

Eating Disorder Safe principles: Whole-of-community approaches to do no harm in relation to eating disorders, disordered eating and body image distress

Section 3

Eating Disorder Safe How-To Guides Guidance for workplaces

Workplaces

The Eating Disorder Safe principles are aimed at changing social norms about health, food, mind and body on a wide scale, in the interests of eating disorder prevention and risk reduction. This may appear novel in a workplace context, though the precedent exists in relation to wider mental health and wellbeing initiatives.

This How-To Guide is for those people who influence and shape organisational culture and employee wellbeing beyond the traditional eating disorder sector. Of course, this includes all employees at some level, as we all have a part to play in the culture of our workplaces.

The suggested actions in this How-To Guide are relevant to:

- Organisational leaders and executives across various industries
- People and Culture managers responsible for employee engagement and well-being
- Human Resources (HR) personnel involved in policy development and employee support
- Diversity and Inclusion officers promoting equitable workplace practices
- Occupational health and safety officers
- Employee Assistance Program (EAP) coordinators
- Corporate wellbeing program managers
- Training and development managers
- Employees who wish to champion the Eating Disorder Safe principles within their workplace
- Employees who are open to being part of positive culture change.

If the Eating Disorder Safe concept is new to you or your team, we recommend starting with a focused approach. Consider hosting a leadership meeting or a workshop to introduce one principle at a time, based on staff feedback about the areas where the need is greatest. You could also develop internal policies or employee programs that align with these principles. Once you feel confident in implementing one area, you can expand your efforts to incorporate additional principles.

Alternatively, you may choose to take a comprehensive approach, aligning efforts to target multiple principles simultaneously. For instance, you could integrate all aspects of the 'Health' principles into your workplace wellbeing initiatives or HR policies. Coordinating actions across different principles can help create a more supportive and inclusive workplace environment.

If you do implement the Eating Disorder Safe principles in your workplace, NEDC would love to hear about it! Submit your case study to nationalstrategy@nedc.com.au, or contact us if you would like to test your ideas with a member of the team.

Getting started with Eating Disorder Safe actions

Creating an Eating Disorder Safe workplace benefits all employees by fostering an environment where employees can leave diet culture at the door and focus on doing their work well. To get started, you may be looking for some practical and quick steps that can be implemented without extensive resources, so that your colleagues can see the impact of these actions before investing more deeply in workplace culture change. We suggest these two quick wins because they are low-cost and can make an immediate positive impact.

Quick Wins:

1. Encourage Inclusive or Neutral Language in the Workplace

Action: Promote the use of inclusive or neutral language among all staff, particularly in communications related to health, food, minds, bodies and wellbeing.

Why? Language that is inclusive of all people and neutral in not placing judgements on food or bodies helps create a supportive workplace environment, reducing the risk of stigma and distress, and promoting overall physical, mental, social and emotional wellbeing.

How? Encourage employees to take short breaks every couple of hours to stretch, walk, or simply relax. Consider setting up a quiet space where employees can go for a few minutes of peace.

2. Remove Weight Focus from Existing Employee Programs

Action: Review and revise any current employee wellbeing programs or charity drives to eliminate elements that focus on weight, such as diet clubs or weight loss competitions.

Why? Removing weight-focused elements from workplace activities promotes a more inclusive approach to employee wellbeing, reduces stigma and protects against unintended consequences such as mental or emotional distress in the workplace.

How? Replace weight-focused initiatives with programs that emphasise overall wellbeing, such as physical activity challenges that focus on skill development or enjoyment, sharing food at cultural events or team picnic days.

Ready to make a bigger impact? Turn the page for a comprehensive range of strategies to promote a safer and more inclusive work environment.

Eating Disorder Safe: Health

Principle	Families are supported to experience and model positive relationships with food, bodies and movement from the earliest opportunity and across the lifespan.
Putting it into practice	<p>Policies and processes: Do our current policies and processes support this principle? Do they have any consequences that cause or contribute to unintended harm? How can we strengthen cultural safety, intersectionality, trauma-informed and strengths-based approaches?</p> <p>Staff development: What knowledge, skills and attitudes do our staff need to deliver on this principle? How can we sustain and embed new competencies?</p> <p>Leadership: What culture change do we need in our organisation? What leadership or action does our community want from us? What wider changes can we advocate for?</p>
Suggested actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement wellbeing programs that emphasise health and wellbeing rather than focus on weight or size. Focus on activities colleagues can enjoy together or involve their families in, such as yoga sessions, nature walks, and mindfulness practices. • Provide benefits that support overall family wellbeing, such as access to Employee Assistance Programs, stress management resources, and workshops on positive body image and intuitive or responsive eating. Ensure systems are in place to facilitate employee access to these programs (e.g., release from duties, sessions planned at different times to accommodate employees' attendance patterns as well as their personal commitments outside work, etc.). • Foster a workplace culture that promotes body acceptance and self-esteem. Encourage inclusive language and behaviours that respect all body types and abilities. The actions throughout this guide give examples of how to do this. • Encourage policies that support work-life balance, such as flexible working hours, remote work options, and generous family leave policies. Allow employees time to engage in health promoting activities with their colleagues, friends or families. • Organise events that involve employees and their families, such as picnic days. Use these events to promote positive relationships with food and movement. • Promote gentle physical activities that can be enjoyed by people of all ages and abilities, such as walking clubs, stretching sessions, and recreational sports that emphasise fun over competition or weight-related goals. • Ensure that wellbeing programs and resources are inclusive and consider the diverse needs of your workforce, including cultural, dietary, and physical diversity. • Encourage a positive relationship with food by offering diverse, nourishing options in the workplace without labelling them as "good" or "bad." Focus on the enjoyment of food and communal eating experiences, allowing staff flexibility to eat in the manner that best supports their wellbeing at work. • Create channels for employees to provide feedback on wellbeing initiatives. Use this feedback to make continuous improvements and address any concerns.

