

Blueprint for Mentally Healthy Workplaces

Release 2, July 2022



Australian Government
National Mental Health Commission

About this Blueprint

The Blueprint for Mentally Healthy Workplaces has been produced as part of the National Workplace Initiative. The National Workplace Initiative is an \$11.5 million investment by the Commonwealth Government in creating a nationally consistent approach to mentally healthy workplaces in Australia.

The National Workplace Initiative is a collaborative project of the Mentally Healthy Workplace Alliance, a group of national organisations representing business, union, mental health, workplace health and government sectors. The contract for the project is held and managed by the National Mental Health Commission, which is also a member of the Mentally Healthy Workplace Alliance.

The Blueprint for Mentally Healthy Workplaces outlines the core pillars and principles underpinning a nationally consistent approach to mentally healthy workplaces. It also outlines key focus areas within the digital portal that the National Workplace Initiative is creating to connect people with the information and support they need to make workplaces mentally healthy. The Blueprint for Mentally Healthy Workplaces aims to help align the work of business, unions, government, workplace health and mental health organisations within these core pillars and principles.

Note on language:

We acknowledge that there is a wide variation in what work looks like for people across Australia. There is also a wide variation in the language people use to define their experience of mental health. We recognise that language related to mentally healthy workplaces is always evolving. Throughout this document we use the term leadership when referring to the act of leading or championing change. We note anyone in an organisation can be a leader in this sense. Where we are referring to formal leadership positions, we use specific terms such as top management. Please refer to the Glossary at the end of this document for more information about the terms we use in this Blueprint.

Release 2

This second release of the Blueprint incorporates a range of feedback we received from individuals and organisations in the business, unions, government, workplace health and mental health sectors. We thank everyone who provided their input.

What has changed

Many things in the Blueprint have remained the same, including the key pillars and principles.

Minor revisions aim to:

- Make legislated requirements clearer.
- Provide more detail about the three pillars.
- Clarify language around concepts such as leadership.
- Highlight the importance of consulting with workers and people with lived experience of mental ill-health and suicide in creating a mentally healthy workplace.

This revision does not include detailed how-to information about creating a mentally healthy workplace. This is because the required steps may be different for each workplace. A range of practical how-to information will be available in the digital platform planned for release in late 2022.

These revisions reflect our commitment for the Blueprint to remain a living document that continually adapts to reflect feedback, reforms and current issues. We welcome your feedback and suggestions to be considered for Release 3 of the Blueprint.

To sign up for updates about the National Workplace Initiative, future versions of the Blueprint for Mentally Healthy Workplaces and news about the forthcoming digital portal, visit: www.mentalhealthcommission.gov.au/mental-health-reform/national-workplace-initiative

Introduction

All of us experience ups and downs throughout our working lives, whether they are financial stress, difficulties with colleagues at work, excessive job demands, the death of a loved one, or other big life or work events. These are the experiences that people bring to work every day that organisations and businesses cannot afford to ignore. Mental illness is also common, with one in two Australians expected to experience a mental illness in their lifetime.

Workplaces can be a source of comfort, helping people through life's challenges. We can connect with others and find a listening ear. Workplaces can also provide a safe place to talk, or encouragement to seek professional support. Importantly, work can promote mental health by providing things like financial security, social connection, structure and opportunities for personal growth and development. It can also provide us with a sense of purpose and meaning. Workplaces can be mentally healthy when they create environments, cultures and practices that protect and promote mental health. A mentally healthy workplace can help people manage periods of stress from life outside work too.

However, workplaces can also negatively impact our mental health. Experiences like bullying, harassment, unreasonable demands and micromanagement can harm mental health, confidence and careers. We can also be negatively impacted by outdated leadership practices, poorly handled change, poor work design, as well as outdated organisational policies, technology or management processes.



Mentally healthy workplaces are good for business

Organisations are powered by people. These are the people who make critical decisions, produce and deliver essential products and services, and interact with customers and the public on behalf of organisations and businesses.

To function at their best, people need healthy environments, cultures and practices to protect them from potential hazards, support recovery, and provide opportunities to develop professionally and personally.

Investment in mentally healthy workplaces provides returns to organisations, including increased engagement, loyalty, productivity and attendance at work. It can also reduce injuries and the costs associated with sick leave, compensation claims and time away from work. Mentally healthy workplace initiatives can help organisations attract and retain talented and skilled people. They can also support people living with mental ill-health to stay at, or return to, work.

Aside from the benefits that mentally healthy workplaces may create, it is important that top management (e.g. executives, senior managers, business owners) understand that they have a range of legislated requirements related to mental health at work. Understanding and meeting requirements related to work health and safety, workers' compensation, discrimination, privacy and workplace relations is essential for protecting people, reputations and organisations.

Creating a mentally healthy workplace is important for organisational sustainability and social responsibility. The performance of an organisation and the wellbeing of its people are mutually dependent. The benefits of investments in creating a mentally healthy workplace extend beyond workplaces into benefits for families, communities and economies.

