



**MENTAL HEALTH IN THE WORKPLACE
PARTICIPANT HANDBOOK**

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 employees, business leaders/management, and create a tailored action plan for your business.

The Heads Up initiative was developed using funding provided to *beyondblue* by the Commonwealth Department of Health.

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INTRODUCTION

This 'Mental health in the workplace' toolbox talk¹ training package was developed by *beyondblue* as part of the Heads Up initiative.

The Heads Up initiative — developed by the Mentally Healthy Workplace Alliance and *beyondblue* — is all about giving individuals and businesses free tools and resources to help them take action around mental health in the workplace. It's also about supporting Australian businesses to create more mentally healthy workplaces.

One element of a mentally healthy workplace is ongoing and simple engagement with staff around mental health. This training package aims to help workplaces with this, as well as providing simple and informal guidance on how everyone can better support staff who may be experiencing a mental health condition.

Staff may include all people employed at the participant's organisation/place of work, including volunteers and contractors.

The training will be delivered as a workshop by nominated professionals/educators², to organisation team leaders³ or anyone leading a team within their organisations. Neither the nominated professional/educator nor the team leaders are required to have any prior knowledge, expertise or understanding of mental health conditions.

The training aims to provide participants with information about mental health, with a focus on anxiety and depression, as these are the most common mental health conditions.

Following this workshop you will be able to:

1. increase awareness of mental health in your workplace through informal 'toolbox talks'.
2. confidently approach and support someone at work you are concerned may be experiencing/at risk of developing a mental health condition.
3. know what supports and resources are available for staff and how to access them for the workplace.

HOW TO USE THIS HANDBOOK

This handbook includes all the information you need for the 'Mental health in the workplace' toolbox talk training session. Please use this handbook to write down any hints, tips or important points that come in your training day so you can refer to them when you deliver toolbox talks in your workplace.

If you have any feedback on this guide, the 'Mental health in the workplace' training or any of the resources, contact *beyondblue's* Workplace and Workforce team at: workplace@beyondblue.org.au

¹ A toolbox talk is defined as any team meeting or gathering with a workplace team.

² Nominated professionals/educators may include human resources professionals, return to work coordinators and occupational health and safety advisors.

³ Team leaders may include managers, supervisors or project managers.

WHAT'S INCLUDED IN THIS HANDBOOK

- Learning outcomes
- Workshop outline
- PowerPoint presentation slides
- Workshop activities
- Appendices:
 - Transcripts of videos used in the workshop
 - Toolbox talk outlines
- Further resources and contacts
- Websites (information and support)
- Other important support options
- Links to online videos of people sharing their experiences of anxiety and depression

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Following the workshop you will:

- have a greater understanding of the signs and symptoms of anxiety and depression
- be confident to approach someone at work you may be concerned about and initiate a conversation
- understand potential mental health risk and protective factors in the workplace and how these may impact on staff
- know what supports and resources are available for staff
- be able to deliver informal toolbox talks to staff about mental health in the workplace.

WELCOME TO THE WORKSHOP



WHAT'S IN IT FOR ME?

WHAT'S IN IT FOR ME?

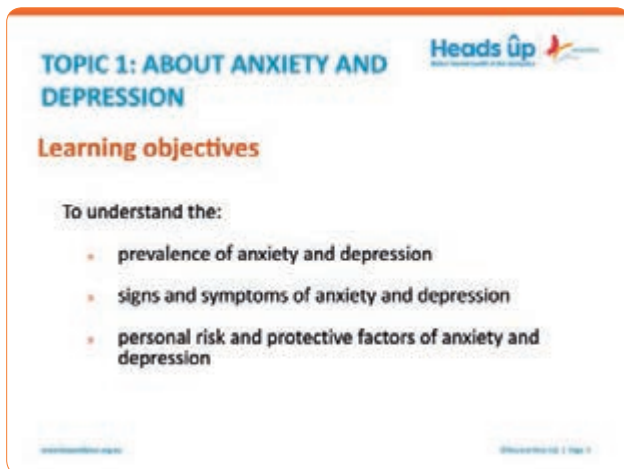
- Increase your awareness of anxiety and depression
- Improve your confidence to approach someone at work you are concerned about
- Assist someone at work to get the right supports
- Be able to deliver toolbox talks to staff and colleagues about mental health in the workplace

WORKSHOP STRUCTURE

WORKSHOP STRUCTURE

1. About anxiety and depression
2. The relationship between the workplace and mental health
3. Taking action to support someone at work

TOPIC 1: ABOUT ANXIETY AND DEPRESSION



TOPIC 1: ABOUT ANXIETY AND DEPRESSION

Heads Up

Learning objectives

To understand the:

