

## EXAMPLE STORY

Health & Wellbeing  
**Cardiff Wellness Program**  
Cardiff RSL



WINNER 2018

---

### **Outline your unique story/project/program**

The strategy was for a collaborative approach to develop a wellness program including the Secretary/ Manager through to our front line staff that would in turn benefit our employees, the community and support business objectives. This was achieved through providing a learning pathway to self-empowerment, recognition of one's behaviour and to have an understanding of what motivates other people's behaviour. The most effective way was to have employees trained in Mental Health First Aid. The initial training was delivered at the club for 15 employees including the management team and core staff. The message was that we as an organisation are not afraid to discuss mental health and our employee's wellbeing and the wellbeing of our community is important to us. We as an organisation saw physical and mental health as important as each other. We recognised health (mental and/or physical) benefits in developing a learning organisation, supporting a culture of continuous improvement through collaboration, consultation, self-empowerment and respect that could benefit and add value to the wider community.

The next stage was a document that we live, breathe and feel. Development programs included Mental Health First Aid and industry accredited training for front line staff and leadership roles. ALL employees that either were recruited for a leadership role or promoted within were made aware that Mental Health First Aid Training was compulsory. This was no different to the acceptance regarding compulsory First Aid training. This supplied a service to support our emergency services but was also an informal approach to developing coaching skills, decision making and the foundation for future professional development based on behaviour.

The next objective was to place emphases on Mental Health First Aid in our workplace and the importance/connection it had with physical First Aid. There is no payment for this accreditation under the Registered & Licensed Club Award 2010, only the allowance for First Aid. Therefore First Aid Officers would incorporate the role of Mental Health First Aid Officers and paid the allowance. Mental Health officers' names are displayed throughout the club, First Aid kits and on our WHS Staff Notice Board. The list title is "Mental Health/First Aid Officers".

A Wellness program booklet was developed advising employees their right to privacy and the guidelines to be followed regarding seeking permission for further support. This booklet was initially handed out to every employee and is included in the initial paperwork required to be given to new employees when onboarding. The booklet consists of :

- Wellness program fundamentals
- EAP Policy & program details
- Mental Health First Aid Policy
- Cultural considerations & communication techniques by MHFA
- The MEWS wellbeing framework.

Wellness program incorporated:

- In the development stage of 2016 we engaged Relationships Australia due to the brand name and connection to the community as a counselling service for the EAP component of the program. In the first review period in 2017 we changed to People sense allowing access to a Psychologist. This allowed us to have flexible arrangements by having a Psychologist come on site as opposed to our employees only being able to access them through their offices. In support of domestic violence campaigns in the community we absorbed the costs for a psychologist to come to the club, have a support person from the wellness group and supply a private room.
- Self-Empowerment that supported confidence for accredited industry training and development. In 2018 as part of our professional development calendar for the wellness group, including our management team, they will be rostered on to attend a two-day workshop on the basic skills for dealing with people in crisis. This course is called the “Accidental Counsellor Foundations” and delivered at the club by Lifeline. Through self-empowerment of our employees the next stage of development was/is accredited training of hospitality, events, finance and leadership skills to give them more confidence for their personal growth but for them to also be able to ask confronting questions and learn to be authentic leaders.
- A core group representing different demographics/ positions. This was developed taking into consideration that between the different styles of leadership, staff and personalities they would support most employees and our customers able to connect with some of our employees when needed.
- Intervention strategies that looked at prevention as opposed to reaction before performance management was applied. Performance management policy was removed and all performance management was under the guidelines of the Fair Work Act and the award. Management were trained in feedback based on performance and conduct with outcomes to be deemed fair and reasonable. For Internal grievances, investigations or alternative strategies the wellness group was used as support personnel. This involved support prior to the shift starting, talking to someone to get a different view, buddying staff up so that they were not left to struggle, seeking advice from HR or senior management. An example of a strategy used to deal with an internal grievance between an employee who is 65 yrs old and a woman who is in her mid-20's was that the young adult would teach the older employee how to use a computer. Not only were we supplying life skills needed for her retirement but a form of communication was developed between generations.
- Mental Health awareness and Mental Health First Aid was our objective to reduce the stigma and transfer that knowledge into our work life but also give the confidence for employees to manage their personal lives with the support of their peers that they spend so many hours with.
- Through Mental Health First Aid Training teaching empathy and compassion into our culture and therefore leadership styles to develop better rostering, team development, how people learn, what motivates them and to think differently to how we approach not only our staff but our customers.