Making complexity simple by focusing on key pillars and principles

People may become interested in making their organisation, business or workplace mentally healthy for many reasons. In researching how the National Workplace Initiative can help, we heard that it is common for people to feel confused about where to start.



Human resources and safety professionals

“ Do we have the right policies and programs?

“ Is our approach best-practice?

When first considering your approach, you may feel uncertain about where to start or overwhelmed by information and advice. It may also require people to work together in new ways or learn new skills. Like most changes, this can feel challenging.

Like many strategic approaches, your plan and actions may evolve over time. Focusing on areas such as key pillars and principles, legislated requirements and consulting regularly with workers can help shape your path forward.



Industry bodies

“ How do we address mental health impacts in our industry?



National Workplace Initiative



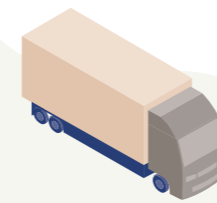
Small business

“ How do we support our people going through a rough patch?



CEO and top management

“ How are we performing relative to others? Are we compliant?



Sole trader

“ How do I manage stress from work?



Foundations of mentally healthy workplaces

Creating mentally healthy workplaces hinges on ongoing commitment and action to strengthen the Protect, Respond and Promote pillars across any organisation.

These pillars intersect, with action in one area often leading to improvements in others.



Protect

Identify and manage work-related risks to mental health.



Respond

Identify and respond to support people experiencing mental ill-health or distress.



Promote

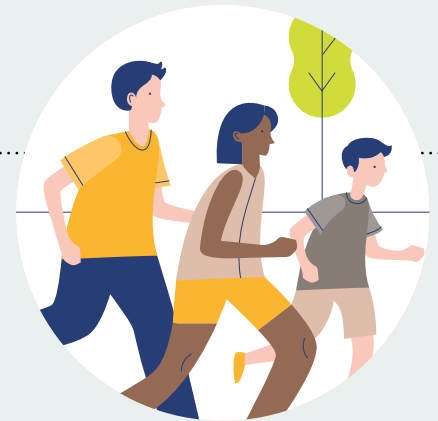
Recognise and enhance the positive aspects of work that contribute to good mental health.



It's the law: Organisations and businesses have legal obligations related to Protect and Respond pillars making these a good place to focus on first. Once your approach is underway, there are benefits to extending your focus beyond compliance and minimum requirements to explore the opportunities a mentally healthy workplace provides.

Continually improving your approach

Differences in risk profiles, demographics or context means the journey towards a mentally healthy workplace may look slightly different for each individual organisation or business.



On the journey to creating mentally healthy workplaces, people can expect to progress through stages including:

- Setting up for success by understanding how to achieve change, whether as an individual, a team or an organisation of thousands.
- Understanding how to measure and monitor mentally healthy workplaces to track change.
- Creating foundations for mentally healthy workplaces by building capability across the three pillars of Protect, Respond and Promote.
- Identifying how to refine existing approaches to support different groups, career stages and types of work.
- Demonstrating leadership by extending approaches into supply chains and communities.

Hearing from people with lived experience

People who have a lived experience of mental ill health or suicide have unique perspectives that can inform your approach to creating a mentally healthy workplace. Similar to how workers can provide important perspectives on what they think will work, people with a lived experience can share insights such as what they have found most or least helpful. As this experience can be very personal, it is important to listen to these experiences with sensitivity and respect.

