

Building Womens Health and Wellbeing –

Time of Life: In The Swing

As women get into the swing of their careers, competing priorities in life start to impact health and wellbeing. Support to manage stress, build and care for families, ensures we maintain out health as we progress and thrive in our careers.

Why is this an area of focus?

As women enter into what can be the most productive and progressive time in their career, competing responsibilities can start to impact on their ability to access promotions, increase earnings, which ultimately affects their ability to support themselves in later years. Given the competing needs placed on them, women can tend to place their own health and wellbeing well down on their list of priorities.

Women report increasing instances of stress related illness, with almost half reporting clinical diagnosis of depression or anxiety. The ongoing expectation to “have it all” (either placed on ourselves or by perception of external expectations and influences, including social media) sees women with higher instances of depression and/or anxiety, increased levels of drinking and an increase in overweight or obese women.

What does the research say?

Women in employment demonstrate elevated levels of weight-gain in line with working longer

hours¹.

As we progress through our career and take on more demanding roles, our lifestyle choices, and thus our health and wellbeing can be affected by the increased commitment to careers.

66% of women reported feeling nervous/anxious/on edge several days in a week;

46% report clinical diagnosis of anxiety or depression;

50% describe themselves as overweight or obese;

Almost 10% of women report drinking on a daily basis²

In 2016-17, 95% of all primary parental leave taken in the non-public sector, was taken by women.

Victims of family violence experience significant impact on their health and wellbeing, with the effects of family violence spilling into their working environment.

Two thirds of women who experience family violence by a current partner, are in paid employment.

What are the barriers?

Social Media continues to reflect unrealistic expectations for women to “have it all”, resulting in women trying to achieve in all areas of life and potentially making their own health and wellbeing a lower priority.

Women are still by far the greatest cohort of workers taking the primary caring role and therefore are disadvantaged in their earning capacity at a time when their capacity to earn could be at it's most robust. Time taken to fulfil caring roles can still end in loss of work time, as well as less likelihood of promotion, affecting future long-term earning capacity, and then superannuation funds during their retirement.

What are the opportunities?

Change the conversation to Work/Life Effectiveness.

Advocate for workplaces to invest in health and wellbeing programs including comprehensive support for victims of family violence so that they are not disadvantaged by reduction in capacity to work.

Source and support submissions on issues affecting women through the Engage Victoria Platform.

¹ Au N, Hauck K & Hollingsworth B. Employment, work hours and weight gain among middle-aged women. *International Journal of Obesity*, 2013; 37(5): 718-724

² Women's Health Survey 2018 – Jean Hailes - <https://jeanhailes.org.au/womens-health-survey-2018>

What BPW can do?

Volunteering and Fundraising

Advocacy

Promote individual and club engagement through Engage Victoria

Share information on employer of choice ratings including:

WGEA

Work180

HRD

Existing Programs

Share The Dignity

White Ribbon Day

Days for Girls

International Women's Day

Resources

Jean Hailes – <https://jeanhailes.org.au/>

Head to Health -

https://headtohealth.gov.au/?utm_source=mindhealthconnect&utm_medium=301

Engage Victoria - <https://engage.vic.gov.au/>

Work180 - <https://au.work180.co/>

Domestic Violence Resource Centre Victoria – www.dvrcv.org.au

Legislation

Paid Parental Leave Act 2010

Carers Recognition Act 2012

Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008

Abortion Law Reform Act 2008

Family Violence Protection Act 2008

Fair Work Act 2009