As part of our recruitment strategy we wanted to reflect our community and support new entrants into the industry as well as give opportunities to long term unemployed, mature age and our youth. To do this we needed our culture to be able to support this strategy.

### **Why was this story/project/program addressed as a priority?**

Cardiff RSL Wellness program came about in 2016 due to the time that was spent with individual employees and the amount of time spent on investigations that lead to performance management and in some cases termination.

Some of these issues were:

- Customer engagement/service standards
- Traditional leadership direction and delivery
- Internal gossiping/grievances
- Employee wellbeing, state of mind
- Disconnection from co-workers, minimal team cohesion, structure support
- Negative culture
- Individual lack of confidence or self-worth
- Lack of industry connection and accredited training
- Undiagnosed mental illness, spouse or family mental illness, lifestyle stresses, learning difficulties
- Recruitment strategy
- Cost effective strategy to address each issue in the shortest time frame that supported the strategic business goals and the wellbeing of our employees and members and guests.

The Hospitality industry backbone is customer service. Traditionally the 'leave your problems at the door and put on a smile' was a common directive to front line staff. Employees that developed a career in service orientated industries or from the millennial generation knew this traditional message is not possible and does not help drive results that reach the bottom line.

This worked to a certain degree when customer service was not expected to go beyond providing a service or purchase with a smile and a Thank you. Today's organisations are expected to create an unforgettable experience for customers, meet individual needs and change delivery of service to the individual. For this to be possible employees need to understand the motivation behind people's behaviour and how to get the best outcome. For customer service to become customer engagement employee wellbeing is more than a good feel approach. This is a business strategy that requires employees to be qualified, motivated and supported to sustain high performance and excellent customer engagement as part of workplace culture. The expectation is that customer engagement is to be reviewed as part of performance and conduct guidelines. Employees then need to have faith and trust that the organisation and their leaders believe that their wellbeing is just as important as our customers.

Due to our workforce size of approximately 36 employees it was imperative that we found a way that our leadership team participated in but also evoked empathy, compassion and mindfulness in conjunction with supervision of daily duties while still managing performance and conduct. Customer engagement training was delivered prior to this program for all employees as compulsory training but while overall moral was low and individual wellbeing was not addressed this training was ineffective.

The challenge we faced as a small organisation with a limited budget was the traditional wellness programs. These not only offered Employee Assistance Programs but discounts to external businesses, yoga lessons, gym memberships and other incentives. This was not possible so we needed to look at a new and innovative approach to a wellness program that incorporated access to the traditional component of an Employee Assistance program, acknowledged and addressed Mental Health in our community as well as a strategy to address the challenges and business issues we had identified.

### **Tell us what was contributed toward this story/project/program?**

Cardiff RSL Wellness program has been in place approximately 2 years. This program was also developed to look at better time management that required less dependency on the HR Manager due to being a team of one. The peer support team have demonstrated how effective this program is by asking the Duty Manager

if they can go to quiet corner as a co-worker needed to talk. The outcome from this is now many issues or challenges employees are facing are discussed and supported before they have reached senior management or resulted in business disruptions of 'sick calls' through support of their peers with less reliance on the EAP. In highlighting the issues, it was also acknowledged that as an organisation we have an amazing group of staff that were already informally supplying these roles but lacked the confidence & education to take full ownership.

The E-learning component of Mental Health First Aid was completed in the administration office evoking conversations acknowledging the struggles people face, identifying with parts of mental health and also sharing of coping strategies that are used for family and friends. The tone and the delivery of the conversations were no different to any other informal conversations that took place between employees.

Feedback complimenting staff on not only supplying the service but engaging customers in conversation and making them feel extremely welcome has been brought to senior management attention. This has been through different forms of communication such as emails, feedback forms and verbal recognition. Cardiff RSL is proud to send our employees into the community to represent us externally but also when employees have been given the skills to change industry's or progress in their careers in other organisations.

