

# Creating a Body Peace Workplace: A guide for health & safety, HR and wellbeing leaders

A Body Peace Workplace is about a culture where everyone has a peaceful relationship with body, food and movement. This includes celebrating diversity, promoting body acceptance, proactively addressing workplace factors that may contribute to body image concerns and eating disorders, and supporting people who are impacted by eating disorders (whether firsthand or as carers) to engage in treatment.

## How disordered eating or eating disorders may present at work

Eating disorders are mental illnesses, so the changes are not necessarily physical and they can happen in any body.

**Note:** To learn about disordered eating, eating disorders, and what the difference is, read *Do you know the signs?*

There is no exhaustive list of what disordered eating or eating disorder behaviours look like at work. Remember too that many people don't share their 'full selves' at work.

Some common signs or challenges to look out for in work settings specifically include:

- reduced energy or focus
- unusual change in performance
- scheduling work events around exercise
- excessive caffeine consumption
- struggling to take on new challenges
- worrying about taking time off to attend appointments
- feeling more anxious than usual around workplace events which involve food or movement
- not attending work social events

- avoiding eating in common areas
- excessive diet talk
- worrying about being judged by others.

Not all these signs immediately mean a person is experiencing an eating disorder – but an open conversation can go a long way.

**Remember:** There is a varied range of eating disorders which can happen in any body; there is no one 'look' or type of person they happen to. You can learn more about eating disorder behaviours on [Eating Disorders A-Z](#).

It's not only people experiencing an eating disorder themselves who are impacted; **carers and loved ones will also struggle at work.** On average, carers do an additional 12.5 hours of unpaid work a week in their caring role, which may detract from their energy, focus or capacity.

Workplace leaders are in a good position to protect their people from risk, and support those who are impacted by an eating disorder, by creating a Body Peace Workplace.

## Creating a Body Peace Workplace

### How you can create a safer work environment

There are a range of risk factors that increase the likelihood of a person developing an eating disorder. These can be genetic, socio-cultural, psychological and behavioural, interpersonal, economic and systemic.

Certain risk factors can be compounded at work. The good news is, there are plenty of steps employers can take to reduce these risks in the work environment.

#### Avoid diet talk

Refrain from diet talk in the workplace:

- Discourage talk about diets, weight or body size.
- Do not comment on or judge the food choices or eating habits of others.
- Create an environment where

#### Prioritise a social calendar everyone can enjoy

Be intentional about the way your workplace approaches movement and food.

Think about what may be confronting for people who are struggling with

### You've reached the end of the free preview.

The full resource covers:

- **Practical strategies for creating a Body Peace Workplace** based in evidence about eating disorder risk reduction. We cover work culture, office policies and management support.
- **How to approach someone when you're concerned** they are showing eating disorder behaviours, in a work-appropriate manner.
- **Detailed, practical, work-appropriate tips for both management and peer-level colleagues to support someone** experiencing an eating disorder at work, and/or someone caring for a loved one with an eating disorder.
- **A fillable Wellbeing Plan** to help staff proactively identify what support they need to be mentally well at work.
- **Suggested further training and support for management**, to confidently support staff impacted by eating disorders.

**Creating a Body Peace Workplace takes everyone – at all levels, and even in teams that may seem 'unrelated'.** Our resources go in detail with a whole-of-organisation approach.

**[Purchase the full resource and/or become a Body Peace Workplace.](#)**