How to create a mentally health workplace?

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Leader, Workplace and Workplace Program
Leadership

Performance

Innovation

Workforce

Strategic Direction

Wellbeing

Growth

Organisational Values

Workplace Culture
# Session overview

1. **What is a mentally healthy workplace?**

2. **What actions can you take?**

3. **What resources are available to help you?**
A mentally healthy workplace “promotes and protects their employees’ mental health and can have a positive impact on productivity, creativity, staff retention and being perceived as an employer of choice.”
The relationship between mental health and the workplace

Individual

Workplace
Benefits of a mentally healthy workplace

• Reducing financial costs
• Reducing risk
• Meeting legislative requirements
• Improving employee engagement
• Meeting your corporate social responsibilities
Critical success factors

- Commitment from senior leaders
- An internal champion
- Employee participation
- A sustainable approach
- Planning and evaluation
- Supporting policies and procedures
Session overview

1. What is a mentally healthy workplace?

2. What actions can you take?

3. What resources are available to help you?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Good Practice Framework</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Develop &amp; implement policies</td>
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<tr>
<td>Improve workplace culture &amp; job design</td>
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<tr>
<td>Build organisational and individual resilience</td>
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<tr>
<td>Raise awareness &amp; reduce stigma</td>
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<tr>
<td>Support people experiencing mental health problems</td>
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<tr>
<td>Facilitate access to psychological support services</td>
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Approaches to mental health in the workplace

Prevention

Mental Health

Raise awareness & reduce stigma

Support people as required
<table>
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Risk and protective factors

- Chronic illness
- Isolation
- Traumatic life events

Risk factors

- Genetics

Protective factors

- Social connection
- Diet and physical activity
- Healthy work environment
Risk and protective factors in the workplace

Risk factors

Protective factors
Risk factors in the workplace

Job stress:
• High job demands
• Low job control
• Low social support at work

Linked to a 2 to 3 fold increase in depression and anxiety disorders

Psychosocial working conditions that contribute to job stress

- Work overload or pressure
- Lack of control and participation in decision making
- Unclear work role
- Job insecurity
- Long working hours
- Bullying
- Poor communication
- Inadequate resources

Protective factors in the workplace

- Strong leadership
- Strong team morale
- Employee consultation and involvement in decision making
- Collaborative peer working relationships
- Effective training
- Effective mental health policies and programs
Prevention strategies

• Is our culture a collaborative one in relation to assisting staff overcome difficulties?
• Do we have strong leadership in regards to mental health in the workplace?
• Are we aware of the mental health risks particular to our workplace?
• Do we have a plan to minimize workplace mental health risks?
• Is everyone in the workplace aware of relevant legislative requirements?
## Awareness

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Raise awareness about mental health problems</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Know the signs and symptoms</td>
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<td>Be aware of and reduce stigma</td>
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Depression and anxiety disorders

- Are diagnosable clinical illnesses
- Are different for different people
- Are different from feeling stressed
- Often occur together, or with substance use disorder
- Effective treatments are available
What is depression?

- Feeling sad, down or miserable/lack of interest or pleasure
- Lasts for more than two weeks
- Symptoms across the following areas:
### Common signs of depression

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Physical</th>
<th>Feeling</th>
<th>Thinking</th>
<th>Behavioural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Disturbed sleep</td>
<td>• Overwhelmed</td>
<td>• Negative thinking patterns</td>
<td>• Poor concentration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Appetite changes</td>
<td>• Indecisive</td>
<td>• Hopeless, helpless and worthless</td>
<td>• Reduced Productivity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Sick and run down</td>
<td>• Lacking confidence</td>
<td>• Worthless</td>
<td>• Alcohol and other drug use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Fatigue</td>
<td>• Irritable</td>
<td>• Suicidal thoughts</td>
<td>• Social withdrawal</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What are anxiety disorders?

• There are a range of different disorders with different signs and symptoms
  – Generalised Anxiety Disorder (GAD)
  – Specific Phobias
  – Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD)
  – Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)
  – Panic disorder
  – Social phobia
## Common signs of anxiety disorders

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<th>Physical</th>
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<tr>
<td>Muscle pain</td>
<td>Overwhelmed</td>
<td>Constant worrying</td>
<td>Avoidance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficulty sleeping</td>
<td>Fearful</td>
<td>Recurring / obsessive thoughts</td>
<td>Poor concentration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restless and on edge</td>
<td>Sudden, intense panic</td>
<td></td>
<td>Alcohol and other drug use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweating</td>
<td>Irritable</td>
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- Physical symptoms: Muscle pain, Difficulty sleeping, Restless and on edge, Sweating
- Feeling: Overwhelmed, Fearful, Sudden, intense panic, Irritable
- Thinking: Constant worrying, Recurring / obsessive thoughts
- Behavioural: Avoidance, Poor concentration, Alcohol and other drug use
Raising awareness

- Are all staff educated in relation to mental health?
- Do our policies include mental health?
- Are the policies clear, easy to understand and accessible?
- Do the relevant staff know how to implement the policies?
- Is mental health included in our health promotion initiatives?
Support people with mental health problems

| Have conversations when you’re concerned about someone |
| Make reasonable adjustments |
| Support access to psychological support |
**beyondblue principles when approaching someone you’re concerned about**

<table>
<thead>
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<th>GUIDE</th>
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<tr>
<td>Get ready</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understand the situation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Initiate a conversation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Try different approaches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluate and reflect</td>
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Recovery from depression and anxiety disorders…

- Is different for different people
- Is assisted by treatment
- Can be an up and down process
- Often involves an ongoing wellbeing plan
Effective management strategies – for the individual

- Talk to others – be collaborative
- Develop a work plan
- Make reasonable adjustments
- Ask them what to tell others in the team
- Manage absence if required
Effective management strategies – for the organisation/team

• Manage workloads
• Communicate appropriate information
• Consider the personal impact
• Manage stigma or misconceptions
Supporting people with mental health problems?

- Do senior staff know how to role model regarding early intervention for mental health problems?
- Are our managers/staff trained in early intervention strategies?
- What support mechanisms are in place for managers managing staff with mental health conditions?
- What external support is available to staff (e.g. EAP)
- Do we have policies in place regarding return to work and reasonable adjustments?
Session overview

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How can *beyondblue* assist you?

- National Workplace Program
- *beyondblue* websites
  - [www.beyondblue.org.au](http://www.beyondblue.org.au)/workplace
  - [www.beyondblue.com](http://www.beyondblue.com)/workplaceonline
- Range of free resources
- Support service 1300 22 4636
Where else to go for help?

- Mentally healthy workplace alliance
- SANE Australia
- Mental Health First Aid
- People at work
- Employee assistance providers
- Australian Workplace Barometer
In summary

- Mentally healthy workplace has many benefits
- Work can impact on mental health
- Actions you take can make a difference
- Recovery and work go hand-in-hand
- Everyone has a role to play
Thank you.