

TEN THINGS YOU CAN DO TO MAKE YOUR WORKPLACE MENTALLY HEALTHY.

Tips for medium and large businesses.

Heads  up

THE MENTALLY
HEALTHY
WORK PLACE ALLIANCE



The benefits of taking action

At any given time, one in five Australian employees is likely to be living with a mental health condition. Untreated depression and anxiety cost employers around \$10.9 billion every year, largely through reduced productivity, absenteeism and WorkCover claims.

The case for creating mentally healthy workplaces is clear, and everyone has a role to play. Businesses with a positive workplace culture are more productive and profitable. They gain a reputation as great places to work, attracting and retaining top talent.

Analysis by PricewaterhouseCoopers shows that businesses will, on average, achieve a positive return on investment of \$2.30 for every \$1 spent creating a mentally healthy workplace.

As well as these benefits, employers have a legal responsibility to provide a safe working environment for all employees, with legislation requiring businesses to identify and minimise any workplace risks to mental health.

How to get started

The good news is that there are a number of simple, concrete actions all businesses can take to promote mental health in their workplaces. When you begin adopting these actions to suit your business, think about the resources and existing structures and policies you have available, and how you can use these to make your investment in mental health more effective.

As you implement your strategy, it's important to communicate with your employees and seek their input at every stage. Managers and leaders must lead by example, so ensure your senior staff are on board, on message and understand their individual roles.

Larger organisations can also draw on the expertise of specialised teams, such as human resources, workplace health and safety, and communications. These professionals will play a key part in engaging the rest of your workforce, as well as helping transform policy into action.

PRIORITY AREAS FOR YOUR BUSINESS

You can take action in three key areas:

1. Raise awareness of mental health conditions and reduce stigma
2. Support someone with a mental health condition
3. Create a supportive workplace culture

The following 10 ideas provide help for you to get started. For each priority area, there are a number of actions you can take – these are just suggestions and will need to be adapted to your business needs and culture.

Many of these actions are simply good business practice backed up by an increased understanding of workplace mental health, and you may be doing some of them already. Remember, you can create a tailored, online action plan at any time.

For more information visit

www.headsup.org.au/actionplan

1. Increase awareness of mental health conditions.

Actions:

Provide mental health awareness resources and training (online or face to face) to staff and managers.

Resources available:

Information resources

- *beyondblue* *Understanding depression and anxiety* flyer
- *beyondblue* *Anxiety and depression: An information booklet*

Face-to-face training

- *beyondblue* *National Workplace Program*
www.headsup.org.au/nwp
- Comcare *Mental health and wellbeing at work* training program
<http://bit.ly/comcarecourse>
- The Black Dog Institute *Managing common mental health issues in your team* workshop
<http://bit.ly/1jNYnvP>

Online training

- *Mindful employer* online training program
www.mindfulemployer.org/mindful-employer/elearning

2 ■ Reduce stigma.

Actions:

Arrange for someone to share their personal experience of a mental health condition and their recovery. This could be a *beyondblue* ambassador, or you may have an employee or manager willing to speak openly and share their story.

Resources available:

Websites and online resources

- *beyondblue* *What it's like – personal stories*
www.beyondblue.org.au/what-its-like

3 ■ Increase awareness of people's roles and responsibilities.

Actions:

Provide information to all employees on their specific roles and responsibilities relating to mental health. This might cover areas such as work health and safety, discrimination, privacy and taking care of their own mental health, and should be tailored for different levels and specific job functions. Induction or refresher training is an ideal time to ensure everyone knows what is expected of them.

Resources available:

Information resources

- *beyondblue* *Taking care of your mental health in the workplace* brochure
- *beyondblue* *Taking action in the workplace* wallet card

Face-to-face and online training

- *Mindful employer* program
www.mindfulemployer.org

4 ■ Increase awareness of your business commitment to creating mentally healthy workplaces.

