



ASPAAH

Australian Society for
Performing Arts Healthcare

Safety in the Performing Arts

Feel safe at work

You have a right to feel safe at work. Your employer has a **legal** responsibility to provide a **safe** workplace, and you should be given information about who to approach about safety concerns and what complaints procedures are available to you. Safety includes freedom from harassment, bullying, discrimination (including racism), violence, and situations where your physical and/or psychological safety could be at risk.

When someone's actions are placing your safety at risk, possibly the hardest thing is to know who to talk to. The websites below give you general details, but different organisations offer different complaint paths. If your organisation has a human resources department or a designated manager for workplace safety, this is a good place to start. Alternatively, you could write to the General Manager, Artistic Director or Board Chairperson. If you feel these people are involved in the problem, or for any other reason are unlikely to help, you can go to the Media Entertainment Arts Alliance (MEAA) or to one of the government organisations listed below.

Feel safe at your school or training place

You have a **legal right** to feel safe in your school or training organisation, free from harassment, bullying, discrimination (including racism), violence, and situations where your physical safety could be at risk. Your school or training institution is responsible for protecting you. If you have a problem, speak to your parents and friends so they can support you, then speak to someone you trust within your training place. This may be a teacher, the school psychologist, chaplain, nurse or the school principal. If none of these help, contact the Education Department (see "Useful websites").

Support for personal health and wellbeing

For many young performing artists, that long-awaited first contract coincides with many other firsts: living away from home; managing cooking, laundry and household duties; balancing rest and social life; travel and touring; self-care for minor illnesses, managing and seeking appropriate help for injuries; and maintaining self-confidence without the daily support of close family members. Temptations may be harder to resist when you are trying to fit in with other cast members. Whenever things start to go off track, it is important to know where to go for help. To ensure a long and fulfilling career, be active in seeking help before problems start to impact on your work, your health, or your personal happiness.

Physical health: Coping with the many pressures of life within the performing arts requires good physical health. It is challenging to ensure you have a diet that will sustain the demands of your work; good quality sleep; adequate exercise; and time for rest and social activities within the constraints of a performing life. However, these things are essential if you are to perform at your best and build a long, successful career.

Mental health: The World Health Organisation defines mental health as a state of well-being in which you realise your own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and can make a contribution to your environment. Most of us have periods when our mental health is not as good as we would wish, but there are a range of health professionals and organisations who can help. Public hospitals and the organisations listed on the next page offer appointments, telephone helplines and online chat facilities, with most free of charge. You can also start by visiting your General Practitioner (GP) who can plan appointments with a range of professionals in either the public or private system.

By actively caring for your mental health, you ensure you enjoy your life as a performing artist. If you are experiencing thoughts of self-harm or suicide for any reason, ring the **Suicide Callback Service** (1300 659 467).



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Substance abuse and addiction: Substance misuse/abuse is the harmful use of drugs (illicit, prescription or over-the-counter), alcohol, caffeine, nicotine, and volatile substances (e.g. petrol, glue, paint). Addiction is a physical and/or psychological need to use a substance, often caused by regular continued use. Mental, physical and lifestyle factors make some people more likely to become addicted to a substance. **Lifeline** and other sites (below) offer confidential phone, chat and online support.

Sexual health: Most public hospitals and many general practitioners offer free sexual health support. You can obtain 24-hour online support and find clinics in your area on www.healthdirect.gov.au/sexual-health. Sites such as this also include information on contraception options, fertility, male and female sexual problems, and sexually transmitted infections (testing, advice and support). Several government sites also offer health apps. Do not hesitate to seek help for any sexual health concerns. Early intervention can avoid unnecessary worry.

LGBTI health: **QLife** is Australia's first nationally-oriented counselling and referral service for people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, and/or intersex (LGBTI). It offers webchat and telephone support between 3pm and midnight. Outside these hours, QLife recommends **Lifeline** (13 11 14) or **Kids Helpline** for under 25s (1800 55 1800).

Assault: Nobody has the right to assault you. If you are injured, go straight to a public hospital. If you can, ask a friend or family member to support you, then ring the police or go to the police station. **Lifeline**, **Beyond Blue** and **Kids Helpline** are all ready to help – see their contact details in "Useful websites".

Useful websites

Feel safe at work: www.humanrights.gov.au/bullying-know-your-rights-violence-harassment-and-bullying-fact-sheet

Feel safe at work – bullying: www.safework.nsw.gov.au/health-and-safety/safety-topics-a-z/bullying/workplace-bullying

Feel safe at work – sexual harassment: www.meaa.org/news/sexual-harassment-in-the-workplace/

Feel safe at work – physical safety: www.liveperformance.com.au/work_health_safety

Feel safe during your training: https://docs.education.gov.au/system/files/doc/other/national_safe_schools_framework.pdf

Make a workplace complaint: Contact the union – Media, Entertainment & Arts Alliance: www.meaa.org/contact/

Sexual health – safe sex, STIs, testing, contraception: www.healthdirect.gov.au/sexual-health

QLife – LGBTI support: <https://qlife.org.au/>; T: 1800 184 527

Mental health support: www.healthdirect.gov.au/community-mental-health-services; <https://headspace.org.au/>;

Substance abuse and addiction: www.lifeline.org.au/get-help/topics/substance-abuse-and-addiction; T: 13 11 14

Beyond Blue – anxiety, depression, loneliness, suicide prevention, LGBTI: www.beyondblue.org.au/; T: 1300 22 4636

Lifeline – crisis support, suicide prevention: www.lifeline.org.au; T: 13 11 14

Kids Helpline – any time, any reason, for under 25s: <https://kidshelpline.com.au/>; T: 1800 55 1800

Suicide Callback Service – crisis support: www.suicidecallbackservice.org.au/; T: 1300 659 467

Butterfly Foundation – eating disorders: support@thebutterflyfoundation.org.au; T: 1800 33 4673

Emergency, ambulance or crisis: T: 000.



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A Guide to Performing Arts Healthcare

ASPAAH is pleased to offer you this Guide which has been compiled by experts in the field. This is an example of ASPAAH's many resources, all designed to inform performers and those who work within the performing arts of current information that may assist their health and wellbeing.

By becoming an ASPAAH member, you will share in exciting new developments in the Australian performing arts healthcare landscape, including:

- A range of health care guides, posters, conference presentation videos and webinar recordings
- Professional listing in ASPAAH's online Directory of Members
- Access to a network of leading performing arts professionals, clinicians and researchers
- Discounted registration for ASPAAH conferences and other events
- Access to Local Chapter events
- Opportunity to run Local Chapter events
- Regular news about local, regional and national performing arts healthcare events
- Full annual subscription to *Medical Problems of Performing Artists*
- One-year subscription to *dancetrain* magazine in first year of membership
- Free advertising in ASPAAH bi-monthly e-newsletters
- The right to vote and hold office in the Society

If you work in the performing arts in Australia, ASPAAH is *your* organisation. We encourage you to join our extensive membership of performing arts practitioners and organisations so you can access a wide range of ASPAAH Guides, conference videos, newsletters and events. To join and/or to make a tax-deductible donation, please contact admin@aspah.org.au.

ASPAAH Guides include:

Acute Injury Care

Overuse and Chronic Injury Care

Understanding Pain

Australian's Health System

Safety in the Performing Arts

Healthcare Insurance Options

What Health Professionals Do

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NB: This ASPAAH Guide is intended as an educational resource only and does not replace professional advice. ASPAAH recommends that diagnosis and initial advice is always obtained from an accredited healthcare professional.