Eating Disorder Safe: Health

Principle	The unique relationships between eating, chronic illness, disability and experiences of healthcare are acknowledged and addressed.
Putting it into practice	<p>Policies and processes: Do our current policies and processes support this principle? Do they have any consequences that cause or contribute to unintended harm? How can we strengthen cultural safety, intersectionality, trauma-informed and strengths-based approaches?</p> <p>Staff development: What knowledge, skills and attitudes do our staff need to deliver on this principle? How can we sustain and embed new competencies?</p> <p>Leadership: What culture change do we need in our organisation? What leadership or action does our community want from us? What wider changes can we advocate for?</p>
Suggested actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create wellbeing programs that accommodate the needs of employees with chronic illness or disability. Include options for various dietary requirements, physical abilities, and healthcare needs. • Make physical adjustments to the workplace to ensure it is accessible to all employees, including those with chronic illness or disability. This includes accessible kitchens, lunchrooms, restrooms, quiet spaces and meeting spaces. • Foster a workplace culture that is understanding and supportive of employees with chronic illness or disability. Provide platforms for employees to share their experiences and needs and act responsively. • Ensure that mental health resources are readily available and tailored to the needs of employees with chronic illness or disability. Provide equitable access to Employee Assistance Programs and stress management programs. • Create channels for employees to provide feedback on workplace inclusivity and support. Use this feedback to make continuous improvements to your policies and programs. • Ensure that workplace food options accommodate employees' dietary needs and preferences without stigma. • Recognise that some employees may be caregivers for family members with chronic illness or disability. Offer flexible work arrangements and support to accommodate their dual responsibilities.

Eating Disorder Safe: Health

Principle	Communications use size-inclusive, non-stigmatising language and imagery in respect of health, food, minds and bodies.
Putting it into practice	<p>Policies and processes: Do our current policies and processes support this principle? Do they have any consequences that cause or contribute to unintended harm? How can we strengthen cultural safety, intersectionality, trauma-informed and strengths-based approaches?</p> <p>Staff development: What knowledge, skills and attitudes do our staff need to deliver on this principle? How can we sustain and embed new competencies?</p> <p>Leadership: What culture change do we need in our organisation? What leadership or action does our community want from us? What wider changes can we advocate for?</p>
Suggested actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create clear guidelines for all internal and external communications that emphasise size-inclusive, non-stigmatising language and imagery. Ensure these guidelines are evidence-based where possible and developed in consultation with staff, people with lived experience and/or relevant organisations. Distribute the guidelines so that they are accessible to all employees. • Review current communication materials, including internal memos, marketing content, and employee handbooks, to identify and revise any non-inclusive or stigmatising language and imagery. • Ensure all visual content, including website images, marketing materials, and internal communications, reflects diverse body types, abilities, and ethnicities. Avoid images that perpetuate stereotypes or promotes unhelpful body standards. • Partner with diversity and inclusion experts to review and enhance your communication practices. • Create channels for employees to provide feedback on workplace communications. Use this feedback to continuously improve and ensure that communications are inclusive and respectful. • Support and promote initiatives that celebrate body diversity and inclusivity. Encourage participation in events that emphasise the value of all body types. • Regularly assess the impact of your communications on employee wellbeing and workplace culture. Use surveys, focus groups, and other tools to gather data and make necessary adjustments. • Provide resources and workshops that educate employees on weight stigma and diet culture, and the importance of using inclusive language and imagery. • Ensure that all marketing and external communications represent diverse body types and use inclusive language. Avoid promoting products or services that reinforce diet culture or stigmatise certain body types. • Encourage leadership to model inclusive language and behaviours. Leaders should actively promote and participate in initiatives that support size inclusivity and non-stigmatising practices.