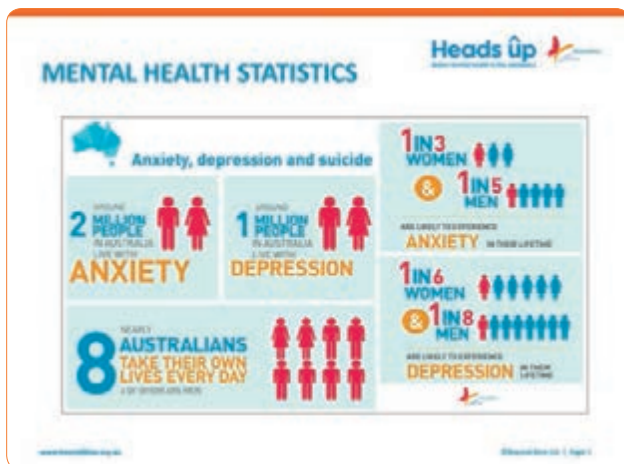
- prevalence of anxiety and depression
- signs and symptoms of anxiety and depression
- personal risk and protective factors of anxiety and depression

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of this session, you should understand:

- the prevalence of anxiety and depression
- signs and symptoms that indicate someone is at risk of/may be experiencing anxiety and/or depression
- personal risk and protective factors associated with anxiety and depression.

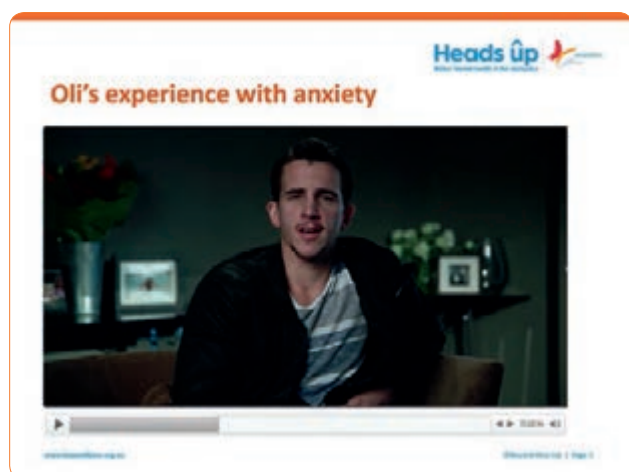
THE PREVALENCE OF ANXIETY AND DEPRESSION



Note down any additional statistics or points you'd like to pass on to your staff.

Blank area for notes.

ANXIETY



If needed, a transcript of this clip can be found in Appendix 1.

COMMON SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF ANXIETY

COMMON SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF ANXIETY

Physical

- muscle pain
- tightening of the chest
- racing heart
- difficulty sleeping
- restless and on edge
- shortness of breath

Feeling

- overwhelmed
- dread – that something bad is going to happen
- fearful
- constantly tense
- panic

Thinking

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

Behaviour

- avoiding situations and tasks
- difficulty making decisions
- poor concentration
- relying on alcohol/drugs
- compulsive behaviour

Heads Up logo: www.headsup.org.au

BRAINSTORMING ACTIVITY: SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

Looking at the slide and thinking about the clip you've just watched, write down in the space below some of the signs that might indicate someone at work is struggling.

A large, empty, light orange rectangular area provided for brainstorming and writing down signs and symptoms.

DEPRESSION

Karl's experience with depression

Heads Up
Mental Health Support for Veterans

"I'd be at work and then I'd go home at lunchtime and I would sit in my lounge room and cry for the whole lunch hour, and then go back to work."

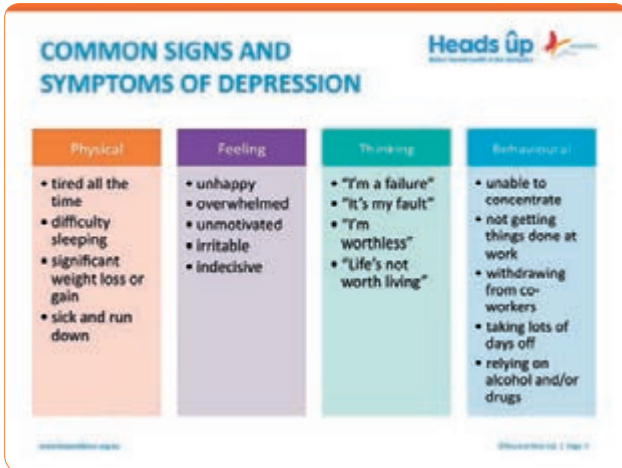
"You'd try and isolate yourself from everyone around you. So you would cut off your friends, you cut off your family and you try and work through the problems on your own. You don't want any social occasions, you don't want to go out or anything socially."

www.headsup.gov.au © Commonwealth of Australia 2018

Notes

Large empty area for taking notes, with a light orange background.