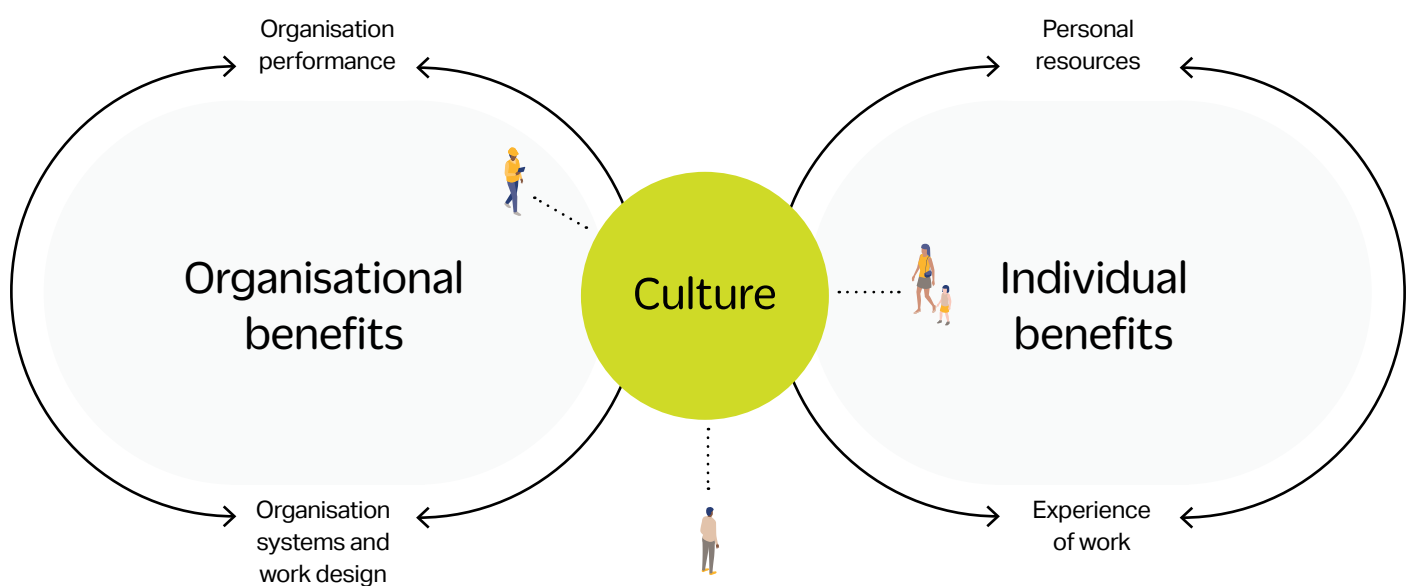
Recognising diversity in your approach

Cultural safety is important for a mentally healthy workplace. Racism, discrimination or bias impacts mental health at work.

Understanding diversity within your workplace and what this means for different communities can help refine your approach.

Continually improving your approach

Creating a mentally healthy workplace can take time. Small steps can make it feel more manageable. Other times a bold strategic shift or investment may be required.



Like physical health and safety at work or diversity and inclusion initiatives, creating mentally healthy workplaces evolves over time. It takes continual improvement, assessing where action is required and learning from what works and what needs improvement.

Everyone has a role to play in supporting positive change across the three pillars and helping to create a mentally healthy workplace.

While [legal obligations](#) will need to inform your approach, there is a lot of scope to tailor and refine your approach. In addition, different roles and professionals offer different perspectives to mentally healthy workplaces.

Achieving a nationally consistent approach to mentally healthy workplaces requires action from industries, policy makers, researchers and service providers supporting organisations and businesses. These larger-scale initiatives can provide tailored supports, focus on key industry needs and provide expert advice.

Many industries are already taking steps to support mentally healthy workplaces. This Blueprint can act as a common foundation that can be adapted and tailored to suit the needs and contexts of a range of work environments and industries. It can create a common language that links different frameworks in different contexts.

Protect

Organisations and businesses have legal obligations related to work health and safety that include psychological health.

These obligations include taking reasonably practicable steps to identify and manage “psychosocial hazards”, which are aspects of work that can lead to psychological or physical harm. These can stem from how work is designed and managed, the work environment and equipment, interactions with others or the types of tasks required.

There will always be things that impact mental health that are outside the control of a workplace, such as pressures within supply chains or client demands. Protecting mental health at work is about taking reasonable steps to identify and mitigate potential harms. Creating a mentally healthy workplace can help people manage periods of stress from life outside work too.

There are several reforms underway that may influence how your organisation or business is expected to manage psychological health and safety. Check with your regulator or Safe Work Australia for the latest obligations or guidance.

Aspects of Protect can include:

- Compliance with legal obligations related to work health and safety, workers’ compensation, workplace relations, privacy and discrimination.
- Ensuring workers have ways to raise concerns at work without negative consequence, and feel safe to do so.
- Preventative Psychosocial hazard identification and management.
- Work design.
- Consultation and communication with workers and their representatives.
- Planning and processes for how to manage periods of increased demands or pressure (e.g. COVID-19 responses).
- Proactive and systematic approaches to address bullying, harassment and discrimination.
- Effective training and supervision across the organisation, including for supervisors and managers.



For more information on psychosocial hazards, visit Safe Work Australia:
<https://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/psychosocial-hazards>

Respond

It is common for people to experience periods where they need additional support or flexibility because of life circumstances, caring responsibilities or mental ill-health. Organisations can support people by building capability to respond and support people experiencing mental ill-health or distress.

Responding appropriately to mental ill-health in the workplace is also linked to legislated duties ranging from workers compensation, discrimination, privacy and workplace relations.

Creating an environment that reduces stigma, makes it safe to talk, supports early intervention and ensures people are able to recognise, respond and refer will lead to a win-win situation for individuals, organisations, businesses and communities.

Aspects of Respond can include:

- Compliance with legal obligations related to work health and safety, workers' compensation, workplace relations, privacy and discrimination.
- Recognising and responding to signs of mental ill-health and distress.
- Educating people about how to talk about mental health in a compassionate and supportive way.
- Strategies to address stigma within organisations.
- Reasonable adjustments to support people experiencing mental ill-health.
- Promoting help seeking and pathways to treatment.
- Research-supported early intervention initiatives.
- Return to work and stay at work initiatives.
- Tailored approaches to ensure people get the right support for them.



Promote

Bringing out the positive elements of work can enhance mental health. Strong workplace relationships, feeling work has purpose, and creating opportunities for personal and professional development are good for mental health. By building on the aspects of work that help people thrive, organisations and businesses can function at their best too.

