



MENTAL HEALTH IN THE WORKPLACE

Increasing awareness and understanding within organisations

Participant workbook for the *beyondblue* National Workplace Program

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HOW TO USE THIS WORKBOOK

This workbook is designed to be used in conjunction with the National Workplace Program presentation, not as a standalone resource.

By attending this presentation you will:

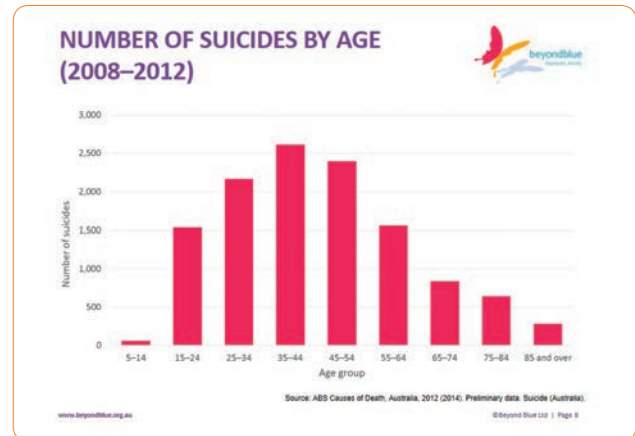
- have a greater understanding of anxiety, depression and suicide
- have a greater understanding of mentally healthy workplaces
- know what resources and helplines are available.

SECTION 1: UNDERSTANDING ANXIETY, DEPRESSION AND SUICIDE

THE PREVALENCE OF ANXIETY, DEPRESSION AND SUICIDE



NUMBER OF SUICIDES BY AGE (2008–2012)



Anxiety and depression often affect people in the prime of their working life and are the leading cause of disability in Australia. Suicide rates are double the national road toll.

Anxiety, depression and suicide not only affect the individual, there is also a flow-on effect to the person's partner, family members, carer/s and workplace. Given the high prevalence, most people will know or work with someone who has anxiety and/or depression, or has been touched by suicide, and will have seen the impact of these conditions.

FACTS ABOUT ANXIETY AND DEPRESSION

Anxiety and depression affect people in different ways and can affect many aspects of a person's daily life, including their work.

Recovery is an individual process: different people access different treatments and support to get, and stay, well. People who don't seek treatment and support can be at an increased risk of suicide.

ACTIVITY: PERSONAL EXPERIENCE VIDEO

Having watched a video of a person recounting his/her experience of anxiety and/or depression, discuss (or reflect on) the following questions.

1. Did anything surprise you?

2. What are some of the words the person used to describe their experience?

3. How do you imagine the person's working life may have been affected?

4. What was recovery like for this person?

WHAT IS ANXIETY?

Anxiety is more than just being stressed. It is excessive worry and/or irrational fears that cannot be brought under control easily, and affects a person's ability to perform and cope with everyday tasks. It may go on for weeks, months or years.

Anxiety can affect a person's ability to work effectively.

COMMON SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF ANXIETY

PHYSICAL

- Muscle pain
- Tightening of the chest
- Racing heart
- Difficulty sleeping
- Restless and on edge
- Shortness of breath

THINKING

- "I'm going crazy"
- "I can't control myself"
- "People are judging me"
- Constant worry
- Unwanted and intrusive thoughts

FEELING

- Overwhelmed
- Dread – that something bad is going to happen
- Fearful
- Constantly tense
- Panic

BEHAVIOURAL

- Avoiding situations and tasks
- Difficulty making decisions
- Poor concentration
- Relying on alcohol/drugs
- Compulsive behaviour

There are several types of anxiety. Specific information about these different conditions can be found at www.beyondblue.org.au/anxiety

WHAT IS DEPRESSION?

We all feel sad, moody or flat from time to time – these are normal human emotions. Depression is more than just a low mood – it’s a serious condition that has an impact on both physical and mental health.

Depression significantly affects how people feel, experience life and cope with day-to-day activities.

They may lose interest in work, hobbies and doing things they normally enjoy.

A person may be depressed if he or she has felt sad, down or miserable most of the time, **for more than two weeks.**

Depression can affect a person’s ability to work effectively.

COMMON SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF DEPRESSION

PHYSICAL

- Tired all the time
- Difficulty sleeping
- Significant weight loss or gain
- Sick and run down

THINKING

- “I’m a failure”
- “It’s my fault”
- “I’m worthless”
- “Life’s not worth living”

FEELING

- Unhappy
- Overwhelmed
- Unmotivated
- Irritable
- Indecisive

BEHAVIOURAL

- Unable to concentrate
- Not getting things done at work
- Withdrawing from co-workers
- Taking lots of days off
- Relying on alcohol and/or drugs

For additional information on depression, go to www.beyondblue.org.au/depression

Note: If someone is at risk of, or is experiencing, anxiety and/or depression they may show a range of signs and symptoms. You may not notice all these signs, but you may notice **changes in behaviour.**

UNDERSTANDING SUICIDE

The causes of suicide are complex and we don't fully understand the reasons for suicidal thinking or behaviour.

