1: Recognise personal wellbeing factors	12
Topic 2 Plan communication with a supervisor	15
2A Select an appropriate communication approach	16
2B Plan to communicate about wellbeing	23
Summary	30
Learning Checkpoint 2: Plan communication with supervisor	31
Topic 3 Communicate with a supervisor	35
3A Arrange and conduct communication with a supervisor	36
3B Review the effectiveness of the communication.....	41
Summary	46
Learning Checkpoint 3: Communicate with a supervisor	47
Topic 4 Research wellbeing resources	49
4A Identify and review wellbeing resources.....	50
4B Document method for accessing resources.....	57
Summary	60
Learning Checkpoint 4: Research wellbeing resources	61

Before you begin

This Learner Guide is based on the unit of competency *BSBPEF201 Support personal wellbeing in the workplace*, Release 1. Your trainer or training organisation must give you information about this unit of competency as part of your training program. You can access the unit of competency and assessment requirements at: www.training.gov.au.

How to work through this Learner Guide

This Learner Guide contains a number of features that will assist you in your learning. Your trainer will advise which parts of the Learner Guide you need to read, and which Practice Tasks and Learning Checkpoints you need to complete. The features of this Learner Guide are detailed in the following table.

Feature of the Learner Guide	How you can use each feature
Learning content	Read each topic in this Learner Guide. If you come across content that is confusing, make a note and discuss it with your trainer. Your trainer is in the best position to offer assistance. It is very important that you take on some of the responsibility for the learning you will undertake.
Examples	These highlight key learning points and provide realistic examples of workplace situations.
Practice Tasks	Practice Tasks give you the opportunity to put your skills and knowledge into action. Your trainer will tell you which practice tasks to complete.
Summaries	Key learning points are provided at the end of each topic.
Learning Checkpoints	There is a Learning Checkpoint at the end of each topic. Your trainer will tell you which Learning Checkpoints to complete. These checkpoints give you an opportunity to check your progress and apply the skills and knowledge you have learnt.

Foundation skills

As you complete learning using this guide, you will be developing the foundation skills relevant for this unit. Foundation skills are the language, literacy and numeracy (LLN) skills and the employability skills required for participation in modern workplaces and contemporary life.

The following table provides definitions for each foundation skill.

Foundation skill area	Foundation skill description
Skill	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Description
Reading	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifies and interprets textual information to determine job role and requirements
Oral communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participates in discussions using clear language and features appropriate to audience Uses listening and questioning techniques to request assistance and confirm understanding
Enterprise and initiative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifies own responsibilities and performs role requirements
Teamwork	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establishes relationship with relevant personnel
Planning and organising	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plans and organises tasks to achieve outcome within timeframes Uses analytical skills to decide on effective techniques to support own wellbeing
Problem Solving	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uses problem solving skills to address a range of issues, seeking advice of others, where necessary

What do you already know?

Use the following table to identify what you may already know. This may assist you to work out what to focus on in your learning.

Topic	Key outcome	Rate your confidence in each section
Topic 1: Recognise personal wellbeing factors	1A Determine personal factors affecting wellbeing	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident
	1B Determine work factors affecting wellbeing	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident
Topic 2: Plan communication with a supervisor	2A Select an appropriate communication approach	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident
	2B Plan to communicate about wellbeing	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident
Topic 3: Communicate with a supervisor	3A Arrange and conduct communication with a supervisor	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident
	3B Review the effectiveness of the communication	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident
Topic 2: Research wellbeing resources	4A Identify and review wellbeing resources	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident
	4B Document method for accessing resources	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident



Topic 1 | Recognise personal wellbeing factors

- 1A Determine personal factors affecting wellbeing
- 1B Determine work factors affecting wellbeing

1A Determine personal factors affecting wellbeing

Personal wellbeing involves a person's mental and physical health, as well as their ability to manage stress and achieve overall satisfaction in their work and personal life.

Wellbeing is not just the absence of disease or a mental illness. It involves a combination of a person's social, physical, emotional and mental health factors. A person who is in a good state of wellbeing can feel more happy, healthy and socially connected, and be more purposeful in their life. Health and wellbeing are important factors for everyone.

Personal factors

Feelings of wellbeing are constantly changing and can be easily affected by a number of personal factors.

Most people want to have a positive sense of wellbeing because it brings feelings of happiness and satisfaction with life. Personal wellbeing is important for managing the effects of mental health issues and managing the stressors of life in a positive way.

Personal factors that affect wellbeing are unique to every person. A positive sense of wellbeing can come from:

- a level of physical health from regular exercise, a well-balanced diet and by getting plenty of sleep
- cultural connections and a sense of shared values with others
- a sense of purpose from their spiritual and religious beliefs
- an enjoyable and stimulating job, career or study
- hobbies and leisure activities that are enjoyable
- positive interactions with others, such as support from family members and a network of close friends
- having enough money to live comfortably
- feeling optimistic and possessing the ability to adapt to change
- having a sense of purpose and meaning to help develop your self-esteem.

The first step to a positive state of wellbeing is to identify the positive and negative factors that may affect your wellbeing. These can be referred to as 'triggers' or 'stressors'. When a person's wellbeing is being challenged, it means they have been exposed to one or more negative stressors. Stressors are different for each person and can have good and bad responses.

Identifying, managing, changing, accepting and/or removing these triggers or stressors is an essential step in effective health management.

Personal factors that can negatively affect wellbeing include:

- boredom within life (no sense of direction)
- a lack of regular exercise
- poor nutrition
- little to no personal time to do the things you enjoy
- conflict with children, parents or partner
- personal illness or injury
- lack of sleep
- the death of a loved one
- moving house
- financial difficulties
- the end of a relationship.

Stress

Stress is inevitable, but its effects are not.

Stress is a difficult concept to define because it affects different people in different ways. Stress can be described as the point at which you feel overwhelmed or unable to cope with internal or external pressures. Individuals' responses to stress will depend on their unique ability to cope with uncomfortable, unfamiliar or unexpected circumstances.

Though stress is often thought of negatively, it can also have positive effects. For example, stress can:

- make a person feel energised to achieve their goals
- increase confidence to overcome barriers or issues
- provide motivation to become mentally, emotionally and physically healthier
- improve social bonds with others as you work as a team
- strengthen life priorities to help a person build a sense of purpose and meaning to life.

In the past, stress was dismissed as being 'just part of having a job', but now employers and employees alike are becoming more aware of stress and the negative effect it can have on health, safety and wellbeing.

The effects of stress on wellbeing

In the field of physics, stress is a reaction to an external force. Too much stress and an object breaks or changes form; just enough stress triggers strength and growth.

Ongoing stress can be harmful, and it is important to distinguish it from 'just having a bad day'. Bad days happen to most of us from time to time and are something that most people manage reasonably effectively. Ongoing stress takes more effort to manage, and the causes of the stress need to be identified and relieved before the person can move forward in their daily life.

An ability to recognise long term stress and its effect on your physical and emotional health is vital. After all, stress can cause serious physical and psychological illnesses and, in some cases, it can lead to death.

Some stress-related illnesses include:

- heart disease
- high blood pressure
- weight gain or loss
- migraines
- depression
- alcoholism
- anxiety
- insomnia
- eating disorders.

Example

The effects of stress

Joe has been working many hours in the past few months. He has been getting home from work late and is feeling distressed at how little time he is spending with his young children. Joe's boss is not giving him much support and keeps adding tasks to Joe's already enormous workload.

Joe is getting headaches most days of the week and is having trouble sleeping at night. He has to keep running to the toilet during the day and is feeling nauseous when he eats anything spicy or when he waits too long between meals. He is snapping at his partner over small issues and his children are fast learning to avoid him in the evenings when he is tired and grumpy.

Practice Task 1

Question 1

Which of the following statements about stress are correct? Select 'Yes' or 'No' for each one.

- | | | |
|---|-------|------|
| a) Stress can have a negative effect on employees' health, safety and wellbeing. | » Yes | » No |
| b) Someone who is having a 'bad day' at work must be struggling with ongoing stress. | » Yes | » No |
| c) Long-term stress can motivate a person to achieve a goal and become more confident and healthier. | » Yes | » No |
| d) Some stress can be healthy and helpful. | » Yes | » No |
| e) Long-term stress can cause serious physical illnesses, such as heart disease and high blood pressure, if left untreated. | » Yes | » No |

Question 2

Which of the following personal factors can bring about a positive sense of wellbeing? Tick all that apply.

- Good nutrition and exercise
- Applying for a personal loan to pay household bills
- Planning a wedding
- Missing out on a promotion
- Death of a family member
- Taking time to do a hobby or activity

1B Determine work factors affecting wellbeing

The workplace can be a source of good and bad stress and may present factors that affect your wellbeing.

Stressors and health factors are common in the workplace environment. Some people work in highly stressful workplaces where life and death are common, such as hospitals and the police and defence forces.

For many people working in the business services sector, there is a wide range of factors that can have positive and negative effects on wellbeing.

