

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

Tips for small businesses.

Heads  up

THE MENTALLY  
HEALTHY  
WORK PLACE ALLIANCE



## The benefits of taking action

Around one in five Australian employees is likely to be living with a mental health condition, which can affect their productivity at work and personal wellbeing. For a small business with a team of 10, that means two people may need additional support in the workplace.

As a small business owner, you may feel you don't have the resources or expertise to create a mentally healthy working environment or support an employee with a mental health condition. However, the costs of inaction – absenteeism, reduced productivity, high turnover and compensation claims – hit small businesses especially hard.

While small businesses may not have access to the resources available to larger organisations, their size provides other advantages. They are typically less bureaucratic, meaning decision-making and change can happen faster. Small business owners tend to work closely with employees, providing regular opportunities to communicate and check in with people who may need support.

They're often close-knit teams that look out for each other, and their size means that issues or problems are harder to hide.

## Getting started

The good news is that there are a number of simple, effective actions you can take to create a mentally healthy workplace and support your people. They don't need to cost a lot, and by involving your employees you can both share responsibilities and increase their commitment to your business.

If you work for a small business, think about what would help promote good mental health in your workplace and how you can contribute. After all, improving workplace mental health is in everyone's interest, and everyone has a role to play. The benefits are clear – mentally healthy businesses are positive, productive places where people want to work.

# 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 positive working environment

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

Many of these actions are simply good business practice backed up by an increased understanding of workplace mental health. You don't need to complete everything all at once – think about what you're already doing, identify any gaps or areas for improvement and go from there. Remember, you can create a tailored, online action plan at any time.

For more information visit

[www.headsup.org.au/actionplan](http://www.headsup.org.au/actionplan)

You can also check out Business in Mind, an online resource developed specifically for small businesses.

Visit [www.headsup.org.au/bim](http://www.headsup.org.au/bim) for ideas, case studies and advice from other small business owners.

## 1. Increase awareness of mental health conditions.

### Actions:

Make information about mental health conditions available in the workplace (e.g. place resources in lunch areas or on notice boards.)

### Resources available:

#### Information resources

- *beyondblue Understanding depression and anxiety flyer*
- *beyondblue Anxiety and depression: An information booklet*
- *beyondblue Support Service wallet card*

#### Websites and online resources

- *beyondblue Workplace mental health awareness online resource*  
[www.beyondblue.org.au/workplaceonline](http://www.beyondblue.org.au/workplaceonline)

## 2 ■ Increase awareness of people's responsibilities relating to mental health.

### Actions:

Provide staff with information about looking after their own mental health and their legal responsibilities relating to mental health.

### Resources available:

#### Information resources

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

#### Training

- The Black Dog Institute *Managing common mental health issues in your team* workshop  
<http://bit.ly/1jNYnvP>
  - *Mindful employer* online training program  
<http://bit.ly/1n7j6zp>
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## 3 ■ Reduce stigma.

### Actions:

Speak openly about mental health conditions in the workplace and encourage others to do the same.

### Resources available:

#### Websites and online resources

- *Heads Up video series – Increase awareness and reduce stigma*  
[www.headsup.org.au](http://www.headsup.org.au)
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## 4 ■ Build the skills and confidence to approach someone who may be experiencing difficulties.

### Actions:

Check how to have a conversation with a staff member who you may be concerned about and encourage staff to look out for each other.

### Resources available:

#### Websites and online resources

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

#### Training

- *beyondblue National Workplace Program*  
[www.headsup.org.au/nwp](http://www.headsup.org.au/nwp)
  - *Comcare Mental health and wellbeing at work* training program  
<http://bit.ly/comcarecourse>
  - *Mindful employer* program  
[www.mindfulemployer.org](http://www.mindfulemployer.org)
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## 5 ■ Encourage staff with mental health conditions to seek treatment and support early.

### Actions:

Tailor information about nearby support services and info lines to your needs.

### Resources available:

#### Information resources

- *beyondblue Looking after your mental health in the workplace* wallet card

#### Websites and online resources

- *Mindhealthconnect*  
[www.mindhealthconnect.org.au](http://www.mindhealthconnect.org.au)
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## 6 ■ Support staff with mental health conditions to stay at or return to work.

### Actions:

Where necessary and in collaboration with your people, make changes to their role and/or working environment to enable them to fulfil their work duties. This might include giving them time off to see a health professional, adjusting working hours, avoiding unnecessary shift changes and reallocating tasks.

### 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](http://www.beyondblue.org.au/perspectives-rtw)
- *Comcare Business benefits of early intervention*  
[www.comcare.gov.au/early\\_intervention](http://www.comcare.gov.au/early_intervention)

## 7. Monitor and manage workloads.

### Actions:

Encourage your people to speak up at an early stage and seek guidance.

### Resources available:

#### Information resources

- *beyondblue Creating a mentally healthy workplace: A guide for business leaders and managers* booklet
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## 8. Increase input in how people do their work.

### Actions:

Your people have direct insight and experience of achieving the tasks at hand – they can help. Listen to their ideas and feedback on how tasks are completed.

### Resources available:

#### Information resources

- *beyondblue Creating a mentally healthy workplace: A guide for business leaders and managers* booklet
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## 9. Prevent bullying and discrimination.

### Actions:

Encourage an environment of dignity and respect so that employees can share any concerning behaviour at an early stage. Make it clear that you support open communication, and ensure you have processes and/or policies in place to deal with any issues.

### Resources available:

#### Information resources

- *Safe Work Guide for preventing and responding to workplace bullying*  
<http://bit.ly/1kDKXT2>
- *Safe Work 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 regular performance feedback.

### Actions:

Recognise whenever a task is done well and give constructive feedback on areas for improvement.

### Resources available:

#### Information resources

- *Looking after your mental health in the workplace* wallet card
- *Comcare Working together: Promoting mental health and wellbeing at work* guide  
<http://bit.ly/comcarewellbeing>

#### Websites and online resources

- *Comcare Work, health and wellbeing*  
<http://bit.ly/comcarecasestudy>

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