Through development of our culture based on empowering it has allowed us an organisation to offer opportunities and partner with Joblink Plus recruitment agency. This has given us a revenue stream into HR through government wage subsidies and also opened the door for long term youth, mature age and people in our community who need added support to find meaningful employment. This is supporting our recruitment objective to employ staff that represent our community. This program was based on learning about behaviour, decisions made that may not be reflective of the needs of that person and that we need to get the right people for the right jobs. In doing this a relationship was built based on consultation with one main recruitment consultant. This gave them the opportunity to understand the soft skills we needed in our applicants and in partnership we could work towards increasing the hard skills. This was more effective for a higher success rate, a shared responsibility and also a pathway for progression. This supplied the financial needs of a job but also through the Wellness group peer support staff also gave ongoing support for employees with mental illness, domestic violence and from various social backgrounds.

This was achieved by working alongside their peers and with the management team on a daily basis.

### **What was the measureable difference that the support made?**

The club is able to support our employees, members and guest and also highlight external support organisations due to the change in our culture. This is achieved by having their information and service displayed in the club. We currently have brochures and flyers from Nextt that support our veterans and families, aged care and people with disabilities and mental health in all age groups including young adults.

Through the fundamentals of this program the club was able to implement organisational change when the Secretary/Manager retired in February 2018. Internal promotions from all levels included advancement to Secretary/Manager, Operations Manager, Gaming Manager, Office Manager, Full time Supervisors, Duty Managers, Department team members and Team Leaders. It has allowed for frontline and management employees to be humble and honest and know that as individuals the organisation would support and respect our employees based on the wellness of each other. Through empowerment and peer support we now have become a learning organisation.

The HR budget had a revenue of \$30,000 in the calendar year ending 2017. This was used to support additional training and will continue to be put back into staff and community skills development like we did with Mental Health First Aid. In July 2018, a group of 11 employees will be taking part in a 7 week training program delivered by the Newcastle Deaf Society so we can have a core group that can communicate, include and represent our community and our customers. This is paid for by the club in developing ongoing skills that are inclusive and diversify our range of customers.

The training in Mental Health First Aid Training has not only been used as a basis for training development but also to support the community. This has been reflected by support of our emergency services when dealing with patrons.

One of our mental Health First Aid officers/peer support sat down with a customer for over an hour and they talked about the problems he was facing. Another example has been the highlight of elderly abuse and discussions taken place and then advising the police, as well a customer advising a supervisor that did not want to live due to his citation and the Supervisor stayed on the phone to talk to him.

Traditionally hospitality workers careers are not deemed a reason to be exempt from Jury Duty. As a community club, we don't try and get our employees exempt when they are called up. One of our Supervisors who was booked into training for Mental Health First Aid was called for a possible 2 week Jury service. On submission of our Mental Health First Aid Policy endorsed by the Board of Directors, the training he was doing and the role this played in supporting the community he was exempt altogether as opposed to the 2 days we requested.

### **Do you have long-term plans/goals for this story/project/program?**

This program was developed to increase self-empowerment, individual learning styles, community concerns and support Human Resources to recruit and train employees to support Operational and Business goals and objectives. Part of the training calendar for 2019 is the three-yearly refresher for 7 Mental health Officers that is paid for by the club. The professional development training will continue for the wellness group and for those that will not be completing the accidental counsellor workshop in June 2018 will complete it in 2019.

Supervisors and core staff will continue to do mandatory training in Mental Health First Aid as part of their roles. Community skills will continue to be looked at and upon review of the effectiveness of the Sign language course we will look at rolling out another group in 2019. A policy will need to be implemented due to the potential "bullying" complaints around staff that may arise if they feel they are being "talked about". This is due to the sign language group instructed to practice around the club with each other. They have been advised that they will need to verbally communicate and with their hands to remove that threat. Like mental health training privacy and respect for our peers needs to be implemented and actively promoted.

By building on the culture we have developed and the continuous development of this program we will also be looking at developing an Employee Volunteer program. This will be an extension of the wellness program that will allow our employees to donate their time while we pay their wages to work with charities by offering our skills e.g. admin for Women's shelters and cooking classes for Oz Harvest to name a few. This extension of the program is only in the discussion stage but has a lot of interest from our employees.

Our relationship with Joblink Plus will still continue with maintaining at least three opportunities for long term unemployed, youth or mature age. This will also maintain a revenue income stream to the HR budget as well as supporting the community through recruitment.

Cardiff RSL recognition program was implemented and developed in consultation with a committee of front line staff and management facilitated by the HR Manager. The employees recognised over the last 12 months include acknowledgement for their commitment to the wellness program and the support of our members and guests in relation to mental health and wellbeing. This will continue.