

BUILDING TRUST THROUGH STORY TELLING

Icon Water

Through sharing stories of lived experience and promoting mental fitness, trust has been built where workers have the courage to share their story or current issues that are challenging them.

Background

As part of Icon Waters Mental Health Initiative and continuing into the current 'Live Well Health Framework,' the ability to share stories from lived experience and increase the conversation of mental fitness features as a foundation of ensuring a mentally healthy workplace.

In an attempt to break the cycle of silence and reduce the stigma associated with talking about issues, targeted conversations/stories have been and will continue to be facilitated.

Implementation

Over time, Icon Water has and will continue to provide its workforce with the opportunity to hear stories from keynote speakers from all walks of life. As examples, this has included a fellow colleague, a former politician and Director of the Australian War Memorial, CEO's of local charities (Lifeline, Menslink, YWCA and The Fly Program), Ambassador of Lifeline, former Australian Defence Force soldiers and mental fitness educators.

Having the ability to use greater network highlights the myriad of issues that are faced across society and how this impacts each and every person, including where we work.

During the recent work from home arrangements, especially in the early stage of the first isolation/lock down period, using technology to share stories became a new way of speaking up. A number of written stories were shared to continue the conversation.

Benefits and outcomes

The power of sharing stories and having thought provoking discussion, injects ownership and empowerment to the general workforce. Some workers found the courage to speak up and share their stories with those they trust (e.g. managers, peers, or loved ones). While workers



discovered they could speak openly without fear of retribution about their issues and others found hope that they could support others in their time of need.

By continuing to share stories, regardless of who it is, the ultimate aim is to reduce the stigma associated with having a mental illness or just how we cope with the stress of day to day life.

Whilst COVID-19 has changed the way things are done, anecdotal evidence has shown that people are now willing to share their grievances without the fear of implication.