Work-related factors affecting wellbeing

- Style of leadership such as poor instructions and no feedback on performance
- Workload (such as busy and slow periods)
- Job security
- Collaboration with others and teamwork
- Difficult customers and colleagues
- Constant change bringing uncertainty in the workplace
- Opportunities to learn new skills or get a promotion
- Workplace health and safety factors, such as resources needed to do your job, poorly maintained equipment, constant noise, poor lighting or other environmental factors
- A reduction or increase in shifts or hours of work
- Mistakes or errors in tasks
- Job rotation or job sharing
- Not being able to meet a deadline
- Availability of social activities with work colleagues

Identify factors affecting wellbeing

To determine the unique factors that affect your wellbeing, assess your own responses to different triggers and seek feedback from trusted people.

Depending on your situation, you may have trouble identifying the factors that affect your wellbeing. It may be easy to overlook your own thoughts, feelings and behaviours and identify any positive or negative changes.

You can identify your unique personal health factors by looking closely at your attitudes, physical changes and general behaviours and comparing these responses to when you are feeling less stressed. Consider how you feel and react to specific types of triggers and how you may treat people differently, both good and bad.

Reflect on the various types of verbal and non-verbal responses given from people during past conversations and consider whether your behaviours and emotions could have been better managed.

You may be able to ask a trusted friend, family member, supervisor or colleague for honest feedback about your personal stressors. By talking with people who know you well and asking for their insights, you may be able to identify the common factors that affect your wellbeing.

Signs and symptoms of poor wellbeing

Everyone has different coping mechanisms and therefore a varied response to personal and work-related wellbeing factors.

Stress and pressure affect people in positive and negative ways. For some people, the experience of failure, physical injury, broken relationships and working under pressure will not affect them negatively; in fact, it can inspire them to achieve greater goals. For others, the first sign of uncertainty can cause great anxiety and stress.

A range of signs and symptoms will indicate that you are experiencing a negative state in your wellbeing. These signs can be physical, behavioural (actions or reactions) or emotional, as detailed in the following table.

Physical signs	Behavioural signs	Emotional signs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Nervous sweat or sweaty palms ▪ A hard time feeling relaxed ▪ Severe or chronic lower back pain ▪ Chronic headaches ▪ Tension or muscle spasms in face, jaw, neck or shoulders ▪ Upset stomach ▪ Skin rashes or itching ▪ Problems with bowels (constipation, diarrhoea) ▪ Frequent urination ▪ Mouth ulcers ▪ Shortness of breath ▪ Very small or very large appetite ▪ Unusual weight gain or loss ▪ Sharp chest pains when physically active ▪ Lack of physical energy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Stuttering or tongue tied ▪ Working while eating lunch ▪ Excessive work hours ▪ Going to work when sick ▪ Bringing work home often ▪ Abuse of alcohol or drugs, especially to relax ▪ Being more clumsy than usual ▪ Problems walking without tripping ▪ Sexual problems ▪ Gambling addictions ▪ Increased isolation ▪ Lack of social interaction ▪ Missing appointments ▪ Anger problems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Avoidance of dealing with issues ▪ Trouble remembering things ▪ Feeling anxious or frightened about problems ▪ Withholding emotions ▪ Difficulty relaxing ▪ Lack of joy and excitement ▪ Internal anger problems ▪ Increased distrust ▪ Taking offense easily ▪ Feeling overly sensitive and irritable ▪ Emotions changing quickly and without any apparent reason ▪ Impulsive behaviour

Health factors affecting work roles

Work and personal factors that affect wellbeing are interrelated. The factors that affect wellbeing at work can have a direct effect on your personal life, and vice versa.

Feeling good and performing well at work are key elements of a person's overall wellbeing. For example, a person working in a job that does not provide them with enough shifts to pay their bills and enjoy the things they want can affect their relationships and quality of home life. In some cases, people find themselves in a situation at work that is challenging to manage, and so feel the need to bring the problem home to discuss it with partners or other family members.

Furthermore, an unstable relationship with a partner, child or parent at home can affect a person's ability to perform well at their job. These issues can affect relationships, productivity and quality at work, as well as the work-life balance.

However, the opposite is also true in that positive triggers can have favourable effects in other areas of life. For example, a supportive and inspiring work environment, such as a job that is fulfilling and rewarding, can have a positive effect on your personal life. A healthy marriage or supportive parents can help a person cope with indifferent or negative people at work.

Here are some suggestions for achieving a positive wellbeing:

- Maintain strong relationships with family and friends outside of work.
- Make time for social contact.
- Exercise regularly.
- Eat wholesome, nutritious foods.
- Take time to do activities of interest.
- Set achievable goals and work towards them.

Example

Work affecting personal life

Maninda works as a receptionist at a law firm. The workplace is male dominated and most of the staff are much older and more experienced than Maninda. Maninda does not have any strong relationships with her peers and managers at work, and often feels incompetent and uncomfortable at work. Maninda's managers are very critical of her work, especially if she makes even the smallest error.

After a number of months, these feelings increase and Maninda starts to take her problems home with her. Before and after work, Maninda is grumpy and unresponsive to her husband and two young children. She often reacts angrily to her family over small things and is increasingly withdrawn from her husband. This is affecting Maninda's marriage, which is then causing her workplace performance to suffer all the more.

Practice Task 2

Question 1

Which of the following workplace factors may lead to a positive state of wellbeing? Tick all that apply.

- A manager who checks on your wellbeing
- Getting at least 12 hours sleep every night
- Working as a team to meet set deadlines
- Using all of your sick leave
- Learning a new skill that saves time

Question 2

Draw a line to match the work-related stressor with the negative effect it can have on personal wellbeing.

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| » Constant long shifts | » A hard time feeling relaxed; working while eating lunch; chronic headaches |
| » Bullying behaviour from colleagues | » Lack of physical energy; lower back pain |
| » Peak or stressful periods | » Lack of joy and excitement; internal anger problems; increased distrust |

Summary

- Wellbeing is not just the absence of disease or a mental illness; it involves a combination of a person's social, physical, emotional and mental health factors.
- A person who is in a good state of wellbeing can feel more happy, healthy and socially connected, and be more purposeful in their life.
- Personal factors affecting wellbeing can include a lack of exercise, poor nutrition, little to no personal time to do the things you enjoy, conflict at home with children, parents or partner, personal illness or injury, a lack of sleep, the death of a loved one or planning for a major event, such as a wedding or holiday.
- Some stress can be healthy: it can strengthen and energise a person to achieve a goal and become more confident and healthier.
- Long-term stress, and an inability to recognise its effect on physical and emotional health, can be dangerous. Long-term stress can cause serious physical and psychological illnesses.
- Work-related stressors can negatively affect wellbeing.
- To determine the unique factors that affect your wellbeing, assess your own responses (e.g. your attitudes, physical changes and general behaviours) to different triggers, and seek feedback from trusted people.
- Stress and pressure affect people in different ways. A range of signs and symptoms will indicate that you are experiencing a negative state in your wellbeing. These signs can be physical, behavioural or emotional.
- Work and personal factors that affect wellbeing are interrelated. The factors that affect wellbeing at work can have a direct effect on your personal life, and vice versa.

Learning Checkpoint 1

Recognise personal wellbeing factors

Part A

1. Draw a line to match the beginning of each sentence about personal wellbeing to the correct ending.

» Work factors that can affect wellbeing include

» constantly changing and are affected by a number of personal factors.

» Feelings of wellbeing are

» the degree to which you feel overwhelmed or unable to cope with internal or external pressures.

» Personal factors that create positive wellbeing include

» fear of change, hazardous working conditions, peak periods, uncertainty in the workplace and a lack of resources.

» Stress is described as

» optimistic attitude, the ability to adapt to change, a sense of purpose and meaning and a health self-esteem.

2. List five examples of workplace-related stressors that can negatively affect an employee's wellbeing.

3. How can stress be both good and bad for you?

Part B

Read the case study below and then answer the questions that follow.

Case study

Stuart has recently been appointed store manager for a large supermarket in a suburb of Adelaide. He was excited to have been selected for the position after a lengthy interview process. Accepting the position meant Stuart and his family had to relocate from their temporary base in Victoria back to South Australia, where they originally resided.

For a period after their move, Stuart's wife was without work. The children took a while to settle into their new schools and routines. Stuart found his sleeping, eating and exercising routines were almost non-existent as he struggled with the increasing demands of his role.

His first month of work at his new store presented him with many challenges. Stuart was required to learn new systems and routines, negotiate a customer dispute, work long hours and deal with existing issues among his management team.

Stuart had not noticed that the tension between him and his wife and children had increased dramatically after this first month in the new role. He became easily offended and irritated by many things, and found it easier to distance himself from his family when he was at home.

1. List three personal factors that may be negatively affecting Stuart's wellbeing.

2. Which of the following workplace factors have the potential to affect Stuart's wellbeing? Select 'Yes' or 'No' for each one.

- a) Conflict with staff » Yes » No
- b) Customer complaints » Yes » No
- c) Longer working hours » Yes » No
- d) Poor nutrition and missing meals » Yes » No

3. Provide two examples of how Stuart's workplace challenges are affecting his personal wellbeing.

4. Suggest three things Stuart could do to improve his feelings of positive wellbeing.



Topic 2 | Plan communication with a supervisor

- 2A Select an appropriate communication approach
- 2B Plan to communicate about wellbeing

2A Select an appropriate communication approach

Building awareness with a supervisor is essential to supporting your personal wellbeing in the workplace.