COMMON SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF DEPRESSION

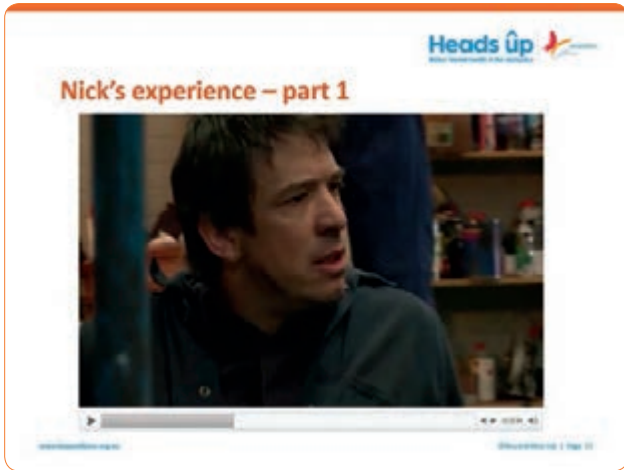


BRAINSTORMING ACTIVITY: SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

What signs and symptoms might you notice at work?

Consider how these would impact on your workplace and write down your responses below.

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS LEARNING ACTIVITY: NICK'S EXPERIENCE – PART 1



If needed, a transcript of this clip can be found in Appendix 1.

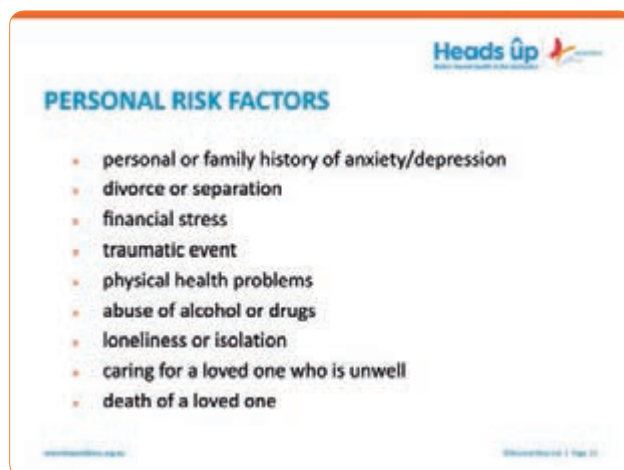
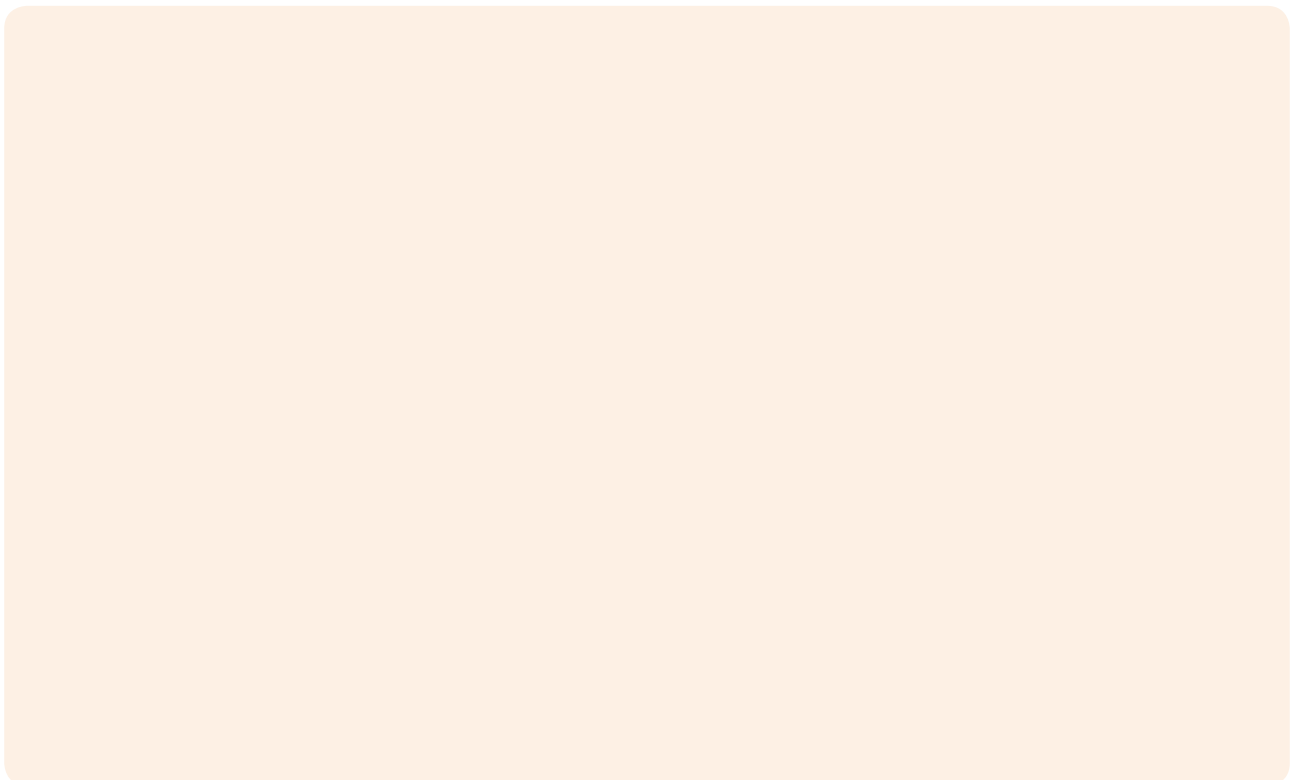
When watching the clip, note Nick's behaviour and body language and write down any possible signs of anxiety and/or depression that you notice.