SUICIDE WARNING SIGNS

Some people who are at risk of suicide try to hide how they are feeling, however they often give warning signs.

Signs to look out for include:

- previous suicide attempt/s
- talking about feeling hopeless, suicidal or wanting to end their own life
- talking about being a burden to others
- saying they want to harm themselves
- agitation, anxiety and/or irritability
- erratic or uncharacteristic changes in behaviour
- oddly calm and appear to be getting their affairs in order.

PRACTICAL TIPS

When a person's mental health deteriorates, or they find themselves in an acute crisis situation, he or she may consider suicide or self-harm. It can be hard to know how to respond if you think someone is at risk of suicide, but there are things that you can do to support them.

- Ask the person if they are thinking of suicide. Asking the question does not increase the person's risk, but may enable you to assist them to access supports.
- If an employee is in crisis and you think immediate action is needed, **call emergency services (000), a mental health crisis service, their doctor or a support person.**
- Do not leave the person alone, unless you are concerned for your own safety.
- You may not always be aware that someone is at risk. Be proactive, and regularly check in with staff about how they are going.

For additional information about suicide prevention, visit www.beyondblue.org.au/the-facts/suicide

Resources and helplines are listed at the back of this workbook.

RISK AND PROTECTIVE FACTORS

There are a number of factors influencing the likelihood of a person developing anxiety and/or depression. Some of these factors increase people's risk, while other factors are protective. Generally, anxiety and depression are not a result of a single event, but of a combination of risk factors.

ACTIVITY: RISK AND PROTECTIVE FACTORS

Brainstorm a list of risk and protective factors.

Risk factors

Protective factors

LOOKING AFTER YOURSELF

Early intervention leads to better outcomes.

For most people, recovery will include a combination of treatment options.

If you are concerned about yourself, a colleague, friend or family member, it is strongly recommended that you seek assistance. Speak to your GP, and if appropriate request a Medicare mental health plan. You could also call a helpline (e.g. the *beyondblue* Support Service) for information and advice.

For additional information about looking after yourself, visit www.beyondblue.org.au/other-sources-of-support

beyondblue has free information booklets, *A guide to what works for depression*, and *A guide to what works for anxiety*, which can be downloaded or ordered from www.beyondblue.org.au/resources or by calling 1300 22 4636.

SECTION 2: MENTALLY HEALTHY WORKPLACES

Mentally healthy workplaces are workplaces where:

- there is a positive workplace culture
- all people speak openly about mental health and feel supported
- risks to mental health are actively managed.

Everyone has a role in creating a mentally healthy workplace – it is a shared responsibility.

ACTIVITY: MENTALLY HEALTHY WORKPLACES

Having watched a video of a person recounting his/her experience of anxiety and/or depression, discuss (or reflect on) the following questions.

What does a mentally healthy workplace look like and what are the benefits?

What actions can you take in the workplace?

For additional information on mentally healthy workplaces, go to www.headsup.org.au/creating-a-mentally-healthy-workplace

SECTION 3: RESOURCES AND HELPLINES

RESOURCES

Heads Up

www.headsup.org.au

headsup@beyondblue.org.au

- Heads Up is an initiative developed by *beyondblue* in collaboration with the Mentally Healthy Workplace Alliance.
- Heads Up aims to highlight the benefits of creating mentally healthy workplaces and assist individuals and organisations to take action.
- The Heads Up website provides a 'one stop shop' for free, simple and practical information and resources to assist workplaces to manage a broad range of mental health issues, including how to create a mentally healthy workplace.
- Heads Up has been designed for individuals at all levels within a workplace, and for organisations of all sizes and across all industries.

Heads Up resources include the following:

- Taking care of yourself at work
- Supporting others in the workplace
- Personal stories – watch people talk about their experiences in the workplace

HELPLINES

SUICIDE PREVENTION HELPLINES

Lifeline

13 11 14

www.lifeline.org.au

Lifeline provides crisis support and suicide prevention services nationwide and is accessible 24 hours, 7 days a week.

Suicide Call Back Service

1300 659 467

www.suicidecallbackservice.org.au

The Suicide Call Back Service provides free nationwide professional phone and online counselling for anyone affected by suicide.

Emergency (Ambulance, Fire, Police)
000

Your local Crisis Assessment and Treatment (CAT) team

GENERAL HELPLINES

beyondblue Support Service

www.beyondblue.org.au

1300 22 4636

Learn more about anxiety, depression and suicide prevention or talk it through with the Support Service. The *beyondblue* Support Service also provides free confidential online support, via online chat or email.

MensLine Australia

1300 78 99 78

www.mensline.org.au

MensLine Australia provides a free and confidential service dedicated to supporting men with family and relationship issues.

Gambling Help Online

www.gamblinghelponline.org.au

Gambling Help Online provides free, confidential online support, self-help tools and information for identifying and dealing with problem gambling, Australia wide.

headspace

1800 650 890

www.headspace.org.au

headspace provides a free online and telephone service that supports young people aged between 12 and 25 and their families.