Communication between employees and supervisors is important in maintaining healthy, supportive and productive work relationships.

Communication about personal wellbeing matters can be useful for three main reasons, as described below:

Building awareness

Communication is used to share how you are feeling and thinking, and the challenges you are facing at work and at home. Communication is the mechanism for explaining where you are at in your personal health and wellbeing journey. By sharing information about your wellbeing and the challenges you are facing, you are giving your supervisor an opportunity to build empathy and understanding, which can then help them manage and lead you more effectively.

Building better relationships

Communication is used to strengthen the supervisor-worker relationship. Open communication, honesty, trust and reliance are necessary for this key relationship.

Solving problems

Communication is used for working together to solve problems, develop solutions and make good decisions as to how you can manage your stress better, improve your communication skills in the workplace and safeguard your personal wellbeing.

Communication methods

To communicate effectively about your wellbeing, you need to choose an appropriate method to share your feelings.

Information about your wellbeing, including your struggles and feelings, is of a sensitive and personal nature. This type of information needs to be communicated to your supervisor in a way that is suitable to both of you, as well as in a manner that aligns with the policies and procedures of the organisation where you are employed.

In most cases, a one-to-one private meeting with your supervisor is going to be the most appropriate because this allows you an opportunity to share how you are feeling and express your concerns in a confidential environment. Confidential topics may be those that affect you personally and create stress. A one-to-one or face-to-face meeting allows for two-way discussion, whereby your supervisor can actively listen to your concerns. When a person is actively listening, they give you their full attention and indicate with their body language that what you are saying is important to them. For example, your supervisor may lean in or nod their head to indicate they understand. They may ask questions and repeat back what they have heard you say to clarify that they have understood you correctly. You may be asked to clarify your thoughts and feelings and to discuss the advice or options given to you to help you manage your wellbeing.

Information or concerns related to workplace health and safety might be communicated in a group setting, such as during a safety meeting or staff meeting. The outcomes arising from the meeting might be shared with other staff through a newsletter, or actions may be posted on the staff intranet or email.

The following diagram presents some common communication methods you can use to discuss your personal wellbeing, and it lists some of the characteristics of each.

Face-to-face meeting (including video-meeting)

- Useful for asking for and giving feedback
- Useful for discussing confidential, private or sensitive matters
- Enables effective two-way communication

Telephone conversation

- Used to share urgent and important information in a confidential manner
- Provides an opportunity for two-way communication
- Useful when access and distance are an issue, such as if you are on leave due to illness or annual leave
- This can be following up with a personal one-to-one meeting if required later on

Email

- Useful when a message is not urgent and an immediate response is not required
- Can communicate details about how you are thinking and feeling, as well as what you are struggling with
- Can be used to set up a meeting or to follow up from a face-to-face meeting

Your communication approach

Understanding different communication approaches can help you achieve improved outcomes and prevent misunderstandings.

Reflecting on and discussing your stress and difficulties with people can affect your ability to communicate effectively. Therefore, you will need to consider the style of communication that you need to use when discussing matters relating to your personal wellbeing.

Your communication style relates to the approach that you use when you communicate, including your attitudes behind your tone, words and body language.

There are a few different communication styles that you can use in the workplace, each with its own advantages and disadvantages. These different styles are described below.

Style	Advantages	Disadvantages
Passive	People who communicate passively will often avoid conflicts. They may have fewer responsibilities at work and delegate important decisions to others (leaving them less stressed).	A person with a passive communication style rarely speaks up about their questions and concerns and is likely to accept forms of aggressive, controlling or domineering communication from others. They may be slow to show anger towards others.

Style	Advantages	Disadvantages
Submissive	People who communicate submissively avoid conflict. They are often praised for being unselfish, 'nice' or being a 'good sport'. Submissive people can often get their way and control others by being nice and appearing weak.	Most people with a submissive communication style struggle to express their needs and may be ignored or not be taken seriously by others. They are often overly compliant to avoid tension. Sometimes a submissive person will think that they have communicated clearly, but their message was unclear, vague and subsequently misunderstood.
Aggressive	A person who communicates aggressively tends to get their material needs met, has the ability to protect their own space and appears to be in control.	People with an aggressive communication style believe they are entitled to have things done their way. They may push their thoughts or agendas onto others because they believe that they are in control, are always right and that the needs of others are less important. However, the achievements of people with an aggressive communication style come at the expense of others.
Manipulative	The only advantage to using a manipulative communication style is that the person achieves their end goal.	People with a manipulative communication style will strive to influence and control the behaviours and emotions of others in a way that helps them meet their personal goals or own agendas. This communication style is calculating and scheming, and the words spoken by people with a manipulative communication style are hiding an underlying message.
Assertive	People with an assertive communication style have the ability to clearly communicate their needs in a respectful manner, without dominating or abusing others. They believe and act as if all individuals involved are equal, where each person is deserving of respect and no more entitled than the other to share their ideas.	There are no disadvantages to the assertive style of communication because it is the happy balance between being passive and aggressive and is an effective style to use when communicating in the workplace.

When communicating your feelings and challenges with your supervisor, it is important to focus on using an assertive style, which will help you communicate more effectively. This style of communication will allow you to explain your thoughts, feelings and struggles better, ask questions to seek advice and take more responsibility for your actions.

Example

Aggressive communication

Following a successful interview process, Martin was appointed head of sales at Stockwell Distributors. Martin's resume displayed an impressive sales record and a wealth of knowledge, having worked in sales for almost two decades. Martin was delegated the responsibility of monitoring and managing the entire eastern states' sales results.

The company was delighted to see that sales had increased by 26% just 3 months after Martin's appointment with the company, but noticed that many of those under his management were taking increased periods of leave.

In preparation for Martin's 3-month probationary review, senior management invited feedback from those who directly reported to Martin. They were disappointed to hear that Martin lacked appropriate concern for his team members.

Feedback included statements that Martin would often communicate exactly what was on his mind, even if it meant hurting members of his team. Martin would be rude and speak down to others while simultaneously demanding respect from them. Members of Martin's team would voluntarily work overtime to hit sales targets, leaving them feeling stressed and taking extended periods of leave.

Although Martin's leadership and communication style were able to drive sales increases for the first quarter of the year, this was achieved at the expenses of others' wellbeing.

Practice Task 3

Question 1

Draw a line to match the correct advantages and disadvantages to each communication approach.

- | | |
|------------------------------|---|
| » Assertive communication | » A person who communicates with this approach tends to get their material needs met, has the ability to protect their own space and appears to be in control. |
| » Passive communication | » People with this communication style have the ability to clearly communicate their needs in a respectful manner, without dominating or abusing others. They believe and act as if all individuals involved are equal, where each person is deserving of respect and no more entitled than the other to share their ideas. |
| » Aggressive communication | » People with this communication style will strive to influence and control the behaviours and emotions of others in a way that helps them meet their personal goals or own agendas. This communication style is calculating and scheming, and any words spoken are hiding an underlying message. |
| » Manipulative communication | » A person with this communication style rarely speaks up about their questions and concerns and is likely to accept forms of aggressive, controlling or dominative communication from others. They may be slow to show anger towards others. |

Question 2

Which of the following communication methods could you use to discuss your personal wellbeing with your supervisor? Tick all that apply.

- Telephone
- Assertive communication
- Face-to-face meeting
- Exit interview
- Email
- Company meeting

Question 3

Why should you use an assertive communication approach when communicating with your supervisor about your wellbeing needs?

2B Plan to communicate about wellbeing

A personal wellbeing management strategy should include a combination of short- and long-term strategies: one tackles the environment, the other tackles the person.

A personal wellbeing management strategy is a plan that can help you develop your ability to safeguard and improve your overall health and wellbeing and respond better when difficult situations arise in the future.

By understanding the common stressors and the pressures of your environment, you can work out a way to manage your emotions better and achieve greater outcomes, without the negative side effects. Building your awareness of the effects your stressors have on your mind and body, and changing the way you deal with them, will lead to both a healthier, more balanced life and improved communication skills.

Short-term strategies

A personal wellbeing management strategy needs to include the short-term actions you will take to safeguard your wellbeing by making small changes to your environment.

As the name suggests, short-term strategies will deliver short-term gains. These types of strategies focus on your environment and the daily stressors you are exposed to.

Eliminate time-wasters	Use the 'Do, Delegate or Drop' technique: 'do' the tasks that require your attention, 'delegate' tasks to others that they can handle and 'drop' or delete tasks that do not need your attention. For example, there may be 20 emails you can delete without even opening them because they are either junk or unrelated to your department or job role. When you have a full workload at home or work, you should also learn to say 'no' to tasks that are not a normal part of your job role.
Avoid people who add stress to your life	If there are people in your life who consistently cause you stress and you cannot turn the relationship around, place a limit on the amount of time you spend interacting with those people or put an end to the relationship.
Avoid hot-button topics	If you are troubled by conversations about religion or politics, cross them off your conversation list. If you continue to argue about the same topic with the same people, excuse yourself from the conversations on this topic or stop bringing it up altogether.
Manage your time better	Managing your time poorly can produce a lot of stress. When you are running behind or juggling too many tasks at once, it is hard to stay calm and focused. However, if you plan in advance and make sure you are not stretched too thin, you can change the amount of stress you are under.

