

# CASP Wellbeing Newsletter

October 2022

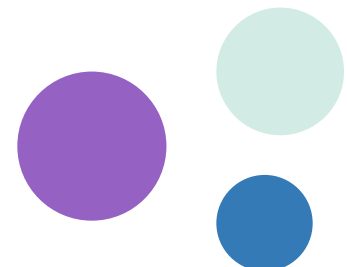
**Welcome to our final issue of our wellbeing newsletter. We hope that the newsletters have been helpful to you over the last few months. This newsletter was designed for frontline workers of the ACT Community Assistance and Support Program (CASP) – which includes volunteers and staff of subcontracted organisations.**

This newsletter provides additional wellbeing support in recognition of the unique challenges faced by frontline workers during the pandemic. In this issue we have partnered with other organisations – including Head to Health ACT, HeadsUp and Northside Community Service to create unique and local content. We hope that these series of newsletters have been useful to you!

**Save the date! 8<sup>th</sup> December** Join us for a CASP Worker Check in Brekky! Connect with other CASP Workers and enjoy a coffee and Brekky. Stay tuned for more info to come!

## Win a local artwork!

As part of the CASP Worker Wellbeing project we have a beautiful local artwork to win. Please see page 5 for more details on how your organisation can enter to win this stunning painting.



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## Building a Team

**Jason McCrae, Clinical Psychologist, Canberra Head to Health**

*Jason McCrae is a Clinical Psychologist who works at Canberra Head to Health. Canberra Head to Health is a new, free service providing mental health support to the Canberra community and surrounds. Visit [canberraheadtohealth.com.au](http://canberraheadtohealth.com.au) or call 1800 595 212 to find out what support you can access.*



Working in support and caring roles, as discussed in this series of articles, can be demanding. Psychologically and emotionally, support workers give a lot. It can also be, despite having regular contact with other people, an isolating job and feel like you are working on your own. It's for these reasons that building a sense of team amongst your fellow workers and your organisation can be really helpful for being able to undertake this demanding role long term.

One of the challenges of building a sense of team and a supportive workplace environment is that in such a demanding role finding the time, energy and effort to undertake activities that foster a sense of team can be difficult. It means taking time out of your day or week and consequently less time either personally or for the main role we perform – providing support. However, most find the reward in terms of spending time and having contact with our co-workers makes it worthwhile, and is an investment in making the workplace more rewarding.

The type of activities for building a sense of team and supportive environment usually aren't overly onerous. The simplest are between two people – call a colleague to see how their day was and let them know how yours was, occasionally or regularly catch up for coffee or lunch, and when you do speak with co-workers, make a point of asking about how their family/partner/pet etc is going – building the conversation and relationship with your colleagues to be about more than work. At a team / organisation wide level regular activities can make a big difference – and they don't have to take lots of time and effort. Having coffee and cake for team members' birthdays, including some "non work" items in the regular team meetings and even a footy tipping competition can all go to building a supportive team which helps everyone in what can be both demanding and rewarding work as a support worker.

Jason McCrae is a Clinical Psychologist who works at Canberra Head to Health. Canberra Head to Health is a new, free service providing mental health support to the Canberra community and surrounds. To find out more [www.canberraheadtohealth.com.au](http://www.canberraheadtohealth.com.au) or call 1800 595 212 to find out what support you can access.

# HEAD TO HEALTH



## CASP Worker Wellbeing Self Compassion Workshops

In July, the Self-Compassion – Time Out for yourself workshops were held for frontline community workers.

While community work is often rewarding, it also often comes with stress and emotional fatigue. With staff shortages and increased workloads flowing from COVID, the burnout of community workers is a growing concern in the community sector.

In response to this, ACTCOSS hosted two Self Compassion workshops for frontline community workers. It was an opportunity for workers to explore the topic of self -compassion and emotional regulation. The workshops developed the skills of community workers to cultivate a kinder way of being towards themselves in a gentle way. Participants were able to reflect on their experiences over the past few years and connect with themselves and colleagues.