Actions:

Engage your employees – let them know what you're doing, share your action plan and seek their input. Get your communications, marketing or HR teams to promote your progress, both internally and externally. Focus on the specific benefits for your employees, business and the community in your campaign.

Resources available:

Templates and plans

- *beyondblue* Mental health and wellbeing policy template
- *beyondblue* Email template to employees about why your business is creating a mentally healthy workplace
- Heads Up online action plan – Make your action plan available on your intranet and encourage employees to review it regularly
www.headsup.org.au/actionplan

Websites and online resources

- Heads Up – information and resources for leaders and employees on workplace mental health
www.headsup.org.au
- *beyondblue* *Organisational leadership* online resource
www.beyondblue.org.au/organisational-leadership

Face-to-face and online training

- *Mindful employer* program
www.mindfulemployer.org

5 ■ Supporting employees with mental health conditions to stay at or return to work.

Actions:

Develop and implement return to work or stay at work plans, tailored for employees' needs.

Resources available:

Information resources

- *beyondblue* *Managing someone with a mental health condition* fact sheet

Templates and plans

- *beyondblue* Return to work/stay at work plan template
- *beyondblue* Return to work/stay at work discussion plan template

Websites and online resources

- *beyondblue* *Perspectives: Returning to work* online resource
www.beyondblue.org.au/perspectives-rtw
- Employers' return-to-work obligations
<http://bit.ly/1pNYyfK>

6 ■ Build the skills and confidence of employees to approach someone they may be concerned about.

Actions:

Promote free resources to help your employees have a conversation if they're worried about a colleague. Make these available on your intranet and display posters or other materials around the workplace.

Resources available:

Websites and online resources

- *Having a conversation, What would you do?* and *Business in Mind* online resources
www.beyondblue.org.au/workplaceonline

Face-to-face training

- *beyondblue National Workplace Program*
www.headsup.org.au/nwp
- *Comcare Mental health and wellbeing at work* training program
<http://bit.ly/comcarecourse>
- *Mindful employer* program
www.mindfulemployer.org

7 ■ Create a discrimination-free workplace where diversity is respected.

Actions:

Provide gender and sexual diversity, cultural and disability awareness training for staff and managers.

Resources available:

Websites and online resources

- Australian Human Rights Commission
Information for employers
<http://bit.ly/1m7hzpl>
- Australian Human Rights Commission
Writing an effective anti-discrimination and harassment policy
www.humanrights.gov.au/writing-effective-anti-discrimination-and-harassment-policy

8 ■ Monitor work load and work hours.

Actions:

If employees are regularly working long hours, taking work home or working through breaks, address the issue directly and look at your resourcing levels.

Resources available:

Information resources

- *beyondblue Creating a mentally healthy workplace: A guide for business leaders and managers* booklet

9 ■ Ensure a zero-tolerance approach to bullying.

Actions:

Develop formal and informal confidential complaint handling processes for employees to report inappropriate behaviour. Deal with any cases of bullying or harassment quickly.

Resources available:

Information resources

- *Safe Work Australia Guide for preventing and responding to workplace bullying*
<http://bit.ly/1kDKXT2>
- *Safe Work Australia Dealing with workplace bullying – a worker's guide*
<http://bit.ly/SpxEPR>

Websites and online resources

- Australian Human Rights Commission *Workplace bullying: violence, harassment and bullying* fact sheet
<http://bit.ly/1n7iHNx>
- Fair Work Commission *What is bullying at work?*
<http://bit.ly/1nJJlzh>

10 ■ Provide clarity on job roles and responsibilities.

Actions:

Ensure employees have an up-to-date job description which includes role purpose, reporting relationships and key duties expected of them. Have a clear process and time frames to resolve any uncertainty.

Resources available:

Information resources

- *beyondblue Creating a mentally healthy workplace: A guide for business leaders and managers* booklet

All *beyondblue* resources are available for download or to order from:

www.headsup.org.au/beyondblue-resources

Find out more at **headsup.org.au/actionplan**