Change your workstation	Make any necessary adjustments to ensure your posture is adequate. Uncomfortable postures leads to physical stress symptoms, which lead to injuries. You may want to discuss using a standing desk with your supervisor because this can help with posture and concentration.
Give yourself more time every day	Get out of bed 30 minutes earlier to avoid feeling rushed at home. Get to work 15 minutes early and make yourself comfortable.
Change your transport methods	Take public transport if driving in peak hour causes you to feel tense. Alternatively, if public transport makes you tense, drive to work or organise a car pool.
Start the day well	Make sure you are well organised at the start of each day. Identify your priorities and tasks that need to be worked on before they reach crisis point.
Stick to your biological prime time	Do difficult tasks at times when you are fresh, such as first thing in the morning.
Take regular time out at work	Take lunch and tea breaks no matter what your day throws at you. Schedule free time every week and stick to it. Regularly go home when your official finish time arrives.

Long-term strategies

Short-term strategies address the environment, whereas long-term strategies address the person and your ability to cope better with the demands of your environment.

Stressors will come and go over time, but people rarely live out a day, week or year without being exposed to a handful of stressors that can affect their wellbeing. Therefore, because the stressors are not going to go away forever, you must implement a range of strategies to improve how you respond to uncomfortable, unfamiliar or unexpected circumstances.

Stamina is the ability to continue functioning during long periods of physical or mental effort. Resilience relates to the ability to cope and adapt in the face of adversity and sources of stress.

A person with stamina and resilience will not only survive difficult experiences, but they will also 'bounce back' from them. Having resilience and stamina does not mean you will not experience periods of stress, but they will help you endure these periods better and maintain your wellbeing. The behaviours, thoughts and actions that characterise resilience and stamina can be learnt.

Develop the ability and confidence to speak up	Tell your family or friends about your stress problems and ask for their support and suggestions.
Rediscover what you enjoy doing	Get involved in activities and hobbies outside the workplace.
Prioritise your work-life balance	Work-life balance means you are honouring both your home and work commitments, and neither activity affects the other negatively.
Give priority to self-renewal activities	Self-renewal activities may include training, reading self-help books or attending regular small groups for support.
Take time for relaxation and recreation	Consider the benefits of regular relaxation and recreation, such as team or individual sports, meditation, yoga or going for a walk.
Get plenty of sleep	According to the Sleep Health Foundation, the average person needs between 7 and 9 hours of continuous sleep every night to allow the body sufficient time to rejuvenate itself.
Eat well	Focus on having a healthy breakfast, lunch and dinner that include lots of vegetables, fruit, wholegrains and protein. Look for unprocessed and natural foods. If you are unsure what 'healthy' means, book a visit with your local dietician, nutritionist or naturopath.
Become active	Take up a hobby or get involved in a sport or community activity, visit friends. Do something that takes you away from the source of your stress.
Get specific 'stress management' help if you need it	Talk to others or join an Internet chat group to learn how others manage stress.
Develop your assertive behavioural skills	Do not let others affect how you want to live your life. Deal with problems directly, and as they arise, doing your best to anticipate and prevent them.
Develop your conflict management skills	If unresolved conflict causes you to 'stress out', invest the time in developing your ability to address conflict and reach win-win outcomes.
Reframe problems	Try to view stressful situations as a more positive perspective. Rather than get all worked up about a traffic jam, look at it as an opportunity to stop and regroup, listen to your favourite radio station or enjoy some alone time.
Set healthy boundaries	Overextending yourself or saying yes when you really want or need to say no leads to exhaustion, resentment and stressful relationships.
Focus only on positive ways of dealing with stress	Eliminate unhealthy ways of coping, such as alcohol, drugs and food, and replace them with healthier coping methods, such as sport, exercise, yoga, spiritual practice or outdoor activities.

Plan your communication approach

Planning for two-way communication will make you more effective and will ensure better outcomes are achieved when discussing your strategy.

Planning how best to communicate with your supervisors about matters relating to your wellbeing will allow you to explain your thoughts and feelings clearly and ask the right questions to gain the feedback you need.

Planning your communication approach involves understanding a number of key factors:

When planning to speak to your supervisor:

- write down the key points about the matter in a communication plan, including what you want to discuss and why you would like to meet with your supervisor
- call your supervisor on the telephone or send them an email advising them that you would like to arrange a time to discuss your wellbeing with them
- confirm a suitable date and time to talk over the telephone or meet face to face.

Plan your communication

A communication plan involves understanding all the key factors that affect the communication process.

A communication plan can be helpful when deciding how to communicate information about your wellbeing to your supervisor.

To develop a basic communication plan, you will need to consider and understand the following important parts of the communication process.

Who are you communicating with?

Consider the audience you need to communicate with, including their needs, limitations and communication skills.

What is the purpose of communicating with this person?

Consider why you need to communicate the information to your supervisor and what you hope to achieve from sharing your personal wellbeing management strategy.

What information needs to be communicated?

Gain a clear understanding of the content that needs to be communicated within your personal wellbeing management strategy. Consider all workplace and personal factors affecting your wellbeing. Include stressors that have negative and positive effects because your supervisor may view these as opportunities for growth.

When does the information need to be communicated?

Consider the ideal time to communicate personal wellbeing information with your supervisor, including whether it is urgent or whether it can wait until a more mutually convenient time.

What is the best way to communicate this information?

After considering all the factors above, think about the best way to communicate with your supervisor so that your message reaches them successfully and they can understand the information clearly. In most cases, this will be a face-to-face personal meeting with your supervisor.

Example

Communicate wellbeing to a supervisor

Anastasia was feeling overwhelmed. Her situation at work and at home was not conducive to a positive state of wellbeing. The more her situation intensified at home and at work, the more desperate she felt.

After speaking with a close friend and doctor, Anastasia knew she needed to act quickly in order to improve her overall health and wellbeing. She set about eliminating stressors at home over which she had control. Anastasia started going to bed earlier to ensure she got 8 hours of sleep each night; she started cooking dinner using whole foods and ditched eating takeaways, and she started attending yoga classes three times a week. Anastasia also learned to better manage and accept other personal stressors that were not going to disappear any time soon.

Anastasia knew she needed to address her workplace stressors with her supervisor. She planned for her discussion by documenting the workplace factors that were causing her the greatest stress: last-minute tasks delegated to her, the need to juggle numerous tasks at once and not having the technological skills to operate the new customer relationship management (CRM) system. Anastasia considered her supervisor's incredibly busy schedule and decided a telephone conversation within the week would be appropriate. Anastasia hoped to achieve some clarity around her responsibilities and additional resources from her supervisor to meet those responsibilities.

After documenting her communication plan, she emailed her supervisor to set up a time to discuss it with him.

Practice Task 4

Question 1

Number each step from 1 to 4 in the order you would follow to communicate matters relating to your wellbeing to a supervisor.

- When meeting with your supervisor, follow your communication plan.
- Develop a communication plan that includes key points, such as what you want to discuss and why you would like to meet with your supervisor.
- Confirm a suitable date and time with your supervisor to meet face to face.
- Call your supervisor or send them an email asking when the best time is to discuss your wellbeing with them.

Question 2

Which of the following statements about communication plans are correct? Select 'Yes' or 'No' for each one.

- | | | |
|--|-------|------|
| a) When developing a communication plan, you need to consider who you are communicating with, their needs and limitations | » Yes | » No |
| b) When considering what information needs to be communicated, you should list stressors that have both positive and negative effects on your wellbeing. | » Yes | » No |
| c) Using a manipulative style of communication is best used when your manager is confident and sensible. | » Yes | » No |
| d) When considering what information needs to be communicated, you should only list stressors that have negative effects on your wellbeing. | » Yes | » No |
| e) To discuss your personal wellbeing, your communication plan should only include a time that is convenient for your supervisor. | » Yes | » No |

Question 3

What short-term strategies could help you respond better to a stressful situation?

Tick all that apply.

- Develop your assertive communication skills
- Change your workstation
- Avoid people who add stress to your life
- Familiarise yourself with your job description so you can say no to tasks that are not in your job role
- Get plenty of sleep

Summary

- Communication between employees and supervisors is important in maintaining healthy, supportive and productive work relationships.
- Communication about personal wellbeing matters can be useful for building awareness, building better relationships and solving problems.
- To communicate effectively about your wellbeing, you need to choose an appropriate method for sharing your feelings. This may include face-to-face meetings, telephone conversations or email.
- Your communication style relates to the approach you use when you communicate, including your attitudes behind your tone, words and body language.
- Communication styles include passive, submissive, aggressive, manipulative and assertive. When communicating your feelings and challenges with your supervisor, it is important to focus on using an assertive style, which helps you communicate more effectively.
- A personal wellbeing management strategy is a plan that can help you develop your ability to safeguard and improve your overall health and wellbeing. Your strategy should include a combination of short- and long-term strategies.
- When planning to communicate with your supervisor about your personal wellbeing, you will need to develop a basic communication plan, call your supervisor or send them an email stating that you would like to arrange a time to speak with them and confirm a suitable date and time.
- A communication plan is helpful when deciding how to communicate information about your wellbeing to your supervisor. When developing your communication plan, consider the attributes of your audience, the outcomes you hope to achieve, the types of information you need to communicate, the best method of communication and timing.