Eating Disorder Safe: Health

Principle	People are supported to experience movement and exercise in ways that promote their overall wellbeing, including their emotions, social connections, and physical and mental health.
Putting it into practice	<p>Policies and processes: Do our current policies and processes support this principle? Do they have any consequences that cause or contribute to unintended harm? How can we strengthen cultural safety, intersectionality, trauma-informed and strengths-based approaches?</p> <p>Staff development: What knowledge, skills and attitudes do our staff need to deliver on this principle? How can we sustain and embed new competencies?</p> <p>Leadership: What culture change do we need in our organisation? What leadership or action does our community want from us? What wider changes can we advocate for?</p>
Suggested actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer a range of wellbeing programs that cater to different interests and abilities. Include options such as yoga, walking groups, dance classes, mindfulness sessions, and recreational sports that emphasise fun and participation rather than competition. • Reconsider any employee challenges that involve a focus on healthy eating, weight loss or competitive counting (e.g. steps, calories, kilos, reps). • Encourage activities that are non-competitive and focus on enjoyment and participation. Highlight the benefits of physical activities that support emotional and social wellbeing. • Provide flexible scheduling options that allow employees to participate in wellbeing activities without impacting their work commitments. Offer activities at various times to accommodate different schedules. • Ensure that workplace facilities are inclusive and accessible to all employees. Provide equipment and spaces that cater to different physical abilities and encourage a wide range of activities. • Promote regular movement breaks throughout the workday. Encourage employees to take short walks, stretch, or engage in light exercises to boost energy and reduce stress. • Organise social events that incorporate physical activities, such as group hikes, team-building games, or family-friendly sports days. • Integrate mental health support into your wellbeing programs. Offer activities that promote relaxation and stress relief, such as meditation or tai chi. • Encourage employees to engage in community-based wellbeing programs and events. Support participation in local sports leagues, charity walks, or community movement classes.

Eating Disorder Safe: Food

Principle	<p>Dietary advice is given in a weight neutral, culturally and developmentally appropriate manner, by people with appropriate qualifications and experience according to their scope of practice.</p>
Putting it into practice	<p>Policies and processes: Do our current policies and processes support this principle? Do they have any consequences that cause or contribute to unintended harm? How can we strengthen cultural safety, intersectionality, trauma-informed and strengths-based approaches?</p> <p>Staff development: What knowledge, skills and attitudes do our staff need to deliver on this principle? How can we sustain and embed new competencies?</p> <p>Leadership: What culture change do we need in our organisation? What leadership or action does our community want from us? What wider changes can we advocate for?</p>
Suggested actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Propose an employee pact to keep diet-talk out of the workplace. • Consider whether any dietary advice needs to be delivered within your workplace context. Only enact the suggestions below if needed (e.g. if on-site catering is provided for personnel with specific nutrition requirements related to their role). • Ensure that dietary advice is provided by qualified professionals such as dietitians and nutritionists who have appropriate credentials and experience. Verify their qualifications and scope of practice. • Create guidelines for providing dietary advice that promote a weight-neutral, culturally sensitive, and developmentally appropriate approach (e.g. for personnel under 18). Ensure these guidelines are accessible to all relevant staff. • Encourage a focus on overall physical and mental health and wellbeing rather than weight. Highlight the benefits of balanced nutrition, mental health, and physical activity in a non-judgmental manner. • Ensure all dietary advice uses inclusive, non-stigmatising language. Avoid terms that categorize foods or eating habits as "good" or "bad" and instead focus on balance and enjoyment. • Make resources on nutrition and healthy eating readily available to relevant employees. Include access to online tools, informational pamphlets, and consultation services with qualified professionals. • Encourage eating practices that focus on enjoying food, recognising hunger and fullness cues, and appreciating the cultural and social aspects of eating.

Eating Disorder Safe: Food

Principle	Neutral language is used to describe food and its properties and food messaging is appropriate for its audience.
Putting it into practice	<p>Policies and processes: Do our current policies and processes support this principle? Do they have any consequences that cause or contribute to unintended harm? How can we strengthen cultural safety, intersectionality, trauma-informed and strengths-based approaches?</p> <p>Staff development: What knowledge, skills and attitudes do our staff need to deliver on this principle? How can we sustain and embed new competencies?</p> <p>Leadership: What culture change do we need in our organisation? What leadership or action does our community want from us? What wider changes can we advocate for?</p>
Suggested actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review all current communication materials, including internal newsletters, cafeteria menus, and wellbeing programs, to identify and revise any language that is not neutral or could be considered stigmatising.• Ensure that all written and spoken communications about food avoid moralistic terms such as "good" or "bad," and instead focus on describing foods in terms of their properties (crunchy, fresh, tasty) and social or cultural significance (birthday cake, festival day).• Acknowledge and celebrate the diversity of dietary practices and preferences within your workforce.• Promote a workplace culture that values and respects diverse food choices. Encourage employees to share their food traditions and experiences in a supportive environment.

Eating Disorder Safe: Food

Principle	Food security is addressed to support safe relationships with food and eating at individual and population levels.
Putting it into practice	<p>Policies and processes: Do our current policies and processes support this principle? Do they have any consequences that cause or contribute to unintended harm? How can we strengthen cultural safety, intersectionality, trauma-informed and strengths-based approaches?</p> <p>Staff development: What knowledge, skills and attitudes do our staff need to deliver on this principle? How can we sustain and embed new competencies?</p> <p>Leadership: What culture change do we need in our organisation? What leadership or action does our community want from us? What wider changes can we advocate for?</p>
Suggested actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that workplace cafeterias, vending machines, and snack areas offer a variety of nourishing and affordable food options. • Provide access to Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs) that offer support for those experiencing food insecurity. Include services such as financial counselling, and referral to agencies who can support access to food banks and food vouchers. • Foster a workplace culture that recognises and supports employees facing food insecurity. Encourage open dialogue and provide a safe space for employees to seek help without stigma. • Establish programs that provide employees with access to healthy food, such as subsidised meal plans, food delivery services, or on-site food pantries. • Conduct anonymous surveys to assess the food security status of your workforce. Use this data to inform policies and programs aimed at reducing food insecurity among employees. • Encourage leaders to advocate for food security initiatives and participate in related programs. • Offer flexible working arrangements to support employees' access to food (e.g. ability to get to the local food relief service within its opening hours). • Review remuneration policies and consider whether there are opportunities to increase employees' take-home pay or otherwise ease financial strain.