Finding ways your workplace can support good mental health can help build organisational and individual resilience. These approaches are a valuable addition when used alongside strategies from the other pillars.

Activities, structures and supports that enable people to reach their potential can also contribute to employee engagement and commitment to the organisation. They can help people do their best work and bring their best ideas to life.

Aspects of Promote can include:

- Opportunities for personal and professional development.
- Meaningful connections at work.
- Recognising and rewarding positive behaviours.
- Opportunities for people to shape their work such as through job crafting.
- Recognition and celebration of diversity and inclusion.
- Connecting to meaning and purpose.
- Holistic wellbeing programs that cover both physical and mental health.
- Using strengths-based approaches where relevant.
- Engaging workers in co-designing approaches to create ways of working that help them reach their potential.
- Work design to support professional growth.



Protect

Identify and manage work-related risks to mental health.



Promote


Recognise and enhance the positive aspects of work that contribute to good mental health.



Respond

Identify and respond to support people experiencing mental ill-health or distress.



 These pillars overlap, with action in one of these areas often leading to improvements in others.

Core principles for change

From factories and farms to offices and online businesses, there is huge diversity in where and how work occurs in Australia. However, there are some core principles for change that set initiatives up for success. Thinking about “how” change can happen in an organisation or business can be just as important as thinking about “what” change to make. Organisations can find that getting started can be the hardest step, if people feel they are changing how they do things or breaking new ground.



1. Consult and listen: In addition to being part of [legal obligations](#), consulting with a range of workers provides valuable insights about what people need, what could improve, their solutions and where initiatives may come unstuck. Organisations should create environments where workers feel supported to raise workplace mental health issues and are protected against adverse consequences or retaliation when concerns are raised. Listening to workers makes initiatives more likely to succeed and can help design enhanced systems and job roles. Approaches such as audits, surveys, and observation can help determine risks and opportunities.



2. Engage decision makers early: Whether it is a team of two or an organisation governed by a board, engaging decision makers from the beginning is essential for successful change. Decision makers set the tone, culture, budgets and strategic directions of organisations. They also bear most of the accountability for legislated requirements.



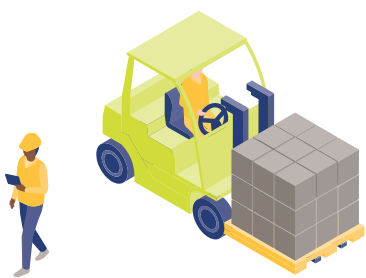
3. Link action to outcomes: There are many valid reasons organisations may choose to invest in mentally healthy workplaces from compliance through to social benefit. Being clear on the “why” will help maintain motivation and enthusiasm.



4. Assign accountability: Shared responsibility for mental health is important, but so is individual accountability for action. Assigning clear, tangible, realistic and measurable accountabilities for specific activities will make it less likely things fall through the cracks or get put on the backburner.

The core principles of our change process

Some of these principles are more relevant for medium to large organisations, others more relevant to sole traders and small businesses, but they are all worth considering in any approach.



5. Integrate into business as usual: Activities that are built into strategic plans, governance, existing workflows, policies, procedures, and practices are much easier to maintain than standalone initiatives. Building things into existing practices, like work health and safety assessments, professional development and wellbeing initiatives, can make changes more likely to stick.



6. Make change visible and transparent: People can become easily frustrated and cynical if they feel talk is not backed up by action. Bringing people on the change journey and clearly communicating outcomes and updates can improve results. Talk openly about mental health and aspects of work that can help or hinder it. Make sure people feel involved in decisions and efforts are visible and accessible.



7. Base decisions on research-supported approaches: Drawing on expert sources and focusing on initiatives with research support will help protect both people and investments. Initiatives that do not work can waste time, money, hope, trust and goodwill.



8. Continually review and improve: Rather than trying to do everything at once, adopt an incremental approach that starts small, reviews where action is required, identifies what is working and responds to what needs improving. Regularly review outcomes, both hits and misses, and respond accordingly.

What we are working towards

Creating mentally healthy workplaces is more than simply providing supports for people in distress. Although awareness and supports for mental ill-health are important, they are not the entire picture. Mentally healthy workplaces also reflect environments, cultures and practices that protect and promote mental health. They involve making decisions and taking action that proactively shapes how individuals experience work.

Many organisations are aware of the importance of finding ways to support and enhance mental health at work. However, there is an overwhelming amount of advice to consider and messages can seem to conflict.

For example, a larger organisation may see more value in focusing on systems and processes while a small business may focus more on relationships.

Some of this confusion comes from differences due to organisation size. As mentally healthy workplaces are linked to how things operate and how decisions are made, the size of organisations may influence what mentally healthy workplaces look like.



What we are working towards

Mentally healthy workplaces can feel:



Mentally unhealthy workplaces can feel:



Mentally healthy workplaces



What do mentally healthy workplaces look like for a sole trader?