Learning Checkpoint 2

Plan communication with supervisor

Part A

1. Which of the following statements about communication methods are correct? Select 'Yes' or 'No' for each one.

a) An email is best when communication is urgent and requires an immediate response.	» Yes	» No
b) Telephone conversations about personal wellbeing are useful for employees who are on leave.	» Yes	» No
c) Active listening skills are important skills to have when communicating personal wellbeing via email.	» Yes	» No
d) Face-to-face meetings with supervisors are great for seeking feedback about personal wellbeing.	» Yes	» No
e) Social media can be used to discuss private and confidential information about personal wellbeing with supervisors.	» Yes	» No

2. Draw a line to match each communication style to its correct definition.

» Manipulative	» A communication style where people have the ability to clearly communicate their needs in a respectful manner, without dominating or abusing others.
» Passive	» A communication style where people strive to influence and control the behaviours and emotions of others in a way that helps them meet their personal goals or own agendas.
» Assertive	» A communication style where people believe they are entitled to have things done their way. They may push their thoughts or agendas onto others because they believe that they are in control, are always right and that others' needs are less important.
» Aggressive	» A communication style where people rarely speak up about their questions and concerns, and are likely to accept forms of aggressive, controlling or dominative communication from others.

3. Which communication style should you use when discussing a strategy for managing your personal wellbeing with your supervisor? Tick all that apply.
- Manipulative
 - Assertive
 - Aggressive
 - Friendly
 - Confident
4. What key aspects should you consider when developing a basic communication plan? Tick all that apply.
- The unique attributes of your audience
 - The outcomes you hope to achieve
 - The information that needs to be communicated
 - The use of information technology
 - The communication method used

Part B

Read the case study below and then answer the questions that follow.

Case Study

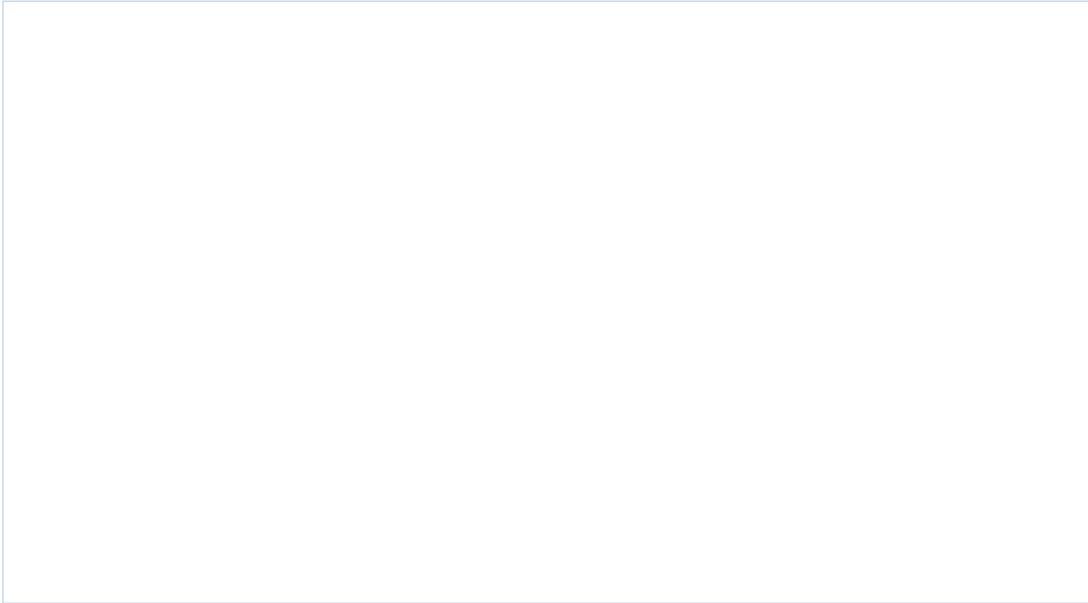
Recent changes and redundancies in senior management have resulted in increased working hours and more responsibilities for Tara at work. After initially agreeing to the increased responsibilities in her job role and a larger pay cheque, Tara is now left feeling very stressed. This is affecting her ability to complete her work tasks on time and to the required standard.

Tara is also studying a postgraduate degree and is feeling increased pressure as the mid-semester exams approach. Tara's husband travels often for work, which means that Tara must look after the majority of their children's activities and commitments while also juggling the demands of part-time studies.

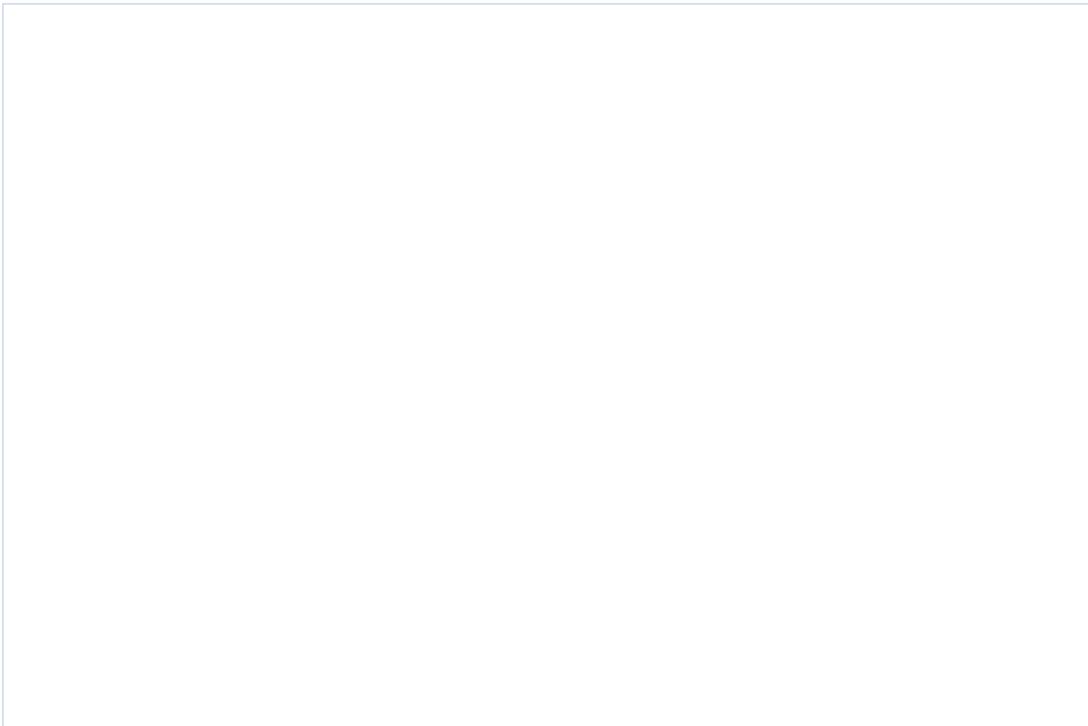
Despite the hectic home life, Tara's family are all incredibly supportive of her. When her husband is not travelling for work, he will often take on the majority of the household responsibilities to give Tara some much needed time to herself.

Tara identifies the negative effects her personal and workplace stresses are having on her wellbeing and sets about developing a plan to communicate her struggles and concerns with her manager.

1. What personal factors and workplace requirements would you expect to see documented in Tara's communication plan as negatively contributing to her wellbeing?



2. What personal factors would you expect to see documented in Tara's communication plan as positively contributing to her wellbeing?



3. List three short-term strategies and three long-term strategies that Tara could use to eliminate or better manage the stressors in her life.





Topic 3 | Communicate with a supervisor

- 3A Arrange and conduct communication with a supervisor
- 3B Review the effectiveness of the communication

3A Arrange and conduct communication with a supervisor

Confirm a suitable date, time and location with your supervisor to discuss your personal wellbeing management strategy.

Once you have developed your personal wellbeing management strategy and finalised your communication plan, you will need to organise a time to meet with your supervisor.

This can be achieved through an email, a brief face-to-face discussion, web video conferencing or a telephone conversation. In most cases a face-to-face meeting in a private room will be most appropriate because this will allow you to share personal and sensitive information in a confidential setting. If you are away from work due to illness or leave, a telephone or video conferencing call may be suitable.

The table below lists the information you will need to confirm with your supervisor in readiness for your meeting.

Confirm the following information with your supervisor prior to your meeting:

- date and time of the meeting
- the proposed length of the meeting
- the meeting venue, including location and room number
- any information you need to prepare and bring along, such as your personal wellbeing management strategy.

Use effective communication skills

Communicating does not just mean speaking. Effective communication occurs when the intention or meaning of the message reaches the receiver.

