

A basic guide to creating healthy environments

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Why create health promoting environments

A welcoming and safe environment contributes to health and meets community expectations. A healthy environment is achieved when an organisation is accessible to all community members, values its volunteers and participants, provides smoke-free areas, adopts sun-protection measures, provides healthy food choices and ensures responsible alcohol management practices are in place when conducting events or activities.

Many organisations are interested in creating healthy environments in which to conduct their activity.

VicHealth is interested in pursuing the creation of healthy environments as they maximise the health impact of cultural and sporting activities and increase the appeal of clubs, organisations and activities to a wider range of potential participants. It's clear that an organisation with a policy to welcome and include potential participants is more likely to attract and retain them. Likewise, smoke free environments and initiatives like a responsible alcohol management

policy can play a significant role in creating a culture around your club, organisation or activity that encourages participation. Participation is a key to improving mental health and wellbeing and increasing physical activity.

In this document we set out some of the things your organisation could do in order to create a healthy environment. We have also provided a list of possible strategies to implement as you move towards a healthier environment for all those involved with your organisation and activities.

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Smoke-free Environments

Health
Health through Participation

There is strong community awareness of the risks associated with smoking and passive smoking, and increasing support for smoke-free environments. Implementing smoking control measures is a legally and socially responsible initiative for your organisation. VicHealth encourages you to make your organisation, and activities you conduct, smoke-free.

Your organisation should:

- ensure that all indoor areas are non-smoking areas;
- not sell cigarettes, including cigarettes from vending machines (this requirement may be waived if the funded organisation does not have direct control over cigarette sales or machines in the venue);
- provide designated non-smoking outdoor areas;
- promote activities as smoke-free; and
- ensure that representatives of the organisation or those acting in an official capacity refrain from smoking while performing these duties.

Some ideas to help you create a smoke-free environment

- Adopt a smoke-free policy
- Ensure all groups involved in the running of an activity are aware of the smoke-free policy
- Display non-smoking signage in appropriate areas



Participation and Inclusion

Social isolation and lack of participation in community life have been found to impact negatively on mental health and wellbeing. Alternatively there is general acceptance that the major factors that influence mental health include having access to social networks, engaging in a variety of social and physical activities and a valued social position. Thus, development of organisations and activities which encourage participation and inclusion is vital to the development and maintenance of mental health and wellbeing at an individual and community level.

Your organisation should:

- ensure that activities are not difficult to access due to cost or location;
- ensure that people from a range of backgrounds are involved in the planning and staging of your activities;
- ensure that information regarding your organisation and activities is widely circulated;
- ensure that people from a range of backgrounds feel comfortable in participating in activities developed; and
- ensure that your premises and activities are accessible to people with disabilities.

Some ideas to help you create welcoming and inclusive activities

- Adopt policies regarding the management of discrimination within your organisation including racism, sexism and bullying
- Stage free or low cost activities to increase participation
- Where possible, conduct your activities in proximity to public transport
- Involve people from a range of backgrounds in the planning and staging of your activities
- Develop relationships with community based organisations which may have an interest in your activities
- Distribute information about your activities in diverse forms and through a range of mediums eg: fliers, community radio, local press, ethnic press



Responsible Alcohol Management

Health through Participation

Over 6,500 Australians die each year from the effects of alcohol.

Safe and responsible drinking means drinking alcohol in a way that does not harm the drinker or others.

Your organisation should:

- provide low and non-alcoholic drinks at prices competitive with full-strength alcoholic drinks;
- provide water free of charge;
- ensure food is provided when alcohol is being served;
- ensure alcohol is not available to minors; and
- comply with Liquor Licensing Victorian regulations.

Some ideas to help you responsibly manage the serving of alcohol

- Adopt a Responsible Alcohol Management Policy
- Know your licensing requirements and ensure your staff members do also
- Provide alcohol-free events for your members and families



Healthy Food Choices

Victorians of all ages would benefit from eating more bread, cereal, rice, pasta, noodles, vegetables, legumes and fruit, and eating less fat. The people attending or participating in your activities should have a choice of these foods which are conducive to good health. The key is to provide a range of food choices so that all consumers participating in or attending activities can make a decision about the type of food they eat.

Your organisation should:

- provide healthy food choices;
- ensure healthy foods are competitively priced;
- have healthy food choices attractively presented and prominently positioned;
- provide water free of charge; and
- ensure safe food handling procedures are observed.

Some ideas to encourage participants to eat healthy foods while at your activity

- Contract caterers who are willing and able to provide healthy food options
- Ensure sufficient variety of healthy food to offer real choice, including fresh fruit and vegetables, breads, pasta and rice
- Include healthy choices for both hot and cold food



Sun Protection

HealthnC
Health through Participation

Australia has one of the highest rates of skin cancer in the world. With so many activities occurring outdoors, exposure to ultra-violet radiation is a particularly relevant health issue for Australians.

Your organisation should:

- ensure that shade is provided;
- ensure that sunscreen is available; and
- ensure that staff, volunteers and, where possible, participants wear sun-protective clothing, for example:
 - wide-brimmed hats
 - shirts with long sleeves
 - sunglasses.

Some ideas to help you create a sun-protective environment

- Provide shade structures, for example, umbrellas, marquees and shade cloths, and/or encourage individuals to bring their own shade structures in areas where natural shade does not exist
- Make sunscreen and hats available for sale as part of any merchandising that does exist
- Schedule activities, when possible, so they don't occur between 11am and 3pm. The effects of ultra-violet radiation are at their highest during these times.



Preventing Sport Related Injury

It is estimated that 30% - 50% of all sporting injuries are preventable. The risk of injury can interfere with the enjoyment of participating in sport and active recreation, and act as a barrier to that participation. Protection from sporting injury cannot be guaranteed but there are many helpful strategies which can minimise the risk.

Your organisation should:

- ensure coaches and officials are trained in injury prevention;
- check the playing area and surrounding areas before activity;
- encourage the wearing of protective equipment;
- develop and implement modified games for juniors; and
- provide first aid equipment.

Some ideas to help you prevent sports injury

- Adopt a sports injury prevention policy
- Implement counter-measures for your sport, where these are available. Counter measures are facts and safety tips for individual sports.
- Have officials qualified in first aid attend activities



Useful websites

VicSport www.vicsport.asn.au

National Heart Foundation www.heartfoundation.com.au

Australian Drug Foundation www.adf.org.au

Diabetes Australia www.dav.org.au

Quit www.quit.org.au

Food Safety Victoria www.foodsafety.vic.gov.au

SunSmart www.sunsmart.com.au

Liquor Licensing Board www.liquor.vic.gov.au

SmartPlay www.smartplay.com.au

International Diabetes Institute www.idi.org.au

Together We Do Better www.togetherwedobetter.vic.gov.au



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