Sole traders recognise the importance of looking after their own mental health as an essential investment in the quality of their work. They set healthy boundaries that allow time to connect and recharge.

They recognise that good business practices are also good for mental health, with effective and compliant processes reducing some of the stress that can come with running a business. They reach out for help when required, whether it is with finances, administration, strategy or mental health.

When working with other people, sole traders feel equipped to support others. They recognise that organisations and businesses subcontracting work to sole traders have a duty to identify and manage work-related risks to mental health.

Sole traders also recognise the impact that their work has on others and understand their role in protecting, responding and promoting mental health in people around them. They understand the value of a strong professional and personal network for providing support in tough times.



What do mentally healthy workplaces look like for small businesses?

Small business owners model the importance of looking after mental health as an essential investment in business health. They balance the pressures of running a small business with time away to connect and recharge, and encourage their people to do the same.

Small business owners recognise that addressing psychological hazards at work is as important as addressing physical hazards and do what they can to support people in their roles. Effective planning and management of rosters, workloads, equipment and technology all contribute to supporting mental health. They recognise that good business practices are also good for mental health, with effective and compliant processes reducing some of the stress that can come with running a business.

Small business owners support their people through the peaks and dips of being in a small business by keeping communication open, listening to concerns and finding ways to support their valued teams. These initiatives may be informal, but they make people feel heard and valued.

Small business owners ensure their people have the autonomy, resources, skills and support they need to perform their roles. Workers are clear about what is expected of them, they feel confident raising issues, and feel connected to the team and valued for their contributions. People feel they can be themselves at work, no matter who they are.



What do mentally healthy workplaces look like for medium to large organisations?

Top management teams, such as executives and senior managers, make a commitment to mental health that is visible across all policies, processes and practices. They create a safe and inclusive environment from the top, starting with what they say and do. Top management proactively invest in a strategic approach that integrates best practice into operations, safety and human resources, beyond legislated requirements. Top management prioritise good work design that considers the work, the organisation's systems, the physical work environment, and the needs and experiences of workers. Top management design their systems, technologies, and work practices to ensure work responsibilities can be carried out in a mentally healthy way. They consider people's mental and physical health alongside meeting productivity targets.

Managers are trained and capable, with people management recognised as a critical skill requiring ongoing development. Managers are recognised as the people who shape the day-to-day experience of work for many, and are empowered and accountable for this essential role. They recognise that mental health fluctuates and people may occasionally require additional support or time to recover. Managers feel equipped and supported to respond appropriately and balance support for individuals with organisational needs. They genuinely engage and consult with workers.

Individuals and teams have the resources, skills, autonomy, reasonable workloads, technology and support they need to perform their roles. People are clear about what is expected of them. Communication and consultation with workers is open and respectful, and people feel connected and valued at work. Schedules, equipment and technology support mental health rather than creating stress. Time away from work is encouraged to enable people to refresh, recharge and enjoy life.

All people feel clear about their role in creating a mentally healthy workplace. This includes roles such as Health and Safety Representatives, human resources, work health and safety, wellbeing and other operational staff. There are clear ways of working together on shared challenges or processes that involve many areas of the organisation.

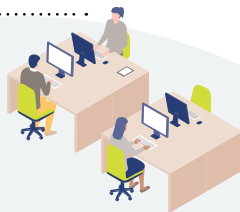
Interactions with customers, suppliers and contractors reflect the same commitment to protecting mental health. People feel they can be themselves at work, no matter who they are.

Acknowledging challenges to mentally healthy workplaces

Workplaces are influenced by national and international events, policies, attitudes and trends that can create challenges to achieving mentally healthy workplaces.

Here are some of the challenges we have heard workplaces and workers are facing. They offer opportunities for innovation and strategic reform.

Intersections between different legislation and variations across jurisdictions creates complexity.



Volatility and change created by geopolitical and natural events.



Changing demands on managers and professional staff that need to be reflected in tertiary and vocational training programs.

Managing psychological health and safety in remote workforces.



Impacts of insecure and temporary work such as casual and gig work on mental health.



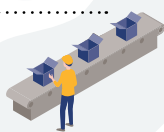
Ensuring people can disconnect from work outside work hours.



Increasing workforce participation of people living with mental illness.



Issues across supply chains



Navigating significant shifts towards hybrid working arrangements.



Rising cost of workers compensation claims related to mental injuries at work.

The COVID-19 pandemic has been a significant challenge to many workplaces. Similarly, natural disasters and extreme weather events can also place pressure on workplaces and workers. Recovery from these events can take time and extend beyond the immediate responses and reactions.

Action at all levels

There are a range of areas that influence mentally healthy workplaces, from those within workplaces to those created by national policies, laws and social attitudes. A continual improvement approach is just as relevant for Government as it is for workplaces in creating mentally healthy workplaces.