A large, empty, light orange rounded rectangular area intended for participants to write down their observations and notes while watching the video clip.

PERSONAL RISK FACTORS

LEARNING ACTIVITY: WHAT FACTORS MIGHT INCREASE SOMEONE'S RISK OF EXPERIENCING ANXIETY AND/OR DEPRESSION?

Brainstorm and list five or six issues that you think are potential risk factors.



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Mental Health in Schools

PERSONAL RISK FACTORS

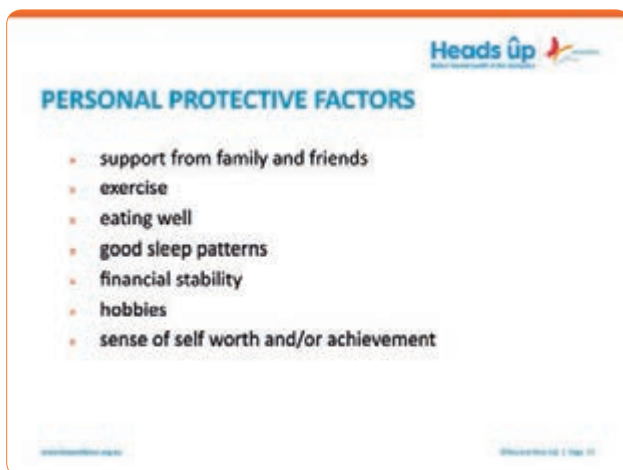
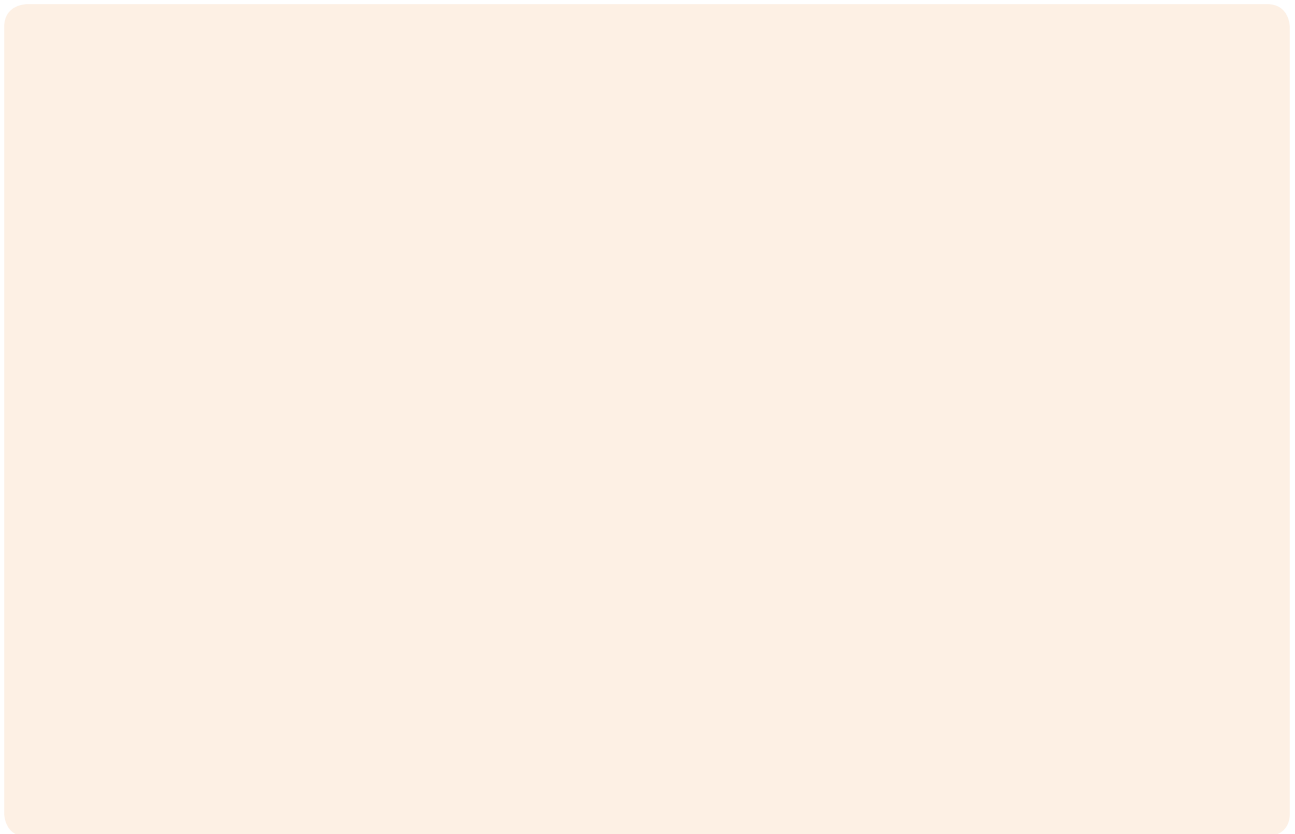
- personal or family history of anxiety/depression
- divorce or separation
- financial stress
- traumatic event
- physical health problems
- abuse of alcohol or drugs
- loneliness or isolation
- caring for a loved one who is unwell
- death of a loved one

