



**Australian Government**

**Comcare**



# Key Priorities for Mentally Healthy Workplaces

Towards 2022

# Creating mentally healthy workplaces is everyone's business

Good Mental Health is a level of wellbeing where people can cope with ordinary work and life pressures. Our mental health exists on a continuum from coping to not coping, affecting how people think, feel and act in everyday life.

## Mental health continuum



### Coping

- Coping with normal mood fluctuations
- Able to focus and be productive

### Reacting

- Nervous, angry, or distracted
- Disrupted sleep or unable to focus

### Not Coping

- Excessive anxiety and stress
- Unable to sleep or concentrate

**20%**  
of Australian  
workers are currently  
experiencing mental  
health challenges<sup>1</sup>

## Challenges in supporting mentally healthy workplaces



### Mental health stigma

can prevent workers from seeking help early. Over two-thirds of workers feel uncomfortable talking to their employer about their mental health concerns.<sup>2</sup> This means people may not get the support they need, which can lead to poorer health.



There may be blurred boundaries between work and home. More technology and flexible working arrangements can contribute to increased expectations of workers, leading to increased work hours.



Workers with mental injury workers' compensation claims have poorer outcomes, with fewer people returning to work when compared with physical injury claims. Reasons for this include delays in seeking support, the rising complexity of mental illnesses and delays in accessing mental health services.



Managing risks to mental health in the workplace is difficult without visible leadership commitment and a good understanding of systematic approaches to psychosocial hazard management.



Leaders can lack confidence and knowledge in how to assist workers who are struggling with their mental health. Without guidance, knowing how to provide support can be challenging.

**Everyone has a role to play in creating a mentally healthy workplace, which starts with a shared understanding about mental health.**

1. TNS (2014): State of Workplace Mental Health in Australia.
2. Mental Health Australia (2013): Mental health still taboo in the workplace





# KEY PRIORITIES

## for driving mentally healthy workplaces

Comcare works in partnership with scheme employers and other stakeholders to drive and support activity across four key priorities.



### Reduce stigma and encourage early help-seeking

**Raising** awareness of stigma and the importance of early help-seeking through education and promotion, and **improved** participation in early intervention initiatives.



### Enhance manager confidence and capability

Providing managers with accessible and practical information around creating mentally healthy workplaces and supporting individuals who may be struggling with their mental health.



### Improve the management of workplace factors

**Connecting** workplaces to better-practice evidence-based resources, and **providing** education on systematic approaches to **creating mentally healthy workplaces**.



### Explore better-practice recovery and return to work

Partnering with experts and employers to trial and test better-practice, evidence-based approaches to managing recovery and return-to-work for psychological injuries.



## Mental health is everybody's business and each of us has a role to play.

What steps are you taking to create a mentally healthy workplace?







## More information

For more information on Comcare's workplace mental health initiatives please visit Comcare's mental health page: [comcare.gov.au/mental-health](https://comcare.gov.au/mental-health)

Workplace mental health is also a key component in [Comcare's Research Plan Towards 2022](#). This plan identifies the importance of applied research around guidance and support for mental health and wellbeing in the workplace.

If you are interested in finding out more about this plan, **please contact:**

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