Effective communication requires the involvement of both the person delivering the message and the person receiving the message.

The prime responsibility for good communication lies with the 'sender', the person who has the idea and wants to share it.

When discussing your personal wellbeing management strategy with your supervisor, follow the communication strategies detailed below to ensure the information you provide is clear, accurate and understandable.

Key communication strategies to be used when discussing your wellbeing management plan:

- speak clearly and pronounce your words using correct English conventions
- think before you speak and choose your words carefully
- avoid jargon and complicated terms
- use language that the supervisor will understand
- explain your thoughts, concerns and ideas in positive terms
- keep your sentences short and concise; do not overload the supervisor with complicated and lengthy information
- allow sufficient time for the supervisor to listen and respond to the information
- ask for the supervisor's feedback to ensure understanding.

Follow your communication plan

Stick to your plan, be flexible where needed and your communication will be more effective.

Communication is a key aspect of every workplace meeting, in particular when discussing sensitive topics such as personal stress and wellbeing. To effectively discuss your challenges, feelings and thoughts on how to respond to stress and other health and wellbeing challenges, it is important to follow the plan you have set out. This includes your communication plan and your personal wellbeing management strategy.

You will need to have a copy of your strategy in front of you during your meeting with your supervisor so you can stay on track and avoid deviating into other topics that may not be related. Before entering the meeting, review the communication approach that you need to follow: one that is assertive, calm and professional.

Remember, assertive communication is the happy ground between aggressive and passive; it involves talking in a way that shows confidence, mutual respect and personal control. This is the ideal style to use, particularly when talking about difficult situations and feelings.

Ask questions to gather information

Asking questions and clarifying what has been said is an important part of a discussion.

When discussing your personal wellbeing management strategy with your supervisor, it is important to ask questions and gain feedback. This will enable you to seek positive input about your strategy and make adjustments that can help you achieve your goals.

By asking good questions, you can check that you have understood what your supervisor has said and confirm that they have understood what you said. You can also learn about ways in which you can improve on your strategies.

Some examples of questions you can ask are listed below.

Examples of questions to ask your supervisor

- What ideas do you have that can help me improve my health and wellbeing?
- How could I have responded better in this situation?
- What did I say that offended the other person?
- Have you observed any signs that show I may be stressed?
- Have you noticed any signs or symptoms that show my wellbeing is low?
- What types of factors do you believe impact the most on my wellbeing?
- What have you done in the past that helped you?

Use active listening skills

One-half of the two-way process of communication is that of active listening.

Most people are great at talking, but when they finally stop speaking, they are just waiting for another opportunity to have more input. The ability to stop, listen and consider the response of the person speaking is crucial to ensuring engagement and understanding in the communication process.

When discussing your personal wellbeing strategy with your supervisor, it is essential that you actively listen to their input and the feedback provided to you. Active listening is defined as listening with the intent of doing something with the information received. It is actively interpreting the information being communicated and participating in the conversation.

Active listening skills

- Use good eye contact
- Stop your task and focus on the person speaking
- Use empathy to look at the situation from the speaker's perspective
- Eliminate all barriers and distractions and focus on the person speaking
- Nod every few seconds to show you are paying attention
- Give verbal gestures when someone else is talking (e.g. 'yes' or 'okay')
- Paraphrase to show you have received the information clearly
- Ask more questions to clarify and confirm understanding

Example

Poor active listening

Clarice had arranged a meeting with her supervisor Mark, to discuss monthly sales results and other matters that were affecting her performance at work. Clarice was struggling to reach her team's new sales targets and was feeling anxious about missing them for the third month in a row.

Although the meeting started well, Clarice found herself becoming increasingly frustrated and angry as she tried to explain to Mark the reasons why she felt the sales targets were unrealistic and unachievable.

When it was Mark's turn to talk, Clarice would constantly interrupt him mid-sentence by aggressively stating her own opinions. Each time Mark spoke, Clarice made it very clear that she was just waiting for an opportunity to get a word in and was not really focusing on what he had to say.

Clarice had minimal eye contact with Mark when he was speaking, often gazing through the meeting room window and becoming distracted by team members outside the meeting room.

Clarice left the meeting still feeling anxious. Due to her poor listening skills, she was unable to recall or put into practice her supervisor's feedback or suggestions.

Practice Task 5

Question 1

Which of the following should you confirm with your supervisor when arranging a discussion about your personal wellbeing strategy? Tick all that apply.

- Date and time
- Dress code: what to wear
- Proposed length of the meeting
- Meeting venue, including location and room number
- Catering options

Question 2

Which of the following statements about communicating effectively with your supervisor are correct? Select 'Yes' or 'No' for each one.

- a) Active listening is defined as listening with the intent of doing something with the information received. » Yes » No
- b) Effective communication is solely reliant on the employee delivering the message. » Yes » No
- c) Asking questions and clarifying what has been said is an important part of a discussion with your supervisor. » Yes » No
- d) It is important to incorporate industry jargon and complicated terms into your conversation with your supervisor to demonstrate your knowledge. » Yes » No
- e) Active listening can be demonstrated by nodding every few seconds to show you are paying attention to your supervisor, and paraphrasing shows you have understood what has been said. » Yes » No

3B Review the effectiveness of the communication

Self-reflect on your communication approach to look for ways to improve on your communication skills.

Workplace communication includes expressing your feelings, thoughts and ideas to others in an appropriate and controlled manner.

Oftentimes when under stress, our communication is less than effective. The emotion that comes with working with stressful people and within difficult situations can overcome our ability to use clear speech, control our tone and communicate in a respectful and assertive manner. Instead, we can become aggressive, controlling or passive and withdrawn.

Communication is something that can be improved over time through ongoing feedback and self-reflection. Continual learning is key to improvement.

Seek and respond to feedback

Feedback is essential in allowing us to monitor and improve our communication skills.

Becoming an effective communicator takes time and practice. To help you understand how you are communicating at work, and in particular when under stress, it is important to get feedback from your supervisor. Feedback is when someone else lets you know how well you did something. This may be very simple and informal, such as saying, 'The way in which you explained how you were feeling was very clear and honest – well done.'

Oftentimes your supervisor is the best person to give you advice on how to communicate more effectively. When receiving feedback, your supervisor will need to know they have been understood and that their feedback provides some value. It is important to acknowledge that you heard what the person providing feedback has said by saying 'thank you' or by asking a question if you are unsure about anything that has been shared.

Self-reflect on your communication

Self-assessment helps to build your level of self-awareness and identify what you can improve on in the areas that matter the most.

Self-assessment is about asking yourself questions that are relevant to your personal work competency standards, including your communication skills.

Stress can affect anyone's ability to communicate effectively; therefore, self-assessment is not about being critical of your character or putting yourself down. Rather, it is about taking an objective look at how you are communicating and looking at ways of extending your skills.

Key questions you can ask yourself when self-reflecting on your communication skills:

- What response did I get from my supervisor when I expressed my concerns?
- Did I explain myself clearly enough that my supervisor understood my message?
- How could I have explained myself better?
- What parts of my body language, tone and words could have been used better?
- Were there any confused looks or other body language that showed that my supervisor misunderstood me?
- Was I in control of my emotions and words for the entire meeting?

Review your communication skills

Evaluating your communication requires you to self-reflect and decide on the value and significance of feedback received.

Self-assessment, coupled with feedback from others, is an excellent way for you to see and correct your blind spots. Have you ever impersonated someone only to hear that person say, 'I don't do that!' while everyone else laughs and agrees with you?

We are often surprised to hear how others perceive us. How we see ourselves and value feedback influences our ability to improve on our professional competencies.

Growth and fixed mindset

Adopt a growth mindset mentality so you can respond positively to different situations and people and improve your communication skills.

Dr Carol Dweck PhD is one of the world's leading researchers in the field of motivation and is a Professor of Psychology at Stanford University. Dr Dweck's years of research have focused on why people succeed and how to foster success. She believes people have either one of two mindsets: fixed or growth.

People with a fixed mindset believe that their basic qualities, like their intelligence, communication or talent, are simply fixed traits. They dedicate their time to documenting their intelligence or talent instead of investing time in developing them. They also believe that talent alone generates success, and that no effort is required. This type of mindset is limiting and will not help a person learn and progress.

People with a growth mindset believe that their most basic skills can be developed through commitment and effort and that brains and talent are just the starting point. This view creates a thirst for personal development.

People with a growth mindset are also constantly self-assessing, asking for feedback and monitoring what is going on, but they are not fixated on judging themselves and others in this way. Many successful people will possess a growth mindset.

Put on your growth mindset

People with a growth mindset are sensitive to positive and negative feedback and are aware of opportunities where they can keep learning.

A person with a growth mindset will ask the following questions when they receive feedback or experience an event that requires self-assessment:

- What can I learn from this?
- How can I improve my own communication skills?
- How can I manage the person or situation better next time?

Below are some principles to follow when evaluating your communication skills.