The digital platform for mentally healthy workplaces

Coming in late 2022

A digital platform is being created as part of the National Workplace Initiative to connect people with the information and support they need to make mentally healthy workplaces. The digital platform will provide access to practical guidance and 'how to' information which will assist organisations in implementing the principles outlined in the Blueprint.



As well as guiding users through the necessary actions in each of the three pillars, the digital platform will also provide:

- * Answers to common questions about mentally healthy workplaces.
- * Guidance to help measure and track the impact of initiatives.
- * The latest news and research on mentally healthy workplaces.
- * Case studies from other organisations and businesses.
- * A community of other champions of mentally healthy workplaces.

Our approach

To ensure the National Workplace Initiative and its digital platform support lasting change, we are following some key guidelines:

Amplify not duplicate:

We will build on existing research and resources and integrate with existing initiatives to amplify great work. We will connect people with information and ideas rather than re-inventing the wheel.

Co-design and consultation:

Just as it is important to consult with workers, we will work with a range of people, including people with lived experience, to understand what they need, where they see gaps and how they experience what we create. It means sometimes things in the digital platform shift and evolve over time, always with the intent to make them better.

Create true value:

The digital platform will make it easier to take action and solve challenges related to mentally healthy workplaces. We will take the guesswork out of what to trust and where to start. Through this, we will create something that organisations and businesses value, and contributes to long-term change.

Communicate purposefully:

The digital platform will cut through complexity to bring clarity and consistency in how people communicate about mentally healthy workplaces. We aim to reduce stigma through the language we use and celebrate strengths and diversity.

Make research-supported decisions:

As a Government-backed initiative, there will be rigour in the content we include. We will draw on a range of sources to ground our content and design. These include research studies, consultation, user testing and monitoring outcomes from our work. We will also help people to collect and use data to make decisions and drive change.

Design for the long-term:

Change takes time and consistent effort. We will work alongside organisations over time create sustainable and lasting change. We will break down their journey into simple, achievable steps that people can work through at a pace that suits them.

Mental health supports for individuals

If you or someone you know needs support, here are some support services you can reach out to now. In an emergency, please call 000.

Organisation	Contact	Description
Head to Health	w headtohealth.gov.au	Provided by the Department of Health to search free or low cost digital supports for mental health.
Beyond Blue	t 1300 22 4636 w beyondblue.org.au	24/7 support for mental health and wellbeing via phone, web chat and online forum.
Lifeline Australia	t 13 11 14 w lifeline.org.au	24/7 crisis support and suicide prevention services.
Suicide Call Back Service	t 1300 659 467 w suicidecallbackservice.org.au	24/7 telephone crisis support for people at risk of suicide, carers and bereaved, as well as online resources and information.
MensLine Australia	t 1300 78 99 78 w mensline.org.au/ phone-and-online-counselling	24/7 telephone and online support, information and referral service for men
Kids Helpline	t 1800 55 1800 w kidshelpline.com.au	24/7 telephone counselling for young people under 25 years.
headspace Australia	t 1800 650 890 w headspace.org.au	Telephone and web chat for young people aged 12 to 25 years.
QLife	t 1800 184 527 w qlife.org.au	Telephone and online chat support service for lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, and/or intersex (LGBTI) communities.

Mental health supports for individuals

If you or someone you know needs support, here are some support services you can reach out to now. In an emergency, please call 000.

Organisation	Contact	Description
Relationships Australia	t 1300 364 277 w relationships.org.au	Relationships Australia offers a broad range of services to individuals, families and communities throughout the country.
Butterfly Foundation	t 1800 334 673 w butterfly.org.au	Support for people affected by eating disorders via telephone, web chat or email.
Carers Australia	t 1800 422 737 w carersaustralia.com.au	Carer gateway of practical advice and connection with local carer services.
SANE	t 1800 187 263 w sane.org	Resources, forums and support for people affected by complex mental health issues.
National Debt Helpline	t 1800 007 007 w ndh.org.au	Financial counselling advice for financial hardship.
Counselling Online	w counsellingonline.org.au	24/7 support for anyone affected by alcohol and other drugs.
Gambling Help Online	t 1800 858 858 w gamblinghelponline.org.au	24/7 support for anyone affected by gambling.
Wellmob	w wellmob.org.au	Social, emotional and cultural wellbeing online resources for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People.

Supports for organisations and businesses

Organisation	Contact	Description
Fair Work Ombudsman	w fairwork.gov.au	Information about workplace rights and obligations.
Australian Human Rights Commission	w humanrights.gov.au	An independent third party which investigates complaints about discrimination and human rights breaches.
Safe Work Australia	w safeworkaustralia.gov.au	An Australian Government statutory agency established to improve work health and safety and workers' compensation arrangements across Australia.
Office of Australian Information Commissioner	w oaic.gov.au	The independent national regulator for privacy and freedom of information.
Ahead for Business	w aheadforbusiness.org.au	Supporting small business to be mentally healthy. Funded by The Australian Treasury, the Ahead for Business digital hub has been developed with and for small business.
My Business Health	w asbfeo.gov.au/my-business-health/home	A free portal provided by the Australian Small Business and Family Enterprise Ombudsman.