Eating Disorder Safe: Food

Principle	Diet culture and its far-reaching consequences are understood, reduced and ultimately eliminated, with actions based on contemporary evidence.
Putting it into practice	<p>Policies and processes: Do our current policies and processes support this principle? Do they have any consequences that cause or contribute to unintended harm? How can we strengthen cultural safety, intersectionality, trauma-informed and strengths-based approaches?</p> <p>Staff development: What knowledge, skills and attitudes do our staff need to deliver on this principle? How can we sustain and embed new competencies?</p> <p>Leadership: What culture change do we need in our organisation? What leadership or action does our community want from us? What wider changes can we advocate for?</p>
Suggested actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create and implement guidelines that discourage the promotion of diet culture within the workplace. Ensure these guidelines focus on physical and mental health and wellbeing rather than weight or appearance. • Foster a workplace culture that celebrates body diversity and promotes self-esteem. Encourage language and behaviours that respect all body types and challenge appearance-based judgments. • Try a staff challenge where people avoid giving appearance-based compliments for a month. See who can generate the most creative list of alternative compliments. • Ensure all workplace communications, including marketing materials and internal messages, use inclusive language and imagery that do not perpetuate diet culture. • Avoid sharing employee before-and-after photos or content that emphasises weight loss. • Prioritise approaches to health that support mental, physical, social and emotional wellbeing. Highlight activities and practices that support overall health rather than focusing on weight. • Develop wellbeing programs that focus on overall health and wellbeing, including stress management, mental health support, and enjoyable physical activities. Avoid programs that promote weight loss or dieting. • Launch internal awareness campaigns that educate employees about the harmful effects of diet culture and promote a safer, more inclusive approach to health and wellbeing.

Eating Disorder Safe: Mind

Principle	Mental health stigma and its harms in relation to health, food, mind and body are of concern and must be eliminated.
Putting it into practice	<p>Policies and processes: Do our current policies and processes support this principle? Do they have any consequences that cause or contribute to unintended harm? How can we strengthen cultural safety, intersectionality, trauma-informed and strengths-based approaches?</p> <p>Staff development: What knowledge, skills and attitudes do our staff need to deliver on this principle? How can we sustain and embed new competencies?</p> <p>Leadership: What culture change do we need in our organisation? What leadership or action does our community want from us? What wider changes can we advocate for?</p>
Suggested actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create and implement workplace policies that support mental health and explicitly prohibit stigma and discrimination based on mental health conditions, including eating disorders. Ensure these policies are communicated clearly to all employees. • Offer regular training for all employees on mental health awareness, focusing on the importance of mental health and how to recognise and address stigma. • Ensure that employees have access to mental health resources, such as Employee Assistance Programs and mental health hotlines. Regularly remind employees about these resources through internal communications. • Encourage an open and supportive workplace culture where employees feel comfortable discussing mental health issues. Host regular discussions, workshops, and seminars to normalise conversations about mental health. • Ensure that all workplace communications use inclusive and non-stigmatising language when discussing mental health, food, and body image. Avoid terms that could perpetuate stereotypes or negative perceptions. • Incorporate mental health support into existing wellbeing programs. Offer activities that promote mental wellbeing, such as mindfulness sessions, yoga, and stress management workshops. • Regularly assess the workplace environment and practices to ensure they support mental health and do not perpetuate stigma. Use employee feedback to make continuous improvements. • Partner with mental health organisations to provide expert-led workshops and access to resources. Leverage their expertise to enhance your workplace initiatives.

Eating Disorder Safe: Mind

Principle	The bidirectional relationship between food, eating and mental health is recognised, within the context of individual, social, cultural and economic factors.
Putting it into practice	<p>Policies and processes: Do our current policies and processes support this principle? Do they have any consequences that cause or contribute to unintended harm? How can we strengthen cultural safety, intersectionality, trauma-informed and strengths-based approaches?</p> <p>Staff development: What knowledge, skills and attitudes do our staff need to deliver on this principle? How can we sustain and embed new competencies?</p> <p>Leadership: What culture change do we need in our organisation? What leadership or action does our community want from us? What wider changes can we advocate for?</p>
Suggested actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create workplace policies that recognise and support the bidirectional relationship between food, eating, and mental health, such as via lunchroom policies which uphold mental wellbeing. Ensure these policies are inclusive and consider the diverse needs of employees. • Implement wellbeing programs that focus on holistic health, integrating nutrition, mental health, and physical activity. Emphasise the interconnectedness of these aspects and the importance of balance. • Ensure all communications use inclusive and non-stigmatising language when discussing food, eating habits, and mental health. Avoid language that moralizes food choices or stigmatises mental health conditions. • Provide flexible work options that allow employees to manage their eating habits and mental health needs effectively. This can include flexible hours, remote work, quiet spaces and sufficient break times. • Respect and support diverse dietary practices and preferences. Ensure that workplace food offerings and programs are culturally sensitive and inclusive.

