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

Tips for medium and large businesses.

Heads up
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

• 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

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
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](http://www.beyondblue.org.au/workplaceonline)
- Face-to-face training
  - beyondblue National Workplace Program
  - Comcare Mental health and wellbeing at work training program
  - Mindful employer program
    - [www.mindfulemployer.org](http://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/1m7hzpI)
  - Australian Human Rights Commission

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
  - Safe Work Australia Dealing with workplace bullying – a worker’s guide
- Websites and online resources
  - Australian Human Rights Commission Workplace bullying: violence, harassment and bullying fact sheet
    - [http://bit.ly/1n7iHNx](http://bit.ly/1n7iHNx)
  - Fair Work Commission What is bullying at work?

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](http://www.headsup.org.au/beyondblue-resources)

Find out more at [headsup.org.au/actionplan](http://headsup.org.au/actionplan)