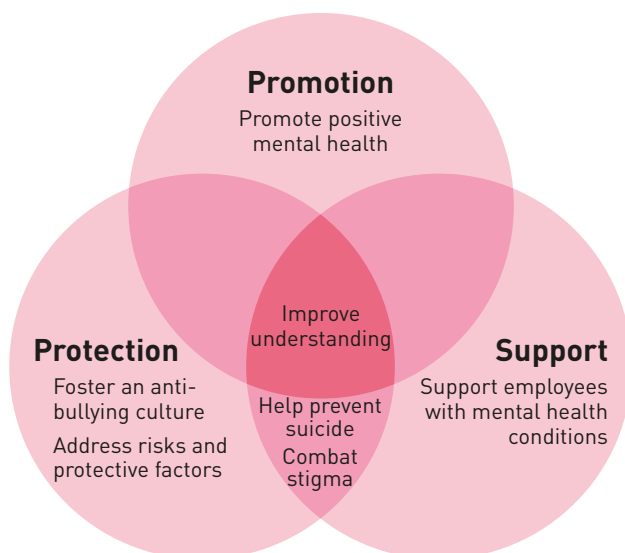


## Seven actions to help create a mentally healthy workplace

Taking an integrated approach to mental health and wellbeing can lead to great benefits for your workplace. An effective strategy involves implementing actions across three key areas: promotion, protection and support.



While every workplace is different and requires a tailored approach, choosing from these seven actions will set your organisation on the path to creating a mentally healthy workplace.

### 1. Improve understanding of mental health

- Provide information on self-care, positive coping strategies and resilience together with signs and symptoms of mental health conditions and suicide risk factors.
- Regularly provide information to staff through multiple channels, about mental health and wellbeing services and support networks, including those provided by external organisations such as *beyondblue*.

### 2. Address risks

Consider a range of factors affecting the mental health and safety of your staff.

The health and wellbeing of a workplace can be enhanced by minimising the impact of risk factors and maximising the impact of protective factors in the following areas.

### Work and organisational design factors

**Role clarity** – Ensure employees understand their role, reporting relationships and key duties, and are informed of any changes including new responsibilities.

**Job control** – Provide opportunities for employee participation in decisions that affect them (e.g. two-way feedback, committees) and enhance flexible working arrangements (e.g. part-time or home-based work, job sharing, phased retirement, additional purchased leave, non-standard working hours) to support employees' work-life balance.

**Resources and skill development** – Provide appropriate resources and training to enable employees to competently do their job and manage its associated demands.

**Individual factors** – Recognise the often-conflicting demands of work and home life and acknowledge that people respond to stressors at work in different ways.

**Respect, trust and equity** – Develop policies for workplace behaviour, diversity and inclusion that are implemented and widely promoted. Challenge behaviour and actions that may adversely affect employee mental health and wellbeing.

**Leadership and management capability** – Provide leaders and managers with effective people management training including identifying and addressing risk factors.

### Operational factors

**Dealing with the public** – Develop and implement procedures that deal with threatening or inappropriate customer behaviour, to ensure employees feel safe.

**Occupational violence** – Conduct a 'violence vulnerability audit' that registers environments in which the organisation operates, and develop a policy in relation to violence and aggression against employees.

**Shift work** – Use best practice shift systems to minimise fatigue, and ensure that rosters allow adequate time between shifts for employees to be well rested.

**Long working hours** – Regularly review workloads, prioritise tasks, define performance expectations, cut-out unnecessary work, give warning of urgent jobs, and encourage employees to discuss issues so solutions can be developed.

### Environmental factors

Consult employees about the work environment to control risks such as unpleasant or dangerous physical conditions (e.g. crowding, noise, air pollution or ergonomic issues).

### 3. Foster an anti-bullying culture

- Create greater awareness of bullying and inappropriate behaviours to break any cultural views that bullying is commonplace and acceptable.
- Implement confidential reporting and response procedures for when bullying occurs. Ensure policies and procedures protect anyone who reports or witnesses workplace bullying, from victimisation.

### 4. Combat stigma

- Encourage senior leaders and managers to speak openly about mental health in the workplace by actively endorsing and participating in activities and events aimed at reducing stigma.
- Promote zero-tolerance from discrimination against staff who have a mental health condition.

### 5. Promote positive mental health and wellbeing

- Develop manager capability in positive, proactive leadership (e.g. promoting employee growth, matching employee skills and strengths with tasks, and providing recognition and constructive feedback).
- Encourage staff to work on tasks together, discuss ideas, share skills and take part in social activities.
- Emphasise the value of the work they do, celebrate achievements and praise effort as well as results.

### 6. Support employees living with a mental health condition

- Develop the capabilities of leaders and managers through training that focuses on people management skills, mental health and suicide prevention in the workplace (identifying staff at risk and supporting those with a mental health condition).
- Provide and promote confidential and easy access to a range of external and internal mental health supports (e.g. Employee Assistance Program, welfare staff, grievance officers, HR, peer supporters and 'wellbeing champions').
- Identify and implement job adjustments to support the employee to return to and/or stay at work.

### 7. Prevent suicide

- Communicate information and provide resources to highlight the warning signs of suicide. You could do this in line with dates such as World Suicide Prevention Day.
- Develop clear policies and protocols around suicide and suicide risk.

The information in this document is general advice only. The advice within it may therefore not apply to your circumstances and is not intended to replace the advice of a healthcare professional.

### Resources available

All resources are available to order/download from: [headsup.org.au/order](https://headsup.org.au/order)

#### Understanding anxiety and depression

An overview of signs and symptoms, what to do and how to help if you or someone you know has anxiety or depression.

#### Developing a workplace mental health strategy: A how-to guide for organisations

The definitive guide to help you develop and implement your organisation's mental health plan. This is particularly valuable for medium and large businesses.

#### Creating a mentally healthy workplace: A guide for managers

Managers with day-to-day responsibilities for staff will find this particularly useful in carrying out their roles.

#### Taking care of your mental health in the workplace: A guide for employees

A great resource for employees, at all levels, to help them manage their mental health in and outside of work.

### Training

These free online resources are designed to increase understanding of mental health in the workplace and provide practical strategies to support all employees.

[headsup.org.au/beyondblue-resources](https://headsup.org.au/beyondblue-resources)

### Where to find more information

#### Heads Up

[headsup.org.au](https://headsup.org.au)

Heads Up is all about supporting Australian businesses to create more mentally healthy workplaces.

#### beyondblue

[www.beyondblue.org.au](https://www.beyondblue.org.au)

Learn more about anxiety, depression and suicide prevention, or talk through your concerns with our Support Service.

☎ 1300 22 4636

✉ Email or 💬 chat to us online at [www.beyondblue.org.au/getsupport](https://www.beyondblue.org.au/getsupport)

#### Head to Health

[headtohealth.gov.au](https://headtohealth.gov.au)

Head to Health can help you find free and low-cost, trusted online and phone mental health resources.



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