Eating Disorder Safe: Body

Principle	<p>Settings where people live, learn, work, play and receive help are inclusive and welcoming for people of all sizes, shapes, weights, genders, sexualities, cultures, neurotypes and abilities.</p>
Putting it into practice	<p>Policies and processes: Do our current policies and processes support this principle? Do they have any consequences that cause or contribute to unintended harm? How can we strengthen cultural safety, intersectionality, trauma-informed and strengths-based approaches?</p> <p>Staff development: What knowledge, skills and attitudes do our staff need to deliver on this principle? How can we sustain and embed new competencies?</p> <p>Leadership: What culture change do we need in our organisation? What leadership or action does our community want from us? What wider changes can we advocate for?</p>
Suggested actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create and enforce workplace policies that explicitly promote inclusion and prohibit discrimination based on size, shape, weight, gender, sexuality, culture, neurotype, and ability. Ensure these policies are well-communicated and accessible to all employees. • Offer regular training programs on diversity, equity, and inclusion for all employees. Include topics such as unconscious bias, cultural competence, and creating inclusive environments. • Ensure that all communications, both internal and external, use inclusive language and imagery that reflect the diversity of the workforce. Avoid stereotypes and representations that marginalise any group. • Encourage the formation of employee resource groups for various communities within the workplace. Provide support and resources for these groups to foster a sense of belonging and community. • Offer flexible working hours, remote work options, and other accommodations that support employees' diverse needs and life circumstances. • Ensure that hiring practices are equitable and inclusive. Use diverse hiring panels, unbiased job descriptions, and outreach strategies to attract a diverse pool of candidates. Monitor hiring practices to ensure equity and transparency. • Regularly celebrate and acknowledge cultural events, heritage months, and other diversity-related initiatives. Use these opportunities to educate employees and build a more inclusive workplace. • Conduct regular surveys and feedback sessions to understand employees' experiences and perceptions of inclusivity in the workplace. Use this feedback to inform and improve policies and practices. • Provide leadership training focused on diversity, equity and inclusion. • Create clear, unbiased pathways for career advancement that are accessible to all employees. Monitor promotion practices to ensure equity and transparency. • Ensure that reasonable accommodations are available for employees with disabilities or other needs. Make the process for requesting accommodations clear and straightforward.

- Share stories of employees who have thrived in the inclusive environment of your workplace. Use these stories to inspire and demonstrate the impact of your inclusivity efforts.

Eating Disorder Safe: Body

Principle	Neutral language is used to describe bodies at all ages and stages of development, all sizes, shapes, abilities and ethnicities.
Putting it into practice	<p>Policies and processes: Do our current policies and processes support this principle? Do they have any consequences that cause or contribute to unintended harm? How can we strengthen cultural safety, intersectionality, trauma-informed and strengths-based approaches?</p> <p>Staff development: What knowledge, skills and attitudes do our staff need to deliver on this principle? How can we sustain and embed new competencies?</p> <p>Leadership: What culture change do we need in our organisation? What leadership or action does our community want from us? What wider changes can we advocate for?</p>
Suggested actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create and implement guidelines for using neutral, inclusive language and images when describing or depicting bodies. Ensure these guidelines are accessible to all employees and regularly reviewed for relevance and effectiveness. • Conduct a thorough review of current communication materials, including internal documents, marketing content, and training manuals, to identify and revise any non-inclusive or stigmatising language or images. • Ensure that all visual content, such as photos, illustrations, and videos, represents a diverse range of body types, ages, abilities, and ethnicities. Avoid imagery that reinforces stereotypes or unrealistic body standards. • Partner with diversity and inclusion experts to review and enhance your communication practices. • Regularly assess the impact of your communication practices on employee wellbeing and workplace culture. Use surveys, focus groups, and other tools to gather data and make necessary adjustments.

Eating Disorder Safe: Body

Principle	<p>Size, shape or weight are not used as a standalone measure of health or wellbeing, used as a measure of skill, aptitude or performance, or a barrier to education, employment or civic participation.</p>
Putting it into practice	<p>Policies and processes: Do our current policies and processes support this principle? Do they have any consequences that cause or contribute to unintended harm? How can we strengthen cultural safety, intersectionality, trauma-informed and strengths-based approaches?</p> <p>Staff development: What knowledge, skills and attitudes do our staff need to deliver on this principle? How can we sustain and embed new competencies?</p> <p>Leadership: What culture change do we need in our organisation? What leadership or action does our community want from us? What wider changes can we advocate for?</p>
Suggested actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create and implement policies that explicitly state size, shape, or weight are not to be used to evaluate employee skill, aptitude or performance. Ensure these policies are well-communicated and enforced throughout the organisation. • Ensure that all workplace communications, including job descriptions, performance evaluations, and health assessments, use inclusive language that does not focus on size, shape, weight or appearance. • Ensure that performance metrics and evaluations are based on skills, achievements, and behaviours rather than physical attributes. Develop clear, objective criteria for assessing performance and aptitude. • Regularly review and assess workplace practices to ensure they are inclusive and do not involve size, shape, or weight discrimination (e.g. offering uniforms in a broad range of sizes and allowing for alterations and adjustments to be made based on individual requirements). Use employee feedback to make continuous improvements. • Provide educational resources on the impact of weight bias and stigma on individuals and organisations. Include information on how to recognise and counteract bias in the workplace, with additional focus on recruitment practices. • Revise your equal employment opportunity (EEO) policies and include proactive steps to provide equal opportunities to employees and candidates with diverse bodies, particularly bodies which are marginalised due to size, weight, shape, colour or gender.