- Look for feedback that is specific and clear with identifiable behaviour you can focus on. Overall evaluation is important, but focusing on key areas is also significant.
- Assessing feedback from multiple sources will give you a fairer picture of your communication skills than if you just listen to one person with their unique perspective.
- Be prepared to act on the feedback you receive.
- Be patient: improving your communication takes time, practice and persistence.

Example

Seeking feedback from a supervisor

Johan and his five co-workers are part of a newly created project team who are responsible for developing a marketing strategy for a client's upcoming product launch.

Five weeks into the project, Johan began to notice that the members of his team were reluctant to come to him for assistance or consult him on important decisions.

Johan called for a private meeting with Sue, the project manager, to discuss the lack of communication between him and the other team members. During the meeting, Johan asked Sue whether she had observed him displaying any behaviours that may have contributed to the team's unwillingness to involve him.

Sue mentioned that on a few occasions Johan had exhibited an aggressive and controlling communication style towards the team, which left them feeling uneasy about him. She suggested that Johan should be more aware of his tone and ensure that communications with his team members were respectful and polite at all times.

Johan thanked Sue for her valuable feedback and agreed to put her suggestions into practice when he next met with his team members.

Practice Task 6

Question 1

How do you review the effectiveness of your communication? Tick all that apply.

- Conduct self-reflection
- Assume your communication is of a good standard and no review is necessary
- Seek ongoing feedback from multiple sources
- Take an objective look at your communication style
- Demonstrate active listening skills

Question 2

What questions may you ask yourself when reflecting on your communication skills?
List at least three.



Summary

- Once you have developed your personal wellbeing management strategy, you will need to arrange a time to meet with your supervisor to discuss it.
 - This can be achieved through an email, a brief face-to-face discussion, web video conferencing or a telephone conversation.
- In most cases, a face-to-face meeting in a private room will be most appropriate because this will allow you to share personal and sensitive information in a confidential setting.
- When arranging to discuss your plan, you will need to confirm the date, time, location and proposed length of the meeting, as well as any other information that you need to prepare, such as your personal wellbeing management strategy.
- When discussing your personal wellbeing management strategy with your supervisor, ensure your communication is clear, accurate and understandable.
- Effective communication requires the involvement of both the person delivering the message and the person receiving the message.
- It is important to follow the plan you have developed so that you can discuss your challenges, feelings and thoughts on how to respond to stress and other health and wellbeing challenges.
- When discussing your personal wellbeing management strategy with your supervisor, it is important to ask questions, use active listening skills and gain feedback.
 - This will enable you to seek positive input about your strategy and make adjustments that can help you achieve your goals.
- Self-assessment helps build your level of self-awareness and identify what you can improve upon.
 - Self-assessment involves asking yourself questions that are relevant to your personal work competency standards, including your communication skills.
- When evaluating your communication skills, look for feedback that is specific and clear, assess feedback from multiple sources, be prepared to act on feedback and be patient with yourself as you refine your skills.

Learning Checkpoint 3

Communicate with a supervisor

Part A

1. What communication strategies should you use when discussing your personal wellbeing plan with your supervisor? Tick all that apply.
 - Avoid jargon and complicated terms
 - Ask for your supervisor's feedback to ensure understanding
 - Keep your sentences short and concise
 - Confirm meeting date, time and location
 - Use language that your supervisor will understand
2. Which of the following will help you develop a growth mindset? Tick all that apply.
 - Look for feedback that is specific and clear with identifiable behaviour you can focus on.
 - Assess feedback from multiple sources.
 - Be prepared to act on the feedback you receive.
 - Document how well you communicate.
 - Be patient as you improve your communication skills.

Part B

Read the case study below and then answer the questions that follow.

Case study

Bernie had been experiencing some struggles at work in recent times that were affecting his personal wellbeing. After implementing a handful of short-term strategies to reduce his stress, Bernie knew he needed to put in place some longer-term strategies to create a more sustainable work–life balance.

Bernie compiled his thoughts, challenges and strategies in a personal wellbeing plan in readiness for a discussion with his supervisor. Bernie then called his supervisor to request a private meeting.

Bernie was hopeful that their scheduled meeting would provide him with an opportunity to seek his supervisor's feedback on ways to improve his work–life balance. He was also eager to hear his supervisor's suggestions for managing stressful situations at work more effectively.

1. What information should Bernie confirm when arranging a meeting with his supervisor?
Tick all that apply.

- The meeting method
- The workplace factors affecting his wellbeing
- The date and time of meeting
- The meeting venue
- The types of information he should have with him at the meeting

2. How can Bernie demonstrate that he is actively listening to his supervisor's feedback during their meeting? Give three examples.

3. List two methods Bernie could use when reviewing the effectiveness of his communication with his supervisor.



Topic 4 | Research wellbeing resources

- 4A Identify and review wellbeing resources
- 4B Document method for accessing resources

4A Identify and review wellbeing resources

There are many internal and external resources available to help you safeguard and improve your health and wellbeing.

Effectively managing wellbeing and stress can be a complex and challenging task. In some situations, a personal wellbeing management strategy can be helpful in safeguarding and improving your wellbeing. In other cases, where more serious issues exist, support and advice may be needed from others within or external to the workplace.

It is important to remember that the first step in dealing with matters relating to personal wellbeing is to identify the factors, including the early stressors and warning signs and symptoms. Workers may be able to identify these themselves, or they may need another person's insights into what is wrong. The warning signs of wellbeing issues may be noticed by partners or family members, colleagues, customers, supervisors and managers, human resources staff or workplace counsellors.

Informal and formal wellbeing resources

When you are experiencing high levels of stress, it may be beneficial to seek out additional support strategies and get advice on how to deal with the situation.

If you are experiencing levels of stress that exceed your ability to cope, and the issues are affecting your personal wellbeing, you may need to seek out informal or formal support services.

Various resources and services are available to help you identify and manage the underlying causes of health and wellbeing issues. Depending on the nature of the issue, some support services may be paid for by your employer.

Formal resources	Informal resources
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Employee assistance program (EAP) ▪ Trained internal counsellors ▪ Human resources professionals ▪ Work health and safety (WHS) professionals ▪ Workplace mentoring programs ▪ Doctors, general practitioners (GPs) and other allied health professionals, such as psychologists, psychiatrists, social workers and counsellors ▪ Professionals from specialised health and wellbeing organisations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Personal support networks, such as having discussions with friends and family members ▪ Informal conversations with colleagues, peers and supervisors at work ▪ Accessing articles on stress, mental health and wellbeing from specialised organisation's such as Lifeline ▪ Accessing media articles and reports on workplace health and other similar types of issues

Employee assistance programs

EAPs are formal structured support programs and services offered to employees who are experiencing challenges with their health and wellbeing.

EAPs are made available through an organisation's partnership arrangement with allied health professionals, such as trained counsellors, doctors or psychologists. Although EAPs are not available in all organisations, in particular small- to medium-sized businesses, some employees can access EAPs to gain more specific levels of support and assistance in a range of areas, including stress management, relationships and divorce, mental health and addiction. EAP meetings and support services are confidential.

Employees can make an appointment with a trained health professional for support and advice on various workplace issues. Some EAP organisations also provide workshops and training for workers to help avoid issues or problems escalating, and to give useful information on a range of personal issues that can affect work performance.

The focus of EAPs is on helping organisations meet their WHS obligations (by providing a safe and healthy workplace), to reduce staff absenteeism and staff turnover, and to increase staff morale and productivity.

Internal counselling services

Organisations can offer formal counselling through the human resources department, health and safety team or other trained specialists.

Internally employed counsellors can be accessed to help workers deal with wellbeing matters that are affecting their work, whether the sources come from within or outside of the workplace.

Counsellors may be accessed as part of an EAP, or privately. The counsellors are usually experienced human resources or WHS professionals or other specialists, and often have a background in mental health, stress and relationship management.

Internal counsellors can:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ help a worker identify sources of stress
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ help a worker develop coping strategies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ provide support and encouragement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ assist with planning changes to work arrangements
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ provide information and advice about mental health issues.

Mentoring

Mentoring is the ongoing relationship of personal development that exists between a mentor and mentee.

A 'mentor' is defined as a trusted counsellor or guide. A mentor is a person who is usually older and more experienced and who guides the mentee through their development.

Formal mentoring programs usually focus on developing behaviours, resilience, problem-solving skills and character, as opposed to coaching, which focuses on developing task knowledge, skills and technical abilities.

Mentors can also be people who are currently in a position where the mentee aspires to be. For many organisations, mentoring programs are offered to new starters to help them transition into the business and manage common issues they may be having. Mentors can be highly effective in supporting workers who are dealing with stress and other work-related issues.

Personal support networks

A personal support network is an informal group of two or more trusted people who can provide advice and reassurance, as well as recommend other resources to help people who are facing health and wellbeing challenges.

Personal support networks can be helpful in dealing with matters relating to mental health, wellbeing and stress.

A personal network may contain:

- family members (including partners, children and parents)
- friends
- peers in the workplace
- members of a professional network.

Often just talking about problems for a short time can be helpful in dealing with them. It is important to remember that there is a difference between talking about problems in a way that is helpful for everyone and talking in a way that promotes and prolongs stress for the whole network.