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PERSONAL PROTECTIVE FACTORS

BRAINSTORMING ACTIVITY: PERSONAL PROTECTIVE FACTORS

Note down some of the ways you take care of your mental health in the space below.



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PERSONAL PROTECTIVE FACTORS

- support from family and friends
- exercise
- eating well
- good sleep patterns
- financial stability
- hobbies
- sense of self worth and/or achievement

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SUMMARY

LEARNING ACTIVITY: SHORT QUIZ

- How common is anxiety?

- How common is depression?

- What are some common signs of anxiety and depression in the workplace?

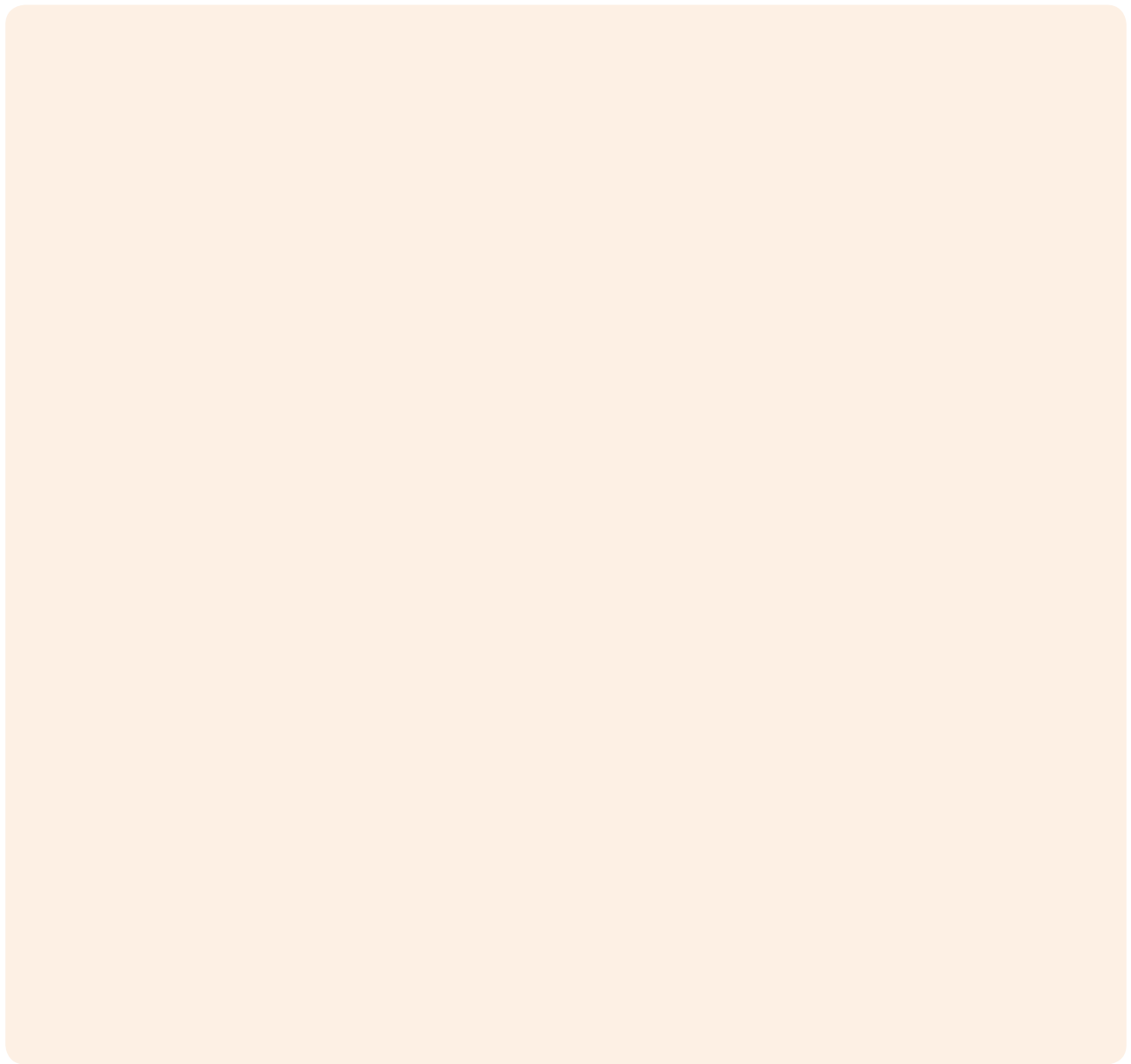
- What are some risk factors for anxiety and depression?