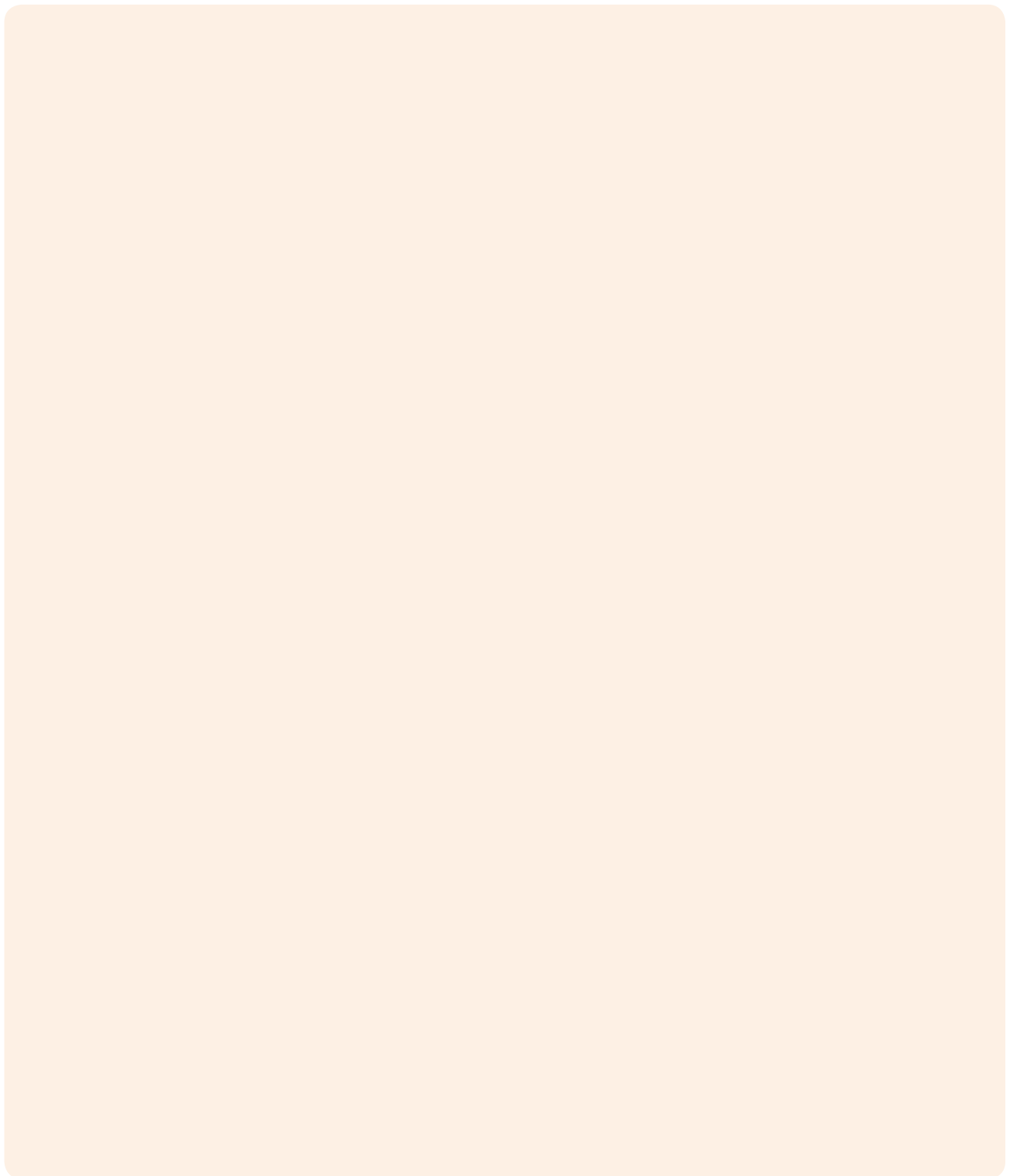
Kids Helpline

1800 55 1800

www.kidshelp.com.au

Kids Helpline provides a free and confidential telephone and online counselling service specifically for people between 5 and 25.

NOTES





Where to find more information

Heads Up

www.headsup.org.au

Heads Up is all about supporting Australian businesses to create more mentally healthy workplaces. Access a wide range of resources, information and advice for all business leaders/management, and create a tailored action plan for your business.

beyondblue

www.beyondblue.org.au

Learn more about anxiety, depression and suicide prevention, or talk through your concerns with our Support Service. Our trained mental health professionals will listen, provide information and advice, and point you in the right direction so you can seek further support.

☎ 1300 22 4636

✉ Email or 💬 chat to us online at www.beyondblue.org.au/getsupport

mindhealthconnect

www.mindhealthconnect.org.au

Access to trusted, relevant mental health care services, online programs and resources.



facebook.com/beyondblue



[@beyondblue](https://twitter.com/beyondblue)



[@beyondblueofficial](https://www.instagram.com/beyondblueofficial)



[heads-up-australia](https://www.linkedin.com/company/heads-up-australia)

Donate online www.beyondblue.org.au/donations