Professional mental health organisations

Mental health describes the range of conditions that affect the state and functioning of a person's mind, including thinking patterns, emotional state and general behaviour.

Mental health is a topic that is commonly reported in the media, and discussions between friends, family members and colleagues in the workforce are gradually increasing as people learn more about this sensitive issue.

Mental health includes conditions such as depression, anxiety and schizophrenia. When you are experiencing ongoing high levels of stress or other related conditions that you are unable to cope with, it may be wise to seek out external resources or make contact with a professional in the area you are struggling with. These professionals are trained to help you with specific types of issues, such as drug or alcohol addiction, relationship issues or depression.

Consider these support services that specialise in mental health conditions:

Beyond Blue	Phone: 1300 22 4636 Website: www.beyondblue.org.au
Lifeline Australia	Phone: 13 11 14 Website: www.lifeline.org.au
Black Dog Institute	Website: www.blackdoginstitute.org.au

Compare wellbeing resources

Review and compare the types of support services available to select the most appropriate service that meets your needs.

There is a wide range of high-quality support services and resources available to help people who are experiencing ongoing high levels of stress and various forms of mental health conditions. It may be wise to see a qualified person to help you through tough times, speak to an internal counsellor or access some quality reading materials from organisations such as Beyond Blue.

It is important to understand that not every support service or resource will be right for you. Therefore, take the time to determine the root causes (stressors and triggers) of your wellbeing challenges and research the different resources that are available to help you.

You may need to compare the level of support between two or more services to make an informed decision. If you need input as to what type of service is best for you, ask a trusted friend, family members, GP, human resources staff member or peer for advice.

Example

Use personal support networks

Kristan usually calls her sister for a chat each Friday after work. Both Kristan and her sister have fairly stressful jobs and they provide support to each other in dealing with challenging situations.

Kristan and her sister understand the need for work–life balance, so whenever they chat together, they ensure that they talk for a short time about work but also spend time talking about other topics.

The sisters enjoy sharing ideas and strategies for dealing with workplace problems, and both come away from their Friday night catch-ups feeling refreshed and ready to enjoy their weekends.

Practice Task 7

Question 1

Which of the following are examples of formal wellbeing resources? Tick all that apply.

- Employee assistance program (EAP)
- Personal support network
- Workplace mentoring programs
- Media articles and reports on workplace health
- Human resources professionals

Question 2

What two strategies can help you determine which formal or informal wellbeing resource is most appropriate?

Question 3

How would you compare all the different types of wellbeing resources available to you?
Tick all that apply.

- Identify wellbeing resources that are available (and paid for) through your employer
- Use the EAP as it is intended to support all employees
- Compare the level of support provided by different resources
- Ask your colleague which wellbeing resource they would use
- Identify the root causes of your wellbeing challenges and look at resources that address these issues

Question 4

Which of the following statements correctly describes the features of employee assistance programs (EAPs)? Tick all that apply.

- They can provide workshops and training for workers to help avoid issues or problems escalating
- They are made available through an organisation's partnership arrangement with allied health professionals
- EAP meetings and support services are confidential
- They are an informal group of two or more trusted people who can provide advice
- They are not available in all organisations

4B Document method for accessing resources

As part of your personal wellbeing management strategy, it is good practice to document the additional support services that you plan to access.

Writing down any planned resources and support services, including how you plan to access them, will provide you with many benefits in terms of helping you protect your personal wellbeing.

Documenting any planned resources and support services will help you:

- maintain accurate contact details of articles, websites, professionals and organisations so that you can refer back to the resource at a later stage
- take notes about what you have found helpful from each resource
- keep a list of the types of resources you have found helpful in the past that could also provide positive input in the future
- provide clear information about the types of actions you have taken that can help when you self-reflect on your personal wellbeing status in the future
- build accountability and create action by writing down any actions you take
- compare more than one type of resource to determine the best fit for you.

Take clear notes of wellbeing resources

Writing clear and concise information is an important part of a personal wellbeing management plan.

Strategies need to contain information that is accurate, clear and up to date. By writing down the method and details of the support services and resources you plan to access, you can easily access those resources in the future, without having to waste your time in searching for the resources again.

When taking notes about wellbeing resources, follow the guidelines below.

Guidelines for taking notes about wellbeing resources:

- Write down the full name and contact details of the article, including the title of the article, the organisation that published the article and the website address.
- Record the details of specific people who have assisted you, including their full name, job title, organisation, email, physical address and contact telephone number.
- Check your spelling, punctuation and grammar.
- Set out your information using tables or plenty of spaces so it is easy to read and understand.
- Check the details relating to telephone numbers, websites and addresses to make sure they are correct.
- Document your information as part of your personal wellbeing management plan.

Example

Resource list of wellbeing support

Name of resource	Type of support	Access details
Beyond Blue article	Article on preventing mental health 'Looking Out for Yourself'	aspirelr.link/beyond-blue-looking-out-for-yourself
Life Supports article	Article on causes and effects of depression 'Depression Counselling'	aspirelr.link/lsc-depression-counselling
Lifeline Support Centre	24/7 telephone support for mental health conditions	Text service: 0477 13 11 14 Ph: 13 11 14
Watervale Counselling Services	Professional counselling for mental health and depression issues	Ph: 1300 700 999 385 Northern Hwy, Robe, SA
Internal workplace counsellor – Jenny P.	Internal support and counselling through the organisation's HR dept	Email: jparis@bigcitycommercial.com.au Ext: 87452

Practice Task 8

Question 1

Why is it important to keep a record of the types of wellbeing resources you have accessed, or plan to access in the future?

Question 2

What strategies should you follow when keeping records of the wellbeing resources you have accessed or plan to access in future? Tick all that apply.

- Record the details of specific people who have assisted you, including their full name, job title, organisation, email, physical address and contact telephone number
- Set out your information using tables so it is easy to read and understand
- Check telephone numbers, websites and addresses to make sure they are correct
- Discard records about wellbeing resources once your wellbeing has improved
- Document your information in your personal wellbeing management plan

Summary

- Various resources and services are available to help you identify and managing the underlying causes of health and wellbeing issues.
 - These may be formal resources such as employee assistance programs (EAPs), doctors and human resource professionals, or informal resources such as personal support networks and media articles.
- EAPs are made available through an organisation's partnership arrangement with allied health professionals, such as trained counsellors, doctors or psychologists.
 - EAP meetings and support services are confidential.
- Internally employed counsellors can be accessed to help you deal with wellbeing matters that are affecting your work, whether the sources come from within or outside of the workplace.
- Mentoring programs can be highly effective in supporting workers who are dealing with stress and other work-related issues.
- A personal support network is an informal group of two or more trusted people who can provide advice, reassurance and recommend other resources to help people who are facing health and wellbeing challenges.
- Professional mental health organisations, such as Beyond Blue, Lifeline Australia and Black Dog Institute, can help with specific types of issues, including drug or alcohol addiction, relationship issues or depression.
- It is important to understand that not every support service or resource will be right for you.
 - Therefore, take the time to determine the root causes (stressors and triggers) of your wellbeing challenges and research and compare the different resources that are available to help you.
- As part of your personal wellbeing management strategy, it is good practice to document the additional support services that you plan to access so you can easily access those resources in the future without having to waste your time in searching for them again.
- Ensure that the information you document in your personal wellbeing management strategy is accurate, clear and up-to-date.

Learning Checkpoint 4

Research wellbeing resources

Part A

1. List three key features of an employee assistance program (EAP).

2. Which of the following are examples of informal wellbeing resources? Select 'Yes' or 'No' for each one.

a) Friends, family and co-workers	» Yes	» No
b) Internally employed counsellors	» Yes	» No
c) Articles on stress, mental health and wellbeing from specialised organisations, such as Lifeline	» Yes	» No
d) Media articles and reports on workplace health and wellbeing issues	» Yes	» No
e) EAPs	» Yes	» No

Part B

Read the case study below and then answer the questions that follow.

Case study

Nel had been experiencing some financial and relationship issues with her long-term partner at home. The severe stress and emotional strain she was experiencing were affecting her personal wellbeing and ability to function properly at work.

Nel's supervisor, Robyn, had noticed the gradual decline in Nel's wellbeing. On hearing about Nel's home struggles, Robyn encouraged Nel to seek out help from the many internal and external support services available to her.

Robyn advised Nel that the company provided formalised and confidential support programs to all their employees when required, and strongly encouraged Nel to consider it. Robyn also informed Nel that if she used the company's employee assistance program, the company would cover the cost, up to a certain limit, and allow Nel to access their services during work time. Nel thanked Robyn for her input and went away to consider her options.

1. Suggest one formal and one informal wellbeing resource available to Nel.

2. How can Nel compare formal and informal wellbeing services to determine which one will best support her during this time? Tick all that apply.

- Take the time to determine the root causes of stress
- Take the time to research all the different resources available
- Look for testimonials from celebrities
- Ask a trusted friend, human resources staff member or peer for their advice on the best service to use
- Compare the number of followers on their social media pages

3. Which wellbeing resource should Nel select and why?



4. List three things Nel can do to ensure that she has a clear, accurate and permanent record of the wellbeing resource she has chosen.