- What are some protective factors?

CONCLUSION

Write down some of the key pieces of information from this topic that you would want to pass on to your staff members.

Responses should be specific to your workplace and staff's needs.

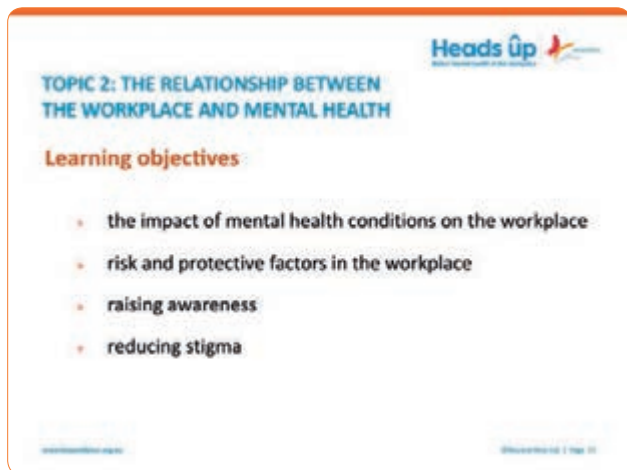


SUPPORTING RESOURCES

- Posters
- *Anxiety and depression: An information booklet*

The information booklet can be ordered from the Heads Up website or *beyondblue* Support Service.

TOPIC 2: THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE WORKPLACE AND MENTAL HEALTH

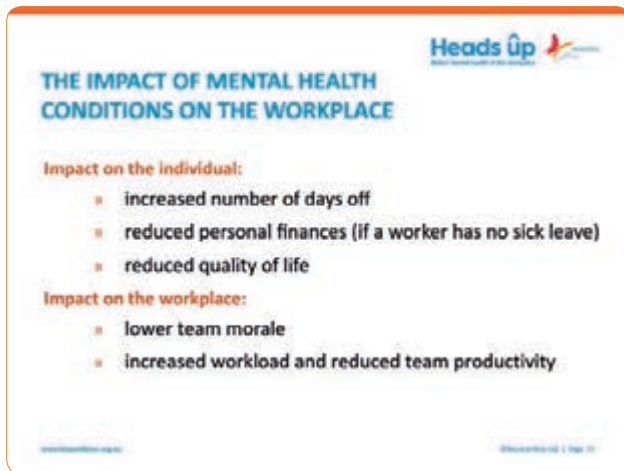


LEARNING OBJECTIVES

At the end of this session, you should be able to:

- understand the impact of mental health conditions on the workplace
- recognise risk and protective factors in the workplace
- play a role in raising awareness and reducing stigma.

THE IMPACT OF MENTAL HEALTH CONDITIONS ON THE WORKPLACE



Heads Up
Mental Health First Aid

THE IMPACT OF MENTAL HEALTH CONDITIONS ON THE WORKPLACE

Impact on the individual:

- increased number of days off
- reduced personal finances (if a worker has no sick leave)
- reduced quality of life

Impact on the workplace:

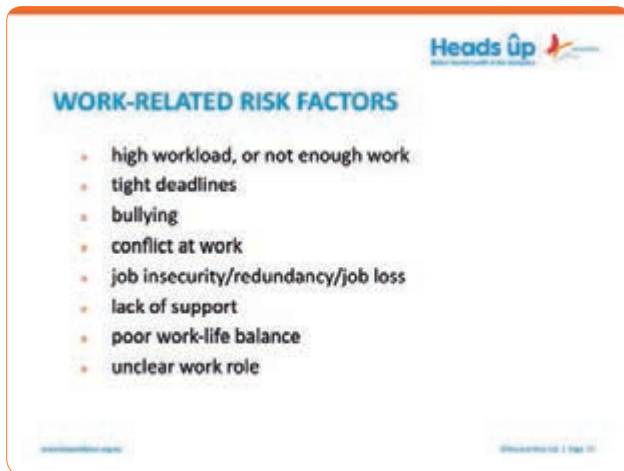
- lower team morale
- increased workload and reduced team productivity