Eating Disorder Safe: Body

Principle	Weight stigma and its consequences are of concern and must be eliminated.
Putting it into practice	<p>Policies and processes: Do our current policies and processes support this principle? Do they have any consequences that cause or contribute to unintended harm? How can we strengthen cultural safety, intersectionality, trauma-informed and strengths-based approaches?</p> <p>Staff development: What knowledge, skills and attitudes do our staff need to deliver on this principle? How can we sustain and embed new competencies?</p> <p>Leadership: What culture change do we need in our organisation? What leadership or action does our community want from us? What wider changes can we advocate for?</p>
Suggested actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create clear policies that explicitly prohibit weight stigma and discrimination. Ensure these policies are communicated to all employees and are enforced consistently. • Offer regular training sessions on the impact of weight stigma and how to foster an inclusive workplace. Include topics such as understanding weight bias, recognising stigma, and challenging discrimination. • Design wellbeing programs that are inclusive of all body sizes and shapes. Avoid programs that emphasise weight loss or equate health with weight, and instead focus on activities that promote wellbeing and joy. • Regularly review workplace practices and materials to ensure they do not perpetuate weight stigma. Use employee feedback and audits to identify and address areas for improvement. • Partner with organisations that advocate for body acceptance and the elimination of weight stigma. Use their expertise to inform your policies and practices.

Eating Disorder Safe: Body

Principle	System-level drivers of eating disorder risk, for example institutional weight stigma, diet culture, medical and health professional weight bias, are addressed.
Putting it into practice	<p>Policies and processes: Do our current policies and processes support this principle? Do they have any consequences that cause or contribute to unintended harm? How can we strengthen cultural safety, intersectionality, trauma-informed and strengths-based approaches?</p> <p>Staff development: What knowledge, skills and attitudes do our staff need to deliver on this principle? How can we sustain and embed new competencies?</p> <p>Leadership: What culture change do we need in our organisation? What leadership or action does our community want from us? What wider changes can we advocate for?</p>
Suggested actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure all staff in client-facing roles are aware of the impact their own weight bias can have on client outcomes. Offer training and opportunities for ongoing reflective practice and development. • Ensure that all workplace communications, including wellbeing programs, use inclusive language and imagery that do not perpetuate diet culture or weight stigma. Avoid content that promotes weight loss as the primary goal of health initiatives. • Regularly review and audit workplace practices to identify and address instances of weight stigma and diet culture. Use employee feedback and external audits to continuously improve. • Partner with organisations that advocate for the reduction of weight stigma and diet culture. Use their resources and expertise to inform your workplace policies and programs. • Foster a workplace culture that values diversity and inclusion. Encourage employees to respect and celebrate differences in body size, shape, and health status. • Ensure that performance evaluations and promotions are based on skills, achievements, and behaviours rather than physical attributes. Develop clear, objective criteria for assessments. • Identify and provide additional support for employees who may be at higher risk of developing eating disorders due to workplace practices. Ensure they have access to appropriate resources and support.

A note on Harm Minimisation

The Eating Disorder Safe principles includes a sub-set of principles focused on harm minimisation, that is, adopting approaches to working with people who are already experiencing an eating disorder, disordered eating or body image distress in ways which do not exacerbate disordered cognitions, behaviours or other symptoms.

These principles are not directly applicable to the workplace as they go beyond the usual obligations of employers in respect of identifying and acting on employee health concerns. Nevertheless, employers should consider their duty of care to employees with an eating disorder, disordered eating or body image concerns and act accordingly.

Proactive steps could include:

- Engaging an Employee Assistance Program and enquiring about their approaches to handling support requests from employees with food or body image concerns.
- Displaying Helpline information on posters around the work site or in relevant sections of the staff intranet, including the [Butterfly Foundation](#), [Eating Disorders Victoria](#) (where relevant) and [13 YARN](#).
- Offering employees flexibility to attend health appointments, e.g. via extended break times, work from home days, etc.