*Emma, I loved the Self Compassion Workshop, it was so nourishing, thank you so much for helping to make it happen and being a part of the experience. The content was informative, and the delivery was wonderful, Kate is engaging and grounded and I felt utterly at home, I could have sat for days learning with her. The participants enhanced the whole experience leaving me feeling much more connected, which goes a long way to self-compassion. Thank you again, I could waffle on for an age... 😊*



*I thought the session was lovely and really appreciated you putting it on. Kate was great. Very personable and created a lovely sense of calm and gratitude. Location at Woden library was perfect and it was nice to have an afternoon tea and opportunity to meet others. In fact, I had opportunity to use some calming techniques last night driving through the city streets of Sydney with 3 teenage girls in the car! We took a few wrong turns and things did get a bit heated 😊. Made it safe and sound in the end and all was good.*



## Win a Local Artwork!

As part of the CASP Worker Wellbeing project we are running a competition for CASP organisations to win a beautiful Aboriginal artwork titled 'The Bush Capital'. This artwork was part of the 10<sup>th</sup> annual NAIDOC Community Art Exhibition, which features works by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander detainees from the Alexander Maconochie Centre (AMC). It measures 600 x 500mm and would make a beautiful and interesting addition to any office.



From the artist: The three kangaroos in the foreground represents the first nation within Ngunnawal country, Canberra's iconic tower depicts Australia's capital city and the communication happening between all its inhabitants

We spend most of our waking weekday hours at work. We can spend more time with our workmates and clients than we do with our own families and friends. It's important that we feel mentally well, healthy, safe and valued at work, so we can perform at our best and flourish in other aspects of life.

We would love to hear of innovative ways your workplace is looking after you! Does your organisation

- provide stress management and resilience training?
- implement mental health policy including zero tolerance of bullying and discrimination?
- participate in events like [World Mental Health Day](#) and [RU OK? Day](#)?
- provide a peer support program for staff?
- organise social activities?
- provide and encourage regular physical activity opportunities like lunchtime yoga, jogging or meditation?
- promote walking meetings?

Let us know!

To enter, tell us in 250 words or less **how your organisation is working towards increasing mental and emotional wellbeing in your workplace**. Please send them to [caspwellbeing@actcoss.org.au](mailto:caspwellbeing@actcoss.org.au) by the **11<sup>th</sup> November 2022**. With permission, we will share the entries so that we can all be inspired by what is happening in other workplaces.



## CASP Worker Profile

**Kate Malone, Northside Community Services**

*We had a chat with Kate Malone, the Care Coordinator at Northside Community Services. She tells us about her role and how she manages to look after herself while working as a frontline worker.*



### **How long have you been in your role?**

Very Fresh! Care coordinator since February 2022, CASP worker since May 2022

### **What do you like about your role?**

Having a positive impact in our clients lives and having the ability to effect change for the better. Connecting with people.

### **What has changed about your role since the pandemic?**

Having just begun in the role I haven't personally experienced any changes, however I can imagine there has been an increase in need throughout our community as well as changes in the way we are able to support our clients.

### **What are your coping strategies as a community worker?**

Ensuring I am looking after my physical, mental and emotional health as a priority and taking time out when I feel the need.

### **Does your employer have any great initiatives for health and wellbeing?**

Northside prioritises employees' mental health and wellbeing. The Employee Assistance Program (EAP) through Benestar is a free and confidential counselling and coaching service available to Northside employees and their immediate family members. Benestar provides health and wellbeing support and resources to assist employees in bringing their best selves to work.

### **What is an Inspirational quote you like?**

'People may forget what you said, they may forget what you did. But they will never forget how you made them feel' 'How we walk with the broken, speaks louder than how we sit with the great'

### **What is your favourite food?** Italian!

### **What is your favourite holiday destination?** New Zealand or Bora Bora

### **Cat or dog person?** All round Animal Person!

### **What do you like to do out of work to relax?**

Quiet time to myself, Spending time with loved ones

Dancing! Exploring Nature

## Did you know?

**One in six working-age Australians are currently experiencing mental illness, most commonly depression and anxiety.**

**If you work in a place with more than 10 people, there's a good chance at least one or two people in your team is living with a mental illness.**

