

# ALL WE NEED IS PEOPLE

## INFORMATION BOOKLET

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### GOAL

ALL WE NEED IS PEOPLE is an initiative for schools and organisations to improve the overall mental health and wellbeing of their students and employees.

The information booklet provides a framework, which schools and organisations can use to prevent the rise of mental health related issues.

**'It's so common,  
it could be anyone.  
The trouble is, nobody  
wants to talk about  
it. And that makes  
everything worse.'**

**– Ruby Wax**



# AWARENESS OF MENTAL HEALTH AS AN ISSUE AND ITS COST TO ORGANISATIONS

The Australian Health Ministers define mental health as a state of emotional and social wellbeing. Your mental health influences how you cope with the stresses of life and whether you can achieve your potential. Mental health describes the capacity of individuals and groups to interact in an inclusive and equitable way with each other, in ways that promote wellbeing and increase opportunities for development and use of mental abilities.

**“To be healthy as a whole, mental wellness plays a role.”**

MENTAL HEALTH IN YOUR ORGANISATION	ROLE OF WORK IN MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING	THE IMPACT OF MENTAL HEALTH ON THE WORKPLACE
<p>Chances are, someone in your organisation is suffering from mental illness.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 in 5 young people in Australia aged 16-85 will suffer from a mental illness in any year</li> <li>• The most common mental illnesses are depression, anxiety and alcohol or drug misuse</li> <li>• 75% of mental illnesses start before age 24</li> <li>• 54% of people with mental illness do not access any treatment</li> <li>• Every day, at least 6 Australians die from suicide and a further 30 will attempt to take their own life.</li> </ul>	<p>Mental health is an increasingly prominent topic within the workplace.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mental illness is one of the leading causes of sickness, absence and long-term work ineffectiveness and reduced work performance in Australia.</li> <li>• Mental illness has very high economic and personal costs, hence there are clear advantages associated with providing a mentally healthy workplace.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Untreated mental illness can affect a person’s ability to work in an effective manner</li> <li>• \$10.9 billion is lost every year in absenteeism, reduced productivity and compensation claims</li> <li>• Individuals suffering from depression have been found to take 3-4 sick days each month for depression</li> </ul>

## FACT VS. FICTION

FICTION	FACT
Mental illness is caused by personal weakness.	Mental illness is NOT a character flaw. Mental health problems have nothing to do with being lazy or weak and many people need help to get better. Research shows that it is caused by various factors, including but not limited to genetic, biological and social factors.
I am immune to mental illness.	There is no immunity to mental illness. Not everyone develops a mental illness during their lives, but anyone could.
Mental illness isn't a big problem in the Muslim community. I don't hear people talking about it.	Mental illness is common, and one in five Australians (including Muslims) will experience it throughout their lifetime.
Mental illness is forever – it cannot be treated or cured.	The reality is that TREATMENT WORKS. With appropriate treatment, people can and do recover from mental illness.
Those with mental health issues don't need help, they can cope with it themselves.	Those with mental health issues require professional help as their focus and decision making skills may be impaired without assistance.

# LEGAL OBLIGATIONS OF ORGANISATIONS

It is important that we improve workplace mental health as it is in everyone's interests, and we all have a role to play.

Both employers and employees have formal rights and responsibilities under privacy, discrimination, and work health and safety legislation.

## MENTAL HEALTH IN YOUR ORGANISATION

The Australia-wide *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* (Cth) and equivalent state and territory laws make it unlawful to discriminate against, harass or victimise people with disabilities. The Act defines 'discrimination' to include both direct and indirect discrimination. This means an employer's failure to make reasonable adjustments for a worker with a mental health condition may constitute discrimination, even when on the face of it no 'direct' discrimination has occurred.

Want to learn more? The *Australian Human Rights Commission* has developed a brief guide to the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* (Cth), available online.

## RECOGNISING DISCRIMINATION WITHIN THE WORKPLACE

Discrimination in a workplace setting could occur:

- during the recruitment process, in advertising, interviewing and selecting candidates
- when determining terms and conditions of employment such as pay rates, work hours and leave
- in selecting or rejecting employees for promotion, transfer and training
- through dismissal, demotion or retrenchment.

