# Sole Trader Self-Assessment Tool

Supporting tool to the Victorian Mentally Healthy Workplaces Framework

Victorian Government

## Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the First Peoples of the lands and waters across Victoria and their ongoing strength in practising the world's oldest living culture. We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the lands and waters on which we live and work and pay our respect to their Elders past and present.

We recognise that poor mental health disproportionately affects First Peoples' communities. Further, there are long-lasting, far-reaching and intergenerational consequences of the dispossession of First Peoples and their Country that are a direct result of colonisation and the establishment of the State of Victoria. This history, and the systems it gave rise to, continue to harm First Peoples today. It is only through community-led approaches to supporting healing and structural transformation to enable true self-determination that we can begin to right the wrongs of the past.

## Acknowledgement of Lived and Living Experience

We acknowledge people with lived experience of mental ill-health and recovery and the experience of people who have been carers, families, or supporters. Some of the most powerful evidence to the Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System came from the personal experience of people living with mental ill-health, their families, and carers. There has been extraordinary determination and courage as people have revisited painful memories in the hope of shaping a better future for themselves and others. We and other Victorians are deeply appreciative for this.

This website uses language to describe and discuss themes and concepts relating to mental health, but we acknowledge others might use different words to communicate their experience which are also valid.

## Disclaimer

This guide is intended for general information and guidance purposes only and should not be considered or relied upon as an official compliance tool or advice. Using this guide does not ensure compliance with Occupational Health & Safety (OHS) regulations under the Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004. Additional resources such as those provided by WorkSafe Victoria need to be considered / adopted to abide by regulations.

While efforts have been made to ensure information presented is accurate and reliable, it is important to note that laws, regulations and requirements can change over time and may vary by jurisdiction.

This guide does not constitute legal, professional or regulatory advice. It is recommended that you consult the appropriate jurisdictional resources and consult with qualified legal or compliance professionals if you require specific compliance and regulatory guidance.

## Crisis support services

If you or someone you know or work with are experiencing a mental health crisis, please contact one of these 24 hours, 7 days services

Lifeline: 13 11 14
Suicide Call Back Service: 1300 659 467
Beyond Blue: 1300 224 636
MensLine Australia: 1300 789 978
QLife: 1800 184 527 (3pm to midnight daily)
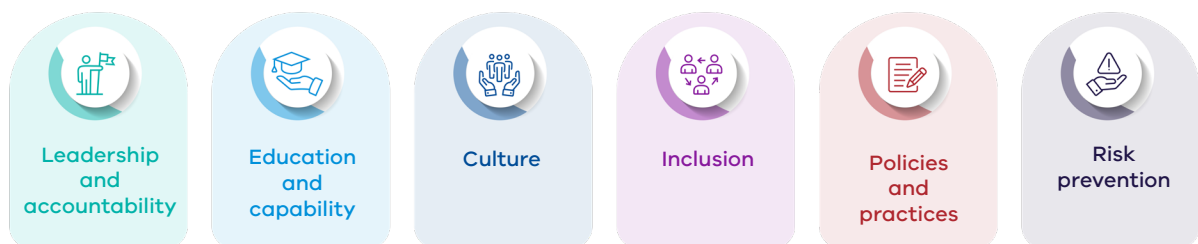Kids Helpline: 1800 551 800
13YARN: 13 92 76

## Key terms and their meaning:

**Business Types:** This framework has been developed for all Victorian Businesses, including sole-traders, small business, not-for-profit organisations, for profit organisations, government organisations and volunteer organisations. Either the term "**workplaces**" or "**organisations**" has been used in this framework as a catch-all to represent all different types of businesses and places where people conduct work. Unless specifically mentioned, the information provided is guidance for all Victorian business types and all workplace types, including working from home or remote work, and working outdoors.

**Employment Type:** This framework has been developed for all Victorians engaged in work. It recognises that people are engaged in work as full-time, part-time or casual employees, self-employed, contractors, volunteers and other types of work. The term "**worker**" has been used in this framework to represent all different ways Victorians are engaged in work. This includes all forms of work, including short term, casual, irregular or insecure work.