**Further to that, an additional one in six of us will have symptoms associated with mental ill health – such as worry, sleep problems and fatigue – affecting our ability to function well at work.**

**(<https://www.blackdoginstitute.org.au/resources-support/wellbeing/workplace-wellbeing/>)**

## From Burnout to Beyond workshop



In response to our survey of CASP community workers, where stress and burnout were highlighted as significant issues, we have engaged popular Canberra psychotherapist and facilitator Kate Diggle to deliver a three- hour engaging and interactive workshop. In this workshop participants will do a self-assessment piece on where they are currently travelling in regard to stress and burnout. We will then explore practical ways to manage our stress and energy so that participants can find strategies that will work for them to be able to continue work and home life in a sustainable and more enjoyable way.

There will be two workshops run, please book only for one:

**Wednesday 12th October (please register by the 5th October)**

9.30am-12.30pm

Griffith Neighbourhood Centre

<https://www.eventbrite.com.au/e/from-burnout-to-beyond-a-workshop-for-community-workers-tickets-416408367637>

**Wednesday 19th October (please register by the 12th October)**

1pm-4pm

Corroboree Park Function Room, Ainslie

<https://www.eventbrite.com.au/e/from-burnout-to-beyond-a-worskhop-for-community-workers-tickets-416426632267>

These workshops are a part of the CASP Worker Wellbeing project, funded by the ACT Health Directorate to provide additional wellbeing support in recognition of the unique challenges faced by frontline community workers during the pandemic.



# Tips for you to create a mentally healthy workplace

By HeadsUp Better Mental Health in the Workplace [Tips for employees \(headsup.org.au\)](https://headsup.org.au)



Employees play a significant part in shaping workplace attitudes and the overall working environment. Here are some tips on what you can do as an employee to create a mentally healthy workplace and make a difference to your workplace

## Look after yourself

No matter where you are sitting on the mental health continuum, it is always helpful to work on taking care of yourself and staying well. If you are feeling down, sad, stressed, or are finding it hard to cope, it is important to speak to someone about this. Your GP or an Employee Assistance Program (if your workplace has one) counsellor is a good place to start. You may also want to complete a [short checklist](#) to get a better understanding of how you're feeling.

## Develop an understanding of mental health conditions

It is good to be aware of the [signs and symptoms](#) that may indicate that you or a colleague, friend or family member is not coping. Learn what support services are available for yourself or to recommend to others.

## Speak openly about mental health in the workplace

Speaking openly about mental health can encourage your colleagues to do the same and contribute to a working environment where people are comfortable seeking support if they need it. You may even consider [sharing your personal experience](#) of anxiety or depression if you have one and feel comfortable doing so.

## Find ways to reduce your stress

Feeling [stressed](#) is different to experiencing a mental health condition, like depression or anxiety. Prolonged or excessive job stress can have a negative impact on your mental health. Think about what the main sources of your stress might be and what [practical steps](#) you can take to reduce them. This may include having a conversation with your manager.

### **Understand what workplace bullying is, and isn't**

It is important to be informed and empowered so you can look after yourself and know what to do if you feel you are being bullied. It can also empower you to look out for others in the workplace.

### **Know your legal rights and responsibilities**

Work health & safety laws protect your [right to a safe workplace](#), but you also have [responsibilities](#) under the same legislation. You must take care of yourself and others and cooperate with your employer in matters of health and safety. This applies to all workers, whether they have a disability or not.

If you're experiencing a mental health condition, you are legally protected against discrimination in the workplace. You also have a right to privacy and are not legally required to tell your employer - unless your condition could endanger you or your colleagues.

### **Ask for support from your manager if you need it**

If you are experiencing a mental health condition, telling your manager about it may mean you get the support you need to get and stay well. However, this is a very personal decision that's not right for everyone. Find out more about the [pros and cons of disclosing](#) and how to have a conversation with your manager.

**Support others in your workplace** If someone you work with doesn't seem themselves, [check in to see if they're OK](#). Providing this support can make a real difference. Everyone benefits from positive workplaces, where people feel confident [having conversations](#) with colleagues, and comfortable accepting support.



