

Addressing stigmatising attitudes and behaviours in the workplace

Factsheet for managers and supervisors

Make a mental note

Recognise and respond to mental health-related stigma at work

Managers and supervisors can receive reports of discriminatory behaviour through a range of avenues.¹

This behaviour could be reported to you either verbally or in writing by the person experiencing it, or by a witness/bystander. Here are some tips on what you can do:

How to respond to reports of discriminatory behaviour

- Identify if the behaviour fits the definition of discrimination or bullying and follow relevant organisational policy and procedures.
- Act promptly and treat all matters seriously.
- Maintain privacy and confidentiality for all parties. Seek advice from Human Resources or Privacy teams before taking action if necessary.
- Ensure all workers know their legal responsibilities, including duties under the *Work Health and Safety Act 2011*.
- Provide all parties with contacts to internal and external support persons and services.
- Manage interactions between the person experiencing stigma and the person allegedly displaying the stigmatising attitudes and/or discriminatory behaviour. Consider making reasonable adjustments to their work environment, workload and hours to decrease distress.
- Explain to both parties the process and outcomes of any investigation that might take place and keep records of all interactions with the workers involved.

What organisations can do to promote a stigma-free environment

Lived experience leadership

Provide training and peer support to workers with lived experience of mental health issues so they can lead conversations about mental health in the workplace.

Increase awareness

Use organisational communication channels to promote positive attitudes and behaviour towards people with experience of mental health issues.

Engagement

Encourage meaningful engagement between people with and without lived experience of mental health issues to talk about mental health.

Cultural responsiveness and relevance

Develop communications and awareness activities in consultation with cultural groups represented in the workplace to ensure they use culturally appropriate concepts and language.

Education and training

Build manager/supervisor capabilities and promote mental health training and education for all workers.

Link action to outcomes

Be clear as to why this change in workplace culture and behaviour is needed.

¹ For the full list of references used in this fact sheet, see the accompanying resource '[Addressing stigmatising attitudes and behaviours in the workplace](#)'