## WORKPLACE HEALTH AND SAFETY

To ensure that the working environment does not harm mental health or worsen an existing condition, necessary steps must be taken according to the work health and safety legislation. This allows workplaces to be reasonably practicable, as well as physically and mentally safe and healthy for all employees.

## PRIVACY

Under the Australia-wide *Privacy Act 1988* (Cth) and similar legislation in some states and territories, employers must observe confidentiality and respect the privacy of each employee.

This means that an employee's mental health condition can't be shared with anyone without their permission, unless there is a direct risk to their health and safety or that of others. Any information that can be disclosed is only for reasons such as arranging adjustments in the workplace to support the employee. Any other types of disclosure are a breach of the employee's confidentiality and privacy.

Source: *Heads Up, Mentally Healthy Workplace Alliance and Beyondlue.*

## **SUPPORT SERVICES AVAILABLE\***

**BEYOND BLUE** <https://www.beyondblue.org.au> 1300 22 4636

Beyond Blue works to raise awareness of depression, anxiety and suicide prevention, while reducing the stigma surrounding these issues and encouraging people to seek support when people need it. Beyond Blue provides information and support to help EVERYONE in Australia achieve their best possible mental health, whatever their age and wherever they live.

**REACH OUT** <https://au.reachout.com> 02 8029 7777

Australia's leading online mental health organisation for young people and their parents. It provides practical support, tools and tips to help young people get through anything from everyday issues to tough times. The information they offer parents makes it easier for them to help their teenagers. On the website, individuals can join the discussion and threads where they can share their feelings and emotions.

**MIND MATTERS** <https://www.mindmatters.edu.au> 1800 1 724 724

A mental health initiative for secondary schools that aims to improve the mental health and wellbeing of young people. MindMatters framework provides guidance and support while enabling schools to build their own mental health strategy to suit their unique circumstances.

**HEADSPACE** <https://www.headspace.org.au/> 03 9027 0100

Headspace provides early intervention mental health services to 12-25 year olds, along with assistance in promoting young people's wellbeing.

**SUICIDE CALL BACK SERVICE** <https://www.suicidecallbackservice.org.au/> 03 8371 2800

This is a nationwide service that provides 24/7 telephone, video and online professional counselling to people who are affected by suicide.

\*The above services are the most commonly sought out in Victoria; other organisations exist providing a range of services and support in promoting and reducing mental health issues.

# MENTAL HEALTH PROMOTION IN AN ORGANISATION

The majority of mental health illness in workplace settings can be prevented or treated

Organisations and employees can play an important role in maintaining workplace health and wellbeing and helping people with mental health issues.

To facilitate mental wellbeing, organisations need to:

1. Raise awareness by running a 'critical lunch' helping people identify behaviors of depression and anxiety.
2. Ask your organisation to include a Mental Health First Aid course in their professional development for staff, equipping everyone with the ability to support adults who are experiencing a mental health issue or developing a mental illness.
3. Put up posters in the organisation highlighting the services that can be accessed in order to tackle any mental health issues they don't wish to discuss and disclose to those within the organisation.
4. Don't be Shy! Start up conversations about mental health. If you notice a change in a person's behavior - don't ignore it, have a conversation. Conversations should be happening on a daily basis.
5. Discuss and identify ways to normalize 'mental health' days and encourage staff to take them to avoid burnout.
6. Include rituals that can take relief stress felt within the workplace. This can include Active Wear Fridays, 15-minute meditation each day and a work environment ban on eating lunch at your desks.

7. Mandatory training courses, and further optional courses could be on offer educating both employers and employees on the basics of mental health and ways in which self-coping could be enhanced.
8. Information, in the form of brochures, counselling services and helplines should all be publicly available and easily accessible in the workplace so that employees and employers know the necessary action to take in order to access the necessary help.
9. The workplace could incorporate activities which raise awareness of and fund mental health campaigns, such as the De Castella run or Movember.
10. Having an onsite counsellor and a collaborative approach between family, friends and colleagues of the work place can help create a profile for employees and is an efficient manner for employers to be more accepting and understanding of an employee's condition.