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Notes

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WORK-RELATED RISK FACTORS



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WORK-RELATED RISK FACTORS

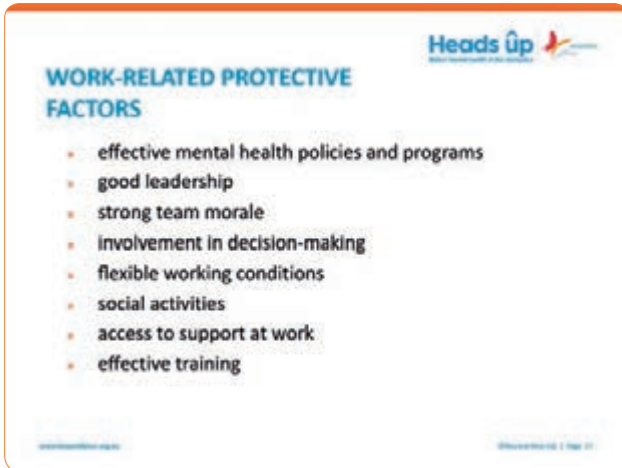
- high workload, or not enough work
- tight deadlines
- bullying
- conflict at work
- job insecurity/redundancy/job loss
- lack of support
- poor work-life balance
- unclear work role

BRAINSTORMING ACTIVITY: RISK FACTORS IN THE WORKPLACE

Using the slide to help with ideas, brainstorm what risk factors are present in your workplace.

A large, empty, light orange rounded rectangular area intended for brainstorming notes.

WORK-RELATED PROTECTIVE FACTORS



The slide features the 'Heads Up' logo in the top right corner. The title 'WORK-RELATED PROTECTIVE FACTORS' is in blue. Below it is a bulleted list of seven factors. At the bottom left, there is a small URL 'www.headsup.org.au' and at the bottom right, a small text '© Commonwealth of Australia 2011'.

- effective mental health policies and programs
- good leadership
- strong team morale
- involvement in decision-making
- flexible working conditions
- social activities
- access to support at work
- effective training

BRAINSTORMING ACTIVITY: PROTECTIVE FACTORS IN THE WORKPLACE

Think of some of the protective factors in your workplace and write them in the space below.

A large, empty, light-orange rounded rectangular area intended for participants to write their brainstormed protective factors.

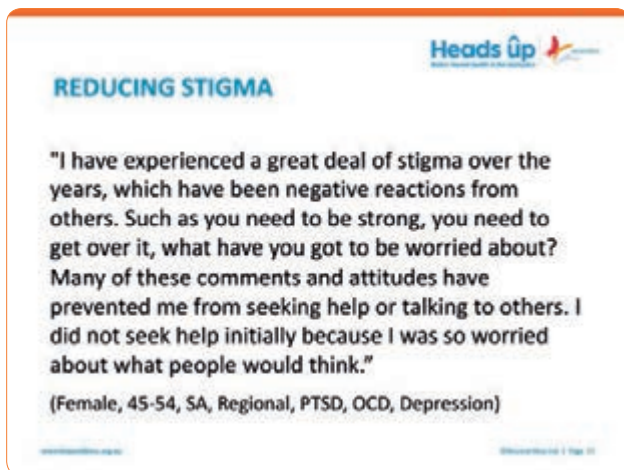
RAISING AWARENESS



Note down some of the things you could do in your workplace to raise awareness.

A large, empty, light orange rectangular area intended for participants to write down their ideas for raising awareness in the workplace.

