

THE MENTALLY HEALTHY WORKPLACE ALLIANCE

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

1. Who is the Mentally Healthy Workplace Alliance?

The Mentally Healthy Workplace Alliance (The Alliance) was established in 2012 to bring together business, community and government leaders committed to creating mentally health workplaces. Alliance members know that:

- mentally healthy workplaces contribute to the mental health of all Australians
- mentally healthy workplaces result in increased productivity and other benefits to businesses
- working together is key to achieving positive and sustainable change

The vision of the Alliance is that Australian workplaces take active steps to promote and create mentally healthy workplaces and fully realise the benefits to individuals, businesses and the community.

The Alliance represents a commitment by its members to work collaboratively to provide practical guidance to workplaces to create mentally healthy workplaces, and a sustainable and measurable change in business practices.

The founding members of the Alliance are:

- Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry
- *beyondblue*
- Black Dog Institute
- Business Council of Australia
- Comcare
- Council of Small Business of Australia
- Mental Health Council of Australia
- National Mental Health Commission
- Safe Work Australia
- SANE
- The Australian Psychological Society Ltd
- University of New South Wales

2. What is a mentally healthy workplace?

Mentally healthy workplaces make sure people who experience mental health difficulties and their families and those who support them are supported, and they have positive cultures that are conducive to mental wellbeing. They recognise that this is not just good for employees; it is also very good for business.

Mentally healthy workplaces provide the same work opportunities to people living with mental health difficulties as everyone else; where the contribution of employees with a mental health difficulty and those who care for them is maximised, providing meaning and connection in their lives and high productivity and economic rewards for business and society at large.

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3. How big an issue is this for employers?

Mental disorders account for 13.3 per cent of Australia's total burden of disease and injury and are estimated to cost the Australian economy \$20 billion annually in lost productivity and labour participation. The cost to businesses for depression alone is \$12.3 billion a year. This figure includes cost associated with absenteeism, presenteeism (reduced productivity at work) and staff turnover.

If you are in a business with more than 10 employees, there's a good chance at least one is living with a mental illness. If you are in a larger workplace, the figure would be closer to one in five. Meanwhile, more workers are absent from work because of stress and anxiety than because of physical illness or injury.

4. Why are mentally healthy workplaces good for business?

Mentally healthy workplaces have significant competitive advantages. A mentally healthy workplace increases productivity, performance, creativity, staff retention and can lead to recognition as an employer of choice. Businesses that invest in mental health are also more innovative and likely to recruit and retain the best and brightest people.

5. What is the purpose of the Call for Good Practice?

The Call for Good Practice is part of a larger program of work sponsored by the Alliance aimed at providing practical guidance for workplaces to assist them in creating mentally healthy workplaces. It seeks to highlight the various mental health practices adopted by Australian workplaces to enable other businesses to implement and adapt for their own workplace culture.

We are hoping to capture a snapshot of what is occurring across various industries and locations from small to large workplaces. The aim of the call is not to simply pick out the best practices, but to provide an opportunity for all workplaces to share and discuss the many things they are doing to create a mentally workplace. It doesn't matter how small or large the things your workplace is doing; we would like to hear about them. We would like to hear about what has worked as well as what hasn't, so that we and others can learn from your real world experience. All submissions will be presented in a final report and will help inform the development of practical resources for all Australian businesses. These will include tips and advice, case studies, video interviews and fact sheets.

6. How does this relate to other projects being conducted by the Alliance?

The Alliance is sponsoring several priority projects aimed at providing practical guidance for employers to assist them in creating mentally healthy workplaces and promoting the benefits to individuals, workplaces, and the broader community. These include:

- Research investigating the return on investment of creating mentally healthy workplaces
- Literature review investigating evidence based interventions for creating mentally healthy workplaces

7. What does the Call for Good Practice involve?

The on-line Call for Good Practice will involve business managers showcasing their approaches via the on-line survey and submission. Selected businesses, identified through the Call for Good Practice, will be invited to be interviewed about their approach to creating a mentally healthy workplace. The interviews will form the basis for the development of two resources – a written case study and a video interview with the head of your organisation or a senior manager. Both these resources will be made available on the website of the Alliance by December 2013.

8. Why should my business get involved?

Submissions will be used to inform the development of practical resources for businesses for the benefit

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of all Australian workplaces. Participation in the project also represents an opportunity for businesses to demonstrate and promote their leadership in this area. It could also provide opportunities for engagement with key industry and government figures, potential employees, and the media.

9. What is considered good practice for mentally healthy workplaces?

The Alliance considers good practice for a mentally healthy workplace as practices that workplaces believe have been helpful in creating, maintaining, enhancing and promoting mental health in the workplace. These practices do not necessarily have to be evidence based, rather the Call for Good Practice will highlight what businesses believe are good mental health approaches that are working for their respective workplace.

10. What type of businesses should make a submission?

The Alliance is looking for a balanced perspective across all industry sectors and sizes, from family run businesses to large national employers. As such, the Alliance wants to hear from all Australian businesses regardless of industry and size.

11. Who in my business should complete the submission?

Ideally the person completing the submission should be closely involved in the development of mental health practices in their workplace. This person could be anyone from the owner of a small business to the HR representative of a large organisation.

12. Should I only describe practices that have been effective?

Not necessarily. The Alliance is interested in lessons learned including mental health practices that didn't work as well and why they didn't work so that we and other workplaces will be able to learn from your experience.

13. When does the submission period close?

Submissions for the Call for Good Practice can be made via www.workplacementalhealth.com.au and close at 6.00PM (AEST) on Sunday 28 July 2013. After this time submissions will no longer be able to be accepted.

14. How long will it take for my submission to be published?

A report summarising findings will be published on the Alliance website towards the end of 2013.

15. Who should I contact for further information?

For further enquires about the work of the Alliance and the Call for Good Practice please contact enquiries@workplacementalhealth.com.au