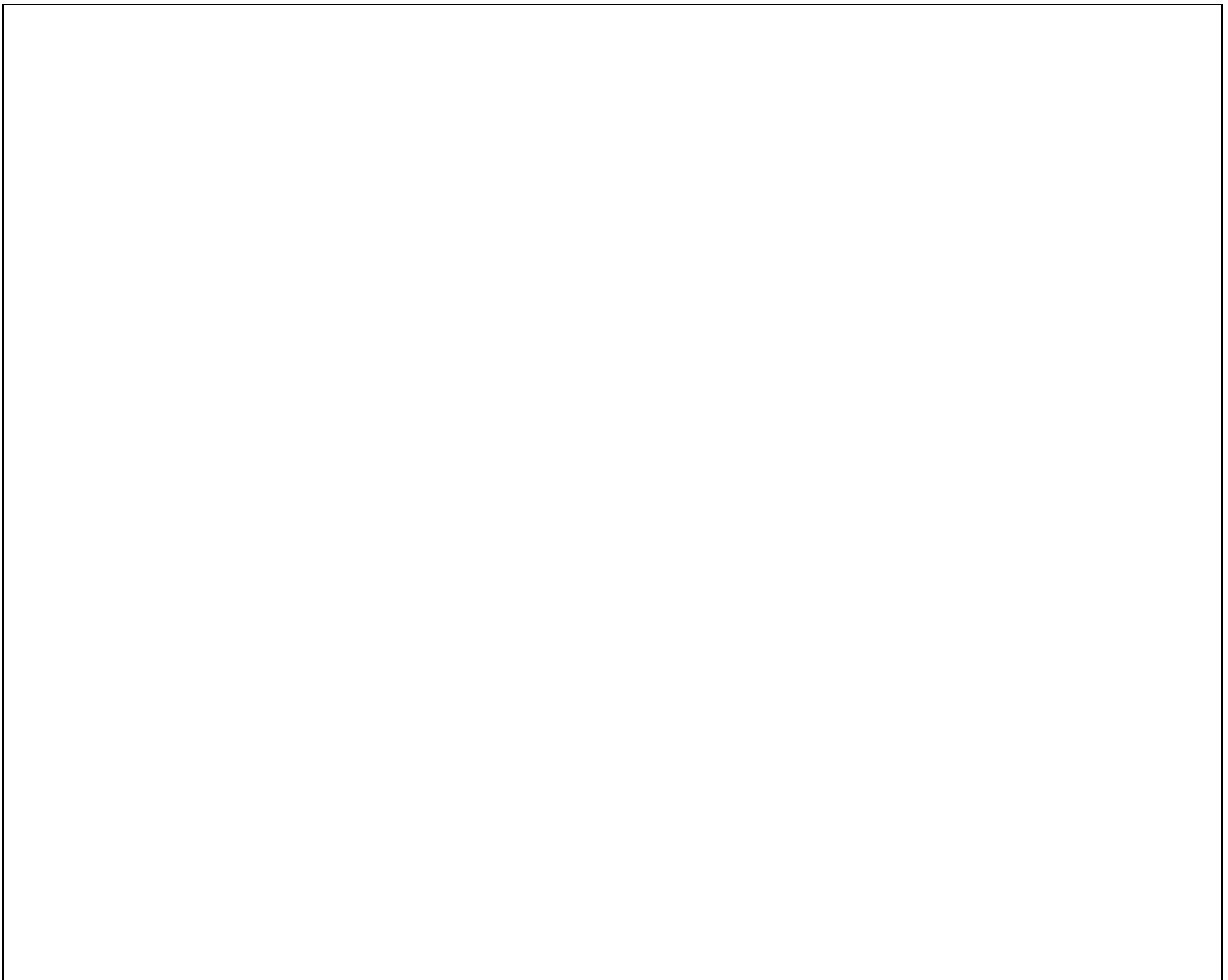
If your organisation has an internal medical team (e.g. for a sporting organisation or performing arts company, or for the armed forces), you may have additional duty of care requirements. Find out whether your organisation has appropriate policies and procedures for identifying and responding to disordered eating and eating disorders within your teams. Or refer to the [Australian Institute of Sport](#) and the Australian Ballet for relevant examples and work to develop and implement a policy tailored to your organisation.

Next steps

Now that you've worked through all the examples in this How-To Guide, and possibly come up with a few of your own, it's time to start planning for action. Use the [Reflection Activity](#), [Self-check Tool](#) and an [Action Plan template](#) to develop your plan and then start practising.

Remember that making changes and learning new habits can take time, and that making mistakes will be a part of this, even if you're in a position of leadership. This is OK. You might choose an approach to handling mistakes as they occur, perhaps with your team, colleagues or a supervisor, so that you can support each other's learning without adding a sense of shame or blame.

The rest of this page is blank for you to jot down any other ideas.

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for the user to jot down any other ideas related to their action plan.

Reflection activity, self-check tool and action plan

Reflection Activity

This activity is designed to help you engage in self-reflection regarding your relationships with health, food, mind and body, using the Eating Disorder Safe principles as a framework. The intent is to help get you thinking before you start developing your [Action Plan](#).

You may choose to complete this activity on your own, with a trusted friend or colleague, or as a family.

Note: the intent of this activity is not to delve into deep feelings of distress in relation to food, eating or body image. There is no requirement to undertake this activity if it doesn't feel right for you. If you do try this activity and find that it brings up troubling thoughts or feelings, please seek support from your care team or via [one of these Helplines](#).

If you want a quicker way to gauge your current level of Eating Disorder Safe practice, you can jump to the [Self-Check Tool](#).