# Sole Trader Self-Assessment Tool

## Overview

This free self-assessment tool is designed for sole traders. It has been developed as a survey to provide a quick and useful way for you to:

- Understand what you are doing well to support your mental health at work
- Identify areas for improvement for a more mentally healthy working environment
- Make informed decisions on actions and initiatives to support positive mental health at work

This tool is a survey designed to assess key behaviours/ observations related to six domains:

Leadership and accountability

Education and capability

Culture

Inclusion

Policies and practices

Risk prevention

The survey takes under 10 minutes to complete and can be taken at any time that works for you. Scores are assessed on a 5-point scale, added to provide an overall score out of 60.

1    2    3    4    5    6    7

# How to use this tool?

1. This tool includes an itemised set of key behaviours/observations that have been grouped according to the Victorian Mentally Healthy Workplaces Framework's (the "Framework") six domains above. This is about how you and your work may be contributing to better mental health or impacting your wellbeing.
2. Complete the survey. Your score should be reviewed to provide an overall score for each response scale by domain to indicate your behaviour, approach or action against each domain and any opportunities for improvement.
3. Assess strengths and weaknesses based on results.
4. Refer to guidance at the end of the section for specific actions to implement (as required) for each domain.

# Key Considerations

- *While this tool has been designed to be ready to use, you can tailor the items where this may seem reasonable for your individual context.*
- *Note: This tool provides an 'indicative' result of you and your work in contributing positively to your mental health and wellbeing. It is not designed to meet every workplace mental health need/query you or your business may have, nor provide assurance to meeting your obligations under the Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004.*
- *The term "psychosocial" refers to the involvement of psychological and social factors and the influence that social, emotional, spiritual and mental influences can have on a person's wellbeing. A "psychosocial risk" is something that has the potential to cause harm to these factors.*

## Leadership and Accountability
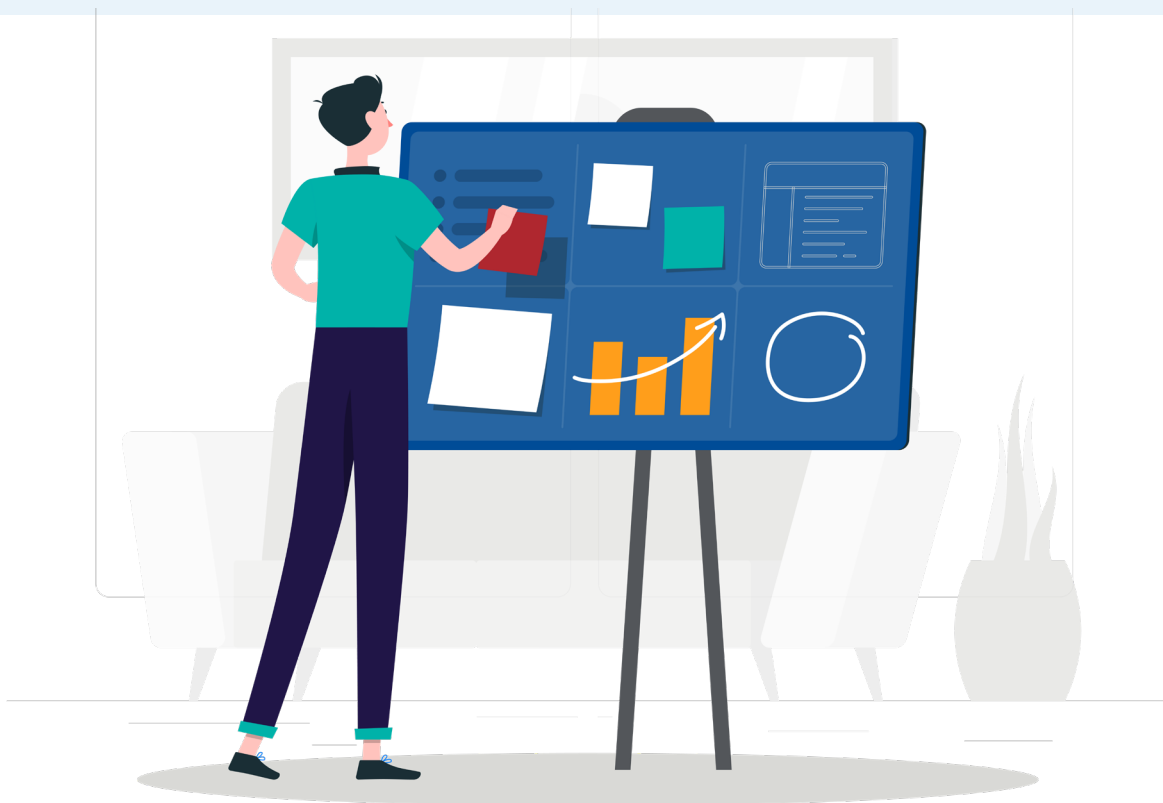
| | Always (5) | Usually (4) | Sometimes (3) | Rarely (2) | Never (1) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| I am comfortable speaking about my lived experience in a workplace context | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| I effectively manage competing priorities, professionally and personally | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |

If these behaviours have been rated less favourably that could indicate that those areas should be prioritised for improvement. Resources that could help you include:

- Ahead for Business, Creating a Mentally Healthy Small Business

## Culture

| | Always (5) | Usually (4) | Sometimes (3) | Rarely (2) | Never (1) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| I understand the importance of being psychologically safe at work | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| I actively look after my wellbeing, including my mental health at work | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |

If these behaviours have been rated less favourably that could indicate that those areas should be prioritised for improvement. Resources that could help you include:

- National Mental Health Commission, Mentally Healthy Workplaces: Sole Traders

## Policies & Practices

| | Always (5) | Usually (4) | Sometimes (3) | Rarely (2) | Never (1) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| My work design (i.e. workload, ways of working) allows me to prioritise my wellbeing daily | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| I know where I can find effective supports that are relevant to my needs at the time | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |

If these behaviours have been rated less favourably that could indicate that those areas should be prioritised for improvement. Resources that could help you include:

- National Mental Health Commission, Mentally Healthy Workplaces: Sole Traders

## Education & Capability

|  | 5 Always | 4 Usually | 3 Sometimes | 2 Rarely | 1 Never |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| I am equipped to recognise signs of poor mental health and wellbeing and know how to manage this for myself | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| I have ways to monitor and prioritise my mental health and wellbeing during times of increased stress | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |

If these behaviours have been rated less favourably that could indicate that those areas should be prioritised for improvement. Resources that could help you include:

- [Beyond Blue, Look after your mental health and wellbeing](#)

## Inclusion

|  | 5 Always | 4 Usually | 3 Sometimes | 2 Rarely | 1 Never |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| When I work or interact with contractors or other businesses, I take note of their mental health and wellbeing needs, for instance, respecting work-life balance for people who work different hours to me, or differences and preferences in the way that others do their work | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| My work practices and interactions with customers, contractors or other businesses are respectful | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| I respect and appropriately respond to the diversity and inclusion needs of others I work with | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |

If these behaviours have been rated less favourably that could indicate that those areas should be prioritised for improvement. Resources that could help you include:

- [Speak to your peak body/ Chamber of Commerce for additional resources that may be available.](#)

## Risk Prevention

| | Always (5) | Usually (4) | Sometimes (3) | Rarely (2) | Never (1) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| I am confident that I can identify workplace risks or hazards that affect me | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| I proactively manage psychosocial risks at work | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |

**TOTAL SCORE** /65

If these behaviours have been rated less favourably that could indicate that those areas should be prioritised for improvement. Resources that could help you include:

- SafeWork, Sole traders and small business owners

# Scoring

In circumstances where your score is below 25, it is important to review your score for each behaviour within the domain to understand which behaviours have been rated more favourably (e.g. "Always" or "Usually"), and which have been rated less favourably (e.g. "Rarely" or "Never"). The behaviours that have been rated less favourably indicate areas that should be prioritised for improvement within that domain. Each question returns a score based on the response scale. Each response will receive between 1 to 5 points as follows:

| 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Always** | **Usually** | **Sometimes** | **Rarely** | **Never** |
| 5 points | 4 points | 3 points | 2 points | 1 point |

## Keep Going: (scoring results: 55-65)

Where responses are predominantly "Always" or "Usually" (achieving an average score between 20-25), it is recommended that you continue to undertake and promote those behaviours using the current approach - as this score indicates the behaviour is working well.

## Need to focus actions: (scoring results: lower than 55)

Where items have been predominantly rated lower on the scale (achieving a score less than 55 overall), this suggests further actions are likely to be required.

You may seek to retake this survey every six months / one year to track progress over time, be proactive in addressing future potential issues, and knowing how to prioritise key actions.