Mental health: A positive concept and more than just the absence of illness. In this Blueprint, the term mental health is used to refer to a state of wellbeing where a person can realise their own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully and is able to contribute to their community.

Mental ill-health: A term that encompasses both mental illness and changes in emotion or behaviour that can impact a person's cognitive, emotional or social abilities but not to the extent that it meets the criteria for a mental illness diagnosis. These changes can result from life stressors and often resolve with time or when the individual's situation changes. These changes may develop into a mental illness if they persist or increase in severity.

Mental illness: A disorder diagnosed by a health professional that significantly interferes with a person's cognitive, emotional and/or social abilities. Mental illness can vary in both severity and duration. The term mental illness is used to refer to a wide spectrum of diagnosable conditions that affect how a person feels, thinks, behaves, and interacts with other people.

Psychosocial hazard: Are hazards that arise from aspects of work such as the design or management of work, the work environment, equipment or behaviours and interactions in the workplace that may cause psychological harm.

Mentally healthy workplace: This Blueprint uses the term mentally healthy workplace to broadly describe workplace experiences that protect, respond to and promote mental health.

Leadership: The act of leading or championing change in an organisation. In this sense, anyone in an organisation can be a leader when they are championing efforts to creating mentally healthy workplaces.

Lived experience: In this Blueprint, lived experience refers to people who have either current or past experience of mental ill-health or a carer.

Reasonable adjustments: Some people with disabilities may face barriers at work because of some feature of their work situation which could readily be altered. Making these changes is commonly referred to as 'reasonable adjustments'. Employers can be required by law to make reasonable adjustments to the workplace.

Top management: The senior leadership team of an organisation, usually consisting of a CEO or Managing Director, other executives or department heads, and the Board of Directors.

Work design: The process through which an organisation works to optimise work health and safety, human performance, job satisfaction, and business success. See Safe Work Australia's 'Principles of Good Work Design'.

Job crafting: The process through which a worker shapes the way they do their work, in a way that makes their job more engaging and meaningful.

Our approach to language has adhered to the conventions outlined in the [Life in Mind National Communications Charter](#), where applicable.

How this Blueprint was developed

The Blueprint for Mentally Healthy Workplaces has been informed by a wide range of perspectives through research reviews, expert advice, consultation and feedback. The National Mental Health Commission would like to thank members of the National Workplace Initiative Framework Working Group including:

Mark Goodsell, Chair	Australian Industry Group
Ngairé Anderson	Comcare
Dr Mark Deady	Black Dog Institute
Jorgen Gullestrup	Mates in Construction
Heather Ikin	College of Organisational Psychologists, Australian Psychological Society
Prof Karina Jorritsma	Future of Work Institute, Curtin University
David Kelly	South Australian Mental Health Commission
Prof Tony LaMontagne	School of Health and Social Development, Deakin University
Jennifer Low	Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry
Sean Marshall	Health Services Union, Australian Council of Trade Unions
Dr Ruth Martin	Small Business Wellbeing and Support, The Treasury
Dr Robyn Mildon	Centre for Evidence and Implementation
Professor Sharon Parker	Future of Work Institute, Curtin University

The Commission acknowledges the valuable feedback and contributions from individuals including:

Ingrid Ozols AM	Lived Experience Advisor
------------------------	--------------------------

The evidence behind our approach

Our Blueprint is based on research about mentally healthy workplaces. If you are interested in learning more about the research underpinning this approach, we recommend reading:

Aust, B., Rugulies, R., Finken, A., & Jensen, C. (2010). When workplace interventions lead to negative effects: learning from failures. *Scandinavian Journal of Public Health*, 38 (3_suppl), 106-119.

Becher, H., & Dollard, M. (2016). Psychosocial Safety Climate and Better Productivity in Australian Workplaces. Canberra, Australia: Safe Work Australia.

Brisson, C., Gilbert-Ouimet, M., Duchaine, C., Trudel, X., & Vézina, M. (2016). Workplace interventions aiming to improve psychosocial work factors and related health. In *Work Stress and Health in a Globalized Economy* (pp. 333-363): Springer.

Glozier, N. (2017). Review of Evidence of Interventions to Reduce Mental Ill-health in the Workplace. Canberra, Australia: Safe Work Australia.

Harvey, S.B., Joyce, S., Tan, L., Johnson, A., Nguyen, H., Modini, M., Groth, M. (2014). Developing a mentally healthy workplace: A review of the literature. Sydney, Australia: Mentally Healthy Workplace Alliance.

Joyce, S., Modini, M., Christensen, H., Mykletun, A., Bryant, R., Mitchell, P.B., & Harvey, S.B. (2016). *Workplace interventions for common mental disorders: a systematic meta-review*. *Psychological medicine*, 46(4), 683-697.

Karanika-Murray, M., & Weyman, A.K. (2013). Optimising workplace interventions for health and well-being. *International Journal of Workplace Health Management*.