Materials Needed:

- Paper or journal
- Pens or pencils
- A comfortable space for discussion if working in pairs or a group

Instructions:

1. Create an environment where everyone can sit together without distractions, or where you feel able to focus.
2. Provide each person with a piece of paper and a pen or pencil.
3. Briefly explain the purpose for the activity, for example:
 - "Today we're going to spend time thinking about our current relationships with health, food, minds and bodies. This will help us understand where we are now and where we want to be in the future."
4. Choose an Eating Disorder Safe principle to focus on. Read the principle aloud.
5. Allow some time for each person to go through these self-reflection questions and make any notes:
 - Where am I/are we at with this principle right now?
 - Where would I/we like to be a month or a year from now?
 - What concepts do I/we need to know more about?
 - Who can I/we learn from?
 - Who can I/we involve in these actions?
 - Who could lead the actions we take?
6. If working in pairs or a group, have a discussion for everyone to share reflections (only as much as they want to). You might like to use these prompts:
 - "What stood out to you as you answered these questions?"
 - "Did you notice any common themes or differences in our reflections?"
 - "What are some realistic steps we can take to move from where we are now to where we want to be?"
7. Based on the discussion, come up with a list of priorities, and add them to your [Action Plan](#).

Eating Disorder Safe Self-check tool

Use the information you have read on the previous pages, as well as any notes you have made, to run through this quick self-check tool to see where you or your organisation are up to in becoming Eating Disorder Safe. This isn't intended as a negative judgement if you're only just starting out. Rather, the purpose of this self-check is to see which areas might need more of your attention when you develop your Action Plan.

You could choose to keep a record of your results, and then re-do the self-check periodically to gauge your progress against each of the principles. You could then update your Action Plan, as you or your organisation gradually increase your level of confidence and range of approaches to being Eating Disorder Safe.

Date completed: _____ **Completed by:** _____

Principle	This is new to me/us	I/we do some of the suggested actions, or relevant equivalents	I/we do most of the suggested actions, or relevant equivalents
Health			
Families are supported to experience and model positive relationships with food, bodies and movement from the earliest opportunity and across the lifespan.			
The unique relationships between eating, chronic illness, disability and experiences of healthcare are acknowledged and addressed.			
Communications use size-inclusive, non-stigmatising language and imagery in respect of health, food, minds and bodies.			
People are supported to experience movement and exercise in ways that promote their overall wellbeing, including their emotions, social connections, and physical and mental health.			
Food			
Neutral language is used to describe food and its properties and food messaging is appropriate for its audience.			
Dietary advice is given in a weight neutral, culturally and developmentally appropriate manner, by people with appropriate qualifications and experience according to their scope of practice.			

Food security is addressed to support safe relationships with food and eating at individual and population levels.			
Diet culture and its far-reaching consequences are understood, reduced and ultimately eliminated, with actions based on contemporary evidence.			
Mind			
Mental health stigma and its harms in relation to health, food, mind and body are of concern and must be eliminated.			
The bidirectional relationship between food, eating and mental health is recognised, within the context of individual, social, cultural and economic factors.			
Body			
Settings where people live, learn, work, play and receive help are inclusive and welcoming for people of all sizes, shapes, weights, genders, sexualities, cultures, neurotypes and abilities.			
Neutral language is used to describe bodies at all ages and stages of development, all sizes, shapes, abilities and ethnicities.			
Size, shape or weight are not used as a standalone measure of health or wellbeing, used as a measure of skill, aptitude or performance, or a barrier to education, employment or civic participation.			
Weight stigma and its consequences are of concern and must be eliminated.			
System-level drivers of eating disorder risk, for example institutional weight stigma, diet culture, medical and health professional weight bias, are addressed.			
Harm Minimisation (where relevant)			
Alternatives to weight-focused activities and outcomes are prioritised as far as possible (e.g., other health, quality of life, performance, and wellbeing metrics).			
Recognising and responding to eating disorder warning signs and symptoms in all people and bodies is a responsibility of all people working in high-risk settings.			
Weight stigma has no place in the healthcare setting, no matter the condition being treated.			
Eating disorder risk is a consideration when making decisions around a person's health, care, learning, work or sports participation.			

Eating Disorder Safe Action Plan

Once you have read through the guidance material most relevant to your role and completed the self-check tool, this action plan template can help you define and prioritise the steps that you or your organisation will take to put the Eating Disorder Safe principles into practice.

We suggest you choose a number of principles to work on that is feasible within your setting and context. A family or an individual worker might choose to work on one principle at a time, whereas a large organisation might take a holistic approach to implementing all of the Eating Disorder Safe principles together.

If you would like advice on aligning your Eating Disorder Safe Action Plan within your other strategic or operational planning cycles, please contact info@nedc.com.au.

Date of plan: _____ **Plan prepared by:** _____ **Endorsed by:** _____

Our Eating Disorder Safe priorities
E.g. Focus on putting the Health principles into practice at home; Develop an ED Safe service charter; Address all weight stigma principles in our new policy; etc.

What actions will we take?	Who is responsible?	What help or resources do they need?	When will this be done?

What barriers might we encounter?	How will we address them?	Who is responsible?	What help or resources do they need?
E.g. Barriers might include feelings of resistance to change, financial barriers, time barriers, competing priorities, or lack of people-power.			

How will we know it's working?
E.g. Our family will feel less anxious about staying healthy; We will get positive client feedback about the ways that we support them to feel safe; Our policy will include tangible measures on weight stigma reduction; etc.

When will we check-in on our progress?	
Once we've achieved this priority, what do we think we will focus on next?	