Heads up

Mentally healthy workplaces – developing an effective strategy to reduce risk and improve wellbeing

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What is mental health?

Mental health is about wellness rather than illness

“a state of well-being in which every individual realises his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to her or his community.” (WHO)
Understanding mental health

It is not a static state

Positive, healthy functioning

Severe impact on everyday functioning
Anxiety, depression and suicide

Around 2 million people in Australia live with anxiety.

Around 1 million people in Australia live with depression.

1 in 3 women & 1 in 5 men are likely to experience anxiety in their lifetime.

1 in 6 women & 1 in 8 men are likely to experience depression in their lifetime.

Nearly 8 Australians die by suicide every day, 6 of whom are men.
POOR MENTAL HEALTH COSTS AUSTRALIAN BUSINESSES $10.9 BILLION EVERY YEAR IN LOST PRODUCTIVITY, ABSENTEEISM AND COMPENSATION CLAIMS.

MENTALLY HEALTHY WORKPLACES ARE MORE PRODUCTIVE & PROFITABLE.

MENTALLY HEALTHY WORKPLACES ARE EMPLOYERS OF CHOICE.

POOR MENTAL HEALTH IS LIKELY TO AFFECT 1 IN 5 EMPLOYEES.

BUSINESSES ACHIEVE AN AVERAGE RETURN ON INVESTMENT FOR EVERY $1 INVESTED IN EFFECTIVE MENTAL HEALTH INITIATIVES.

$2.30
A ‘mentally healthy’ workplace...

✓ Has a positive workplace culture
✓ Minimises workplace risks related to mental health
✓ Builds confidence and facilitate good conversations about stress, struggles and illness
✓ Supports people with mental health conditions appropriately
✓ Reduces stigma and discrimination
Creating a mentally healthy workplace

Developing a mental health strategy: key steps

Gain leadership support

Monitor, review and improve

Analyse your situation

Establish your action plan

Communication & participation
Creating a mentally healthy workplace

An Integrated Approach

Promotion
Promote positive mental health

Protection
- Foster an anti-bullying culture
- Address risks and protective factors

Support
Support employees with mental health conditions

Improve understanding
Help prevent suicide
Combat stigma

Protecting the mental health of staff

- Consider the range of factors affecting mental health and safety of staff
  - Organisational factors
  - Operational factors
  - Environmental factors
  - Individual factors

- Take a risk management approach – what can be done to minimise risks and build protective factors in the workplace

- Include good work design principles
### Protecting the mental health of staff

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Workplace Risk Factors</th>
<th>Workplace Protective Factors</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>❌ Long working hours</td>
<td>✓ Effective leadership</td>
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<tr>
<td>❌ Low job control</td>
<td>✓ Employee participation in decision making</td>
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<tr>
<td>❌ Work overload or pressure</td>
<td>✓ Support from colleagues and managers</td>
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<tr>
<td>❌ Lack of control</td>
<td>✓ Flexible working arrangements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>❌ Lack of participation in decision making</td>
<td>✓ Effective mental health training for managers and staff</td>
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<tr>
<td>❌ Unclear work role</td>
<td>✓ Recognising and rewarding work</td>
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<tr>
<td>❌ Poor communication</td>
<td>✓ Managing change effectively</td>
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<tr>
<td>❌ Limited resources</td>
<td>✓ Organisational fairness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>❌ Bullying, discrimination and harassment</td>
<td>✓ Effective mental health policies and programs</td>
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Creating a mentally healthy workplace

An Integrated Approach

- **Promotion**: Promote positive mental health
- **Protection**: Foster an anti-bullying culture, Address risks and protective factors
- **Support**: Help prevent suicide, Combat stigma, Support employees with mental health conditions

Critical success factors

Leadership buy-in

How are we going to afford this?
Shouldn’t people just harden up?
By talking about it, won’t it result in more claims?

Employee consultation & ongoing involvement

How do I find out what employee’s want?
Can I just use our H&S Committee?
No one seems interested?
What about culture?

- It’s not just about managing risk
- Developing a culture of care, not just compliance
- Building a community where everyone can make a difference
- Psychological safety in the workplace
Open communication
Celebrating success
Supportive team and leaders
Inclusive - embrace diversity
Flexibility

Trust
Are you OK?
Listening
Feeling safe & accepted
Feeling valued
Open door policy

Training/education
Enjoying work
Caring for each other
Open minded
Friendly, smiling

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Psychological Safety

“A belief that one will not be punished or humiliated for speaking up with ideas, questions, concerns or mistakes”

Amy Edmondson (TED talk)
ReturnToWorkSA Resources

- Visit [www.rtwsa.com](http://www.rtwsa.com)
- Search mentally healthy
- Further information
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Where to Start: headsup.org.au

Create mentally healthy workplaces with Heads Up

Join Heads Up

Workplace resources for

Employers
Employees
Managers
Small business owners
Where to Start: headsup.org.au

Strategies for healthy workplaces

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

For leaders
For employers
For managers
For employees
For small businesses
What is a healthy workplace?
Why it matters
Workplace stress
Workplace bullying
Legal rights and responsibilities

Strategies for healthy workplaces

Step 1: Gain leadership support
Step 2: Identify needs
Step 3: Develop a plan
Step 4: Monitor, review and improve
Create your action plan

Developing strategies for a healthy workplace provides a framework for your workplace to promote mental wellbeing, minimise workplace risks to mental health, support people experiencing mental health issues and reduce stigma associated with mental health conditions.
Where to Start: headsup.org.au

Available Resources
Other useful resources

• Websites:
  – Beyond Blue www.beyondblue.org.au
  – SANE Australia www.sane.org
  – Superfriend www.superfriend.com.au

• Safe Work Australia www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au
  – Work related psychological health and safety guide

To keep up to date, consider joining Heads Up website and Superfriend’s newsletter
A few more tips

✓ Align with the broader workplace health, safety and wellness systems
✓ View this process as development of a “system” rather than an “initiative”
✓ Ensure your strategy is supported by a clear implementation plan
✓ Genuine, visible commitment from top level leaders combined with champions throughout all levels of the workforce, not just at the top.
✓ Start small and grow

Where to Start: headsup.org.au

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