### **Be a mental health champion**

Participate in your organisations work health and safety and wellbeing initiatives and cooperate with workplace policies and procedures. Learn about how you can [reduce risks related to mental health](#) in your workplace.

You can also play a role in encouraging your organisation to be proactive about creating a mentally healthy workplace. To help your senior leaders you could refer them to [Developing a workplace mental health strategy: A how-to guide for organisations](#). It provides a step-by-step process and clear actions that will help your organisation develop and implement a Workplace Mental Health Strategy. Once your organisation is ready to go, the [Getting Started Pack](#) is a great resource for helping to communicate the plan to all levels of your organisation.

# Help and Resources

If you or anyone you know needs help:

- Access Mental Health line on 1800 629 354
- Domestic Violence Crisis Service 6280 0900
- Lifeline on 13 11 14
- Kids Helpline on 1800 551 800
- Beyond Blue on 1300 224 636
- Headspace on 1800 650 890
- Parentline on 1300 30 1300
- ReachOut at [au.reachout.com](http://au.reachout.com)
- Suicide Call Back Service on 1300 659 467
- MensLine Australia on 1300 789 978
- Care Leavers Australasia Network (CLAN) on 1800 008 774
- Head to Health at [headtohealth.gov.au](http://headtohealth.gov.au)
- 1800 Respect on 1800 737 732
- Q Life on 1300 555 727
- Brother to Brother on 1800 435 799
- Mindspot [www.mindspot.org.au](http://www.mindspot.org.au)

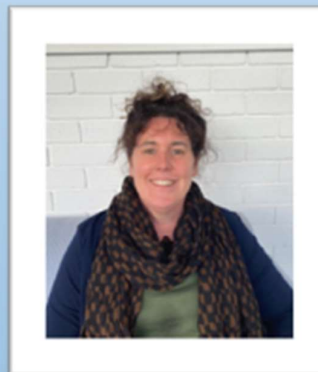
## Wellbeing tip

**Create clear boundaries between work and home.** Use the time on your commute home to wind down from work. Listen to your music or try cycling or walking to work. Or if using public transport, try getting off a stop earlier to walk. These little actions can really help you to switch off from work and make clear boundaries between work and home.

## Additional Support for CASP Workers

Emma provides support to the ACT Community Assistance and Support Program (CASP) and also works on policy issues related to disability, health, ageing and transport. She understands the unique pressures of frontline work and recognises while frontline work often brings great joy and satisfaction, workers can sometimes put their needs secondary to clients and experience burnout or disillusionment. She is happy to chat to frontline workers and put them in touch with resources.

Reach out to Emma via [emma.hawke@actcoss.org.au](mailto:emma.hawke@actcoss.org.au) or call 02 6202 7200.



Emma Hawke, CASP Development Officer

## About ACTCOSS



The ACT Council of Social Service Inc. (ACTCOSS) advocates for social justice in the Australian Capital Territory and represents not-for-profit community organisations.

ACTCOSS acknowledges Canberra has been built on the land of the Ngunnawal people. We pay respects to their Elders and recognise the strength and resilience of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples. We celebrate Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander cultures and ongoing contributions to the ACT community.

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## Contact details

Address: 1/6 Gritten St, Weston ACT 2611

Phone: 02 6202 7200

Email: [actcoss@actcoss.org.au](mailto:actcoss@actcoss.org.au)

Web: [www.actcoss.org.au](http://www.actcoss.org.au)

Twitter: [twitter.com/ACTCOSS](https://twitter.com/ACTCOSS)

Facebook: [facebook.com/actcoss](https://facebook.com/actcoss)

Instagram: [instagram.com/actcoss](https://instagram.com/actcoss)

**Disclaimer:** Views expressed in this newsletter are those of individual authors and do not necessarily reflect the policy views of ACTCOSS.

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## About the CASP Worker Wellbeing Project

The CASP Worker Wellbeing Project is designed to provide additional wellbeing support to staff during the pandemic, through 4 issues of a wellbeing newsletter and CASP events. To raise any questions or provide feedback, please contact: [caspwellbeing@actcoss.org.au](mailto:caspwellbeing@actcoss.org.au)

This project is supported by funding from the ACT Health Directorate.

Supported by



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