LaMontagne, A. D., Martin, A., Page, K.M., Reavley, N.J., Noblet, A.J., Milner, A.J., . . . Smith, P.M. (2014). Workplace mental health: developing an integrated intervention approach. *BMC psychiatry*, 14(1), 1-11.

Memish, K., Martin, A., Bartlett, L., Dawkins, S., & Sanderson, K. (2017). Workplace mental health: An international review of guidelines. *Preventive Medicine*, 101, 213-222.

Martin, A., Shann, C., LaMontagne, A. (2017). What works to promote workplace wellbeing? A rapid review of recent policy developments and intervention research. Melbourne, Australia: Victorian Workplace Mental Wellbeing Collaboration.

Murray, J.P., Branch, S., & Caponecchia, C. (2019). Success factors in workplace bullying interventions. *International Journal of Workplace Health Management*.

Martin, A., Sanderson, K., Warnecke, E., Dawkins, S., Bartlett, L., Memish, K., Crawford, J., Newstead, T., & Peebles, D. (2017). An integrated approach to workplace mental health: Nine priorities for implementation in Australia, the University of Tasmania.

Newstead, T., Angela, M., Dawkins, S., Bartlett, L., Crawford, J., Peebles, D. (2017). An integrated approach to workplace mental health.

Ng, J.L., Johnson, A., Nguyen, H., Groth, M. (2014). Workplace Culture Improvements: A Review of the Literature - A report for the Workforce Planning and Development Branch of the NSW Ministry of Health. Sydney, Australia: UNSW and the University of Sydney.

OECD (2021). Fitter Minds, Fitter Jobs: From Awareness to Change in Integrated Mental Health, Skills and Work Policies. Paris, France: OECD Publishing.

Parker, S.K., & Jorritsma, K. (2020). Good work design for all: Multiple pathways to making a difference. *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology*, 1-13.

The evidence behind our approach cont.

Petrie, K., Joyce, S., Tan, L., Henderson, M., Johnson, A., Nguyen, H., . . . Harvey, S.B. (2018). A framework to create more mentally healthy workplaces: A viewpoint. *Australian & New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry*, 52(1), 15-23.

Pieper, C., Schröer, S., & Eilerts, A.L. (2019). Evidence of Workplace Interventions—A Systematic Review of Systematic Reviews. *International journal of environmental research and public health*, 16(19), 35-53.

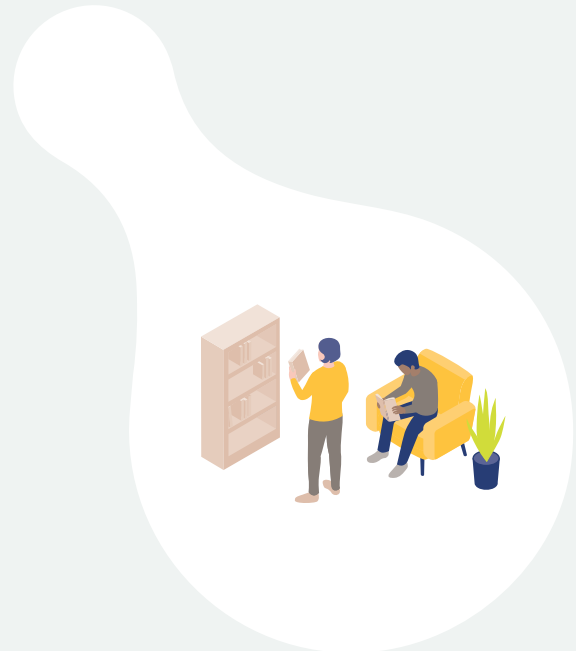
Royal Australasian College of Physicians Australasian Faculty of Occupational and Environmental Medicine. (2013). What is Good Work? Position Statement. Sydney, Australia: RACP AFOEM.

Safe Work Australia. (2019). Work-related psychological health and safety A systematic approach to meeting your duties National guidance material. Canberra, Australia: Safe Work Australia.

Safe Work Australia. (2020). Principles of good work design: A work health and safety handbook. Canberra, Australia: Safe Work Australia.

Thrive at Work. Job crafting. Available from: <https://www.thriveatwork.org.au/resources/job-crafting/>

World Health Organization. (2005). *Mental health policies and programmes in the workplace*. Geneva, Switzerland: World Health Organization.



© Commonwealth of Australia 2022, unless otherwise indicated.

With the exception of the Commonwealth Coat of Arms, the National Mental Health Commission's logo, all photographs and where otherwise indicated, all material in this document is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International (CC BY-NC-ND 4.0) licence (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>).

The details of the relevant licence conditions are available on the Creative Commons website, accessible using the link provided, as is the full legal code for the Attribution 4.0 International (CC BY-NC-ND 4.0) licence (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/legalcode>).

The Commonwealth Coat of Arms and National Mental Health Commission logo and branding must not be copied or used.

This document must be attributed as the Blueprint for Mentally Healthy Workplaces.