REDUCING STIGMA



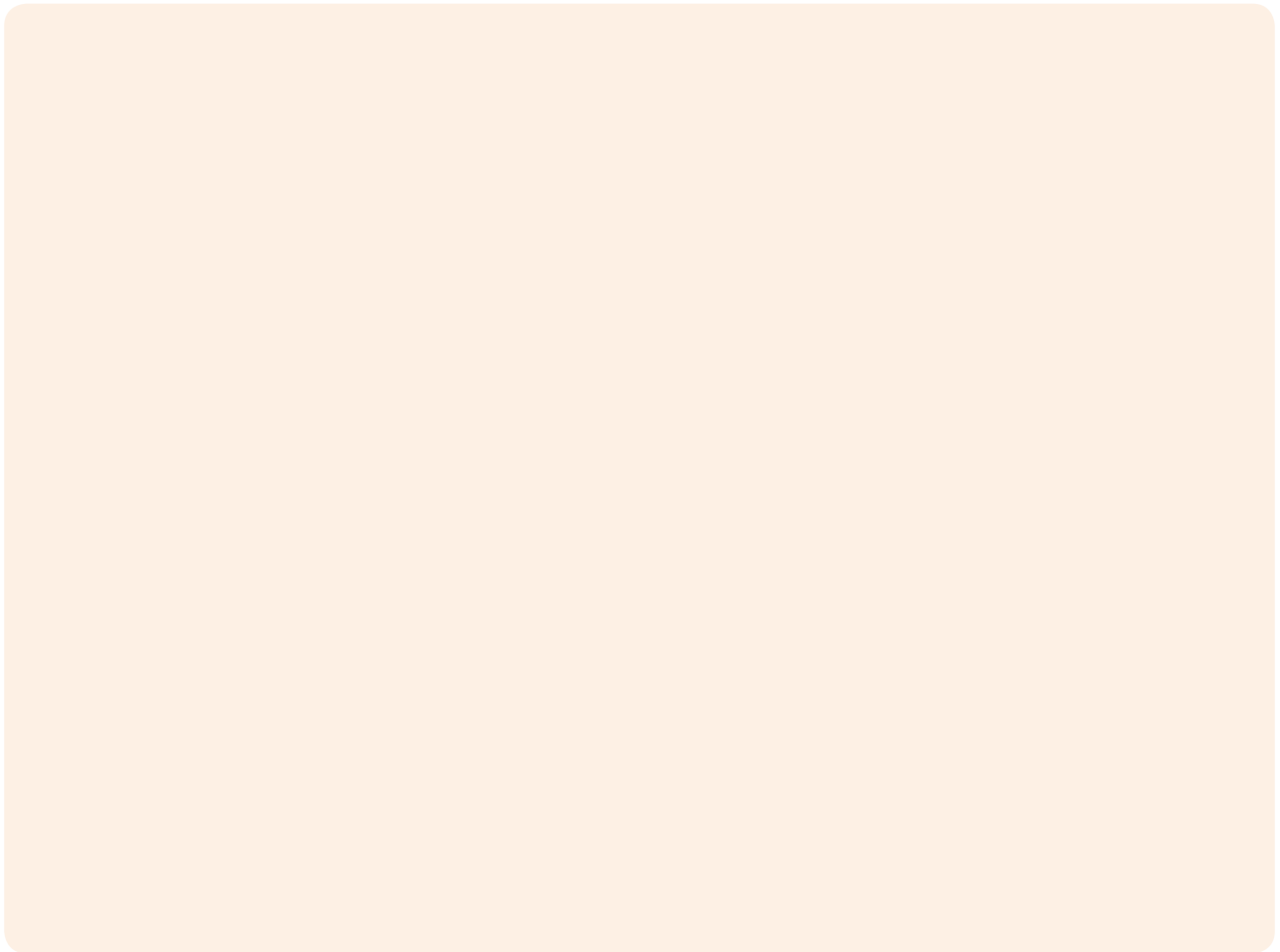
The image shows a screenshot of a presentation slide. At the top right is the 'Heads Up' logo with the tagline 'Mental Health in the Workplace'. The slide title is 'REDUCING STIGMA'. The main text is a quote: "I have experienced a great deal of stigma over the years, which have been negative reactions from others. Such as you need to be strong, you need to get over it, what have you got to be worried about? Many of these comments and attitudes have prevented me from seeking help or talking to others. I did not seek help initially because I was so worried about what people would think." Below the quote is the demographic information: "(Female, 45-54, SA, Regional, PTSD, OCD, Depression)". At the bottom left is the URL 'www.headsup.gov.au' and at the bottom right is '© Commonwealth of Australia 2015'.

Note down some of the things you could do in your workplace to reduce stigma.

A large, empty, light-orange rounded rectangular area intended for participants to write their notes on workplace strategies to reduce stigma.

CONCLUSION

Write down some of the key pieces of information from this topic that you would want to pass on to your staff. Responses should be specific to your workplace and staff's needs.

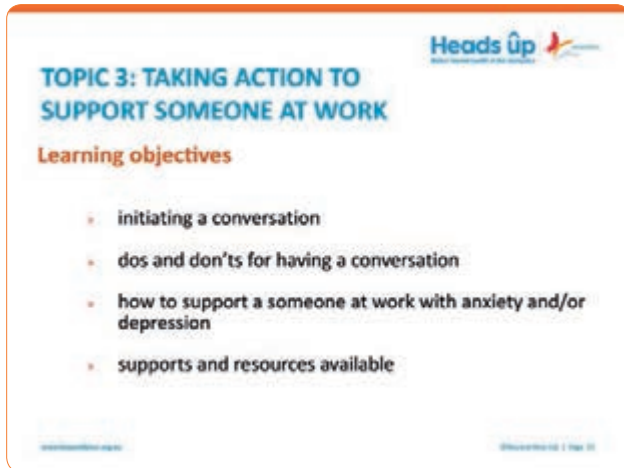


SUPPORTING RESOURCES

- *Taking care of your mental health in the workplace: A guide for employees*

This information booklet can be ordered from the Heads Up website or *beyondblue* Support Service.

TOPIC 3: TAKING ACTION TO SUPPORT SOMEONE AT WORK



LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Following this workshop you should be:

- confident to initiate and have a conversation
- understand how to support someone at work with anxiety and/or depression
- aware of available support
- able to help someone at work access appropriate support.

SUPPORTING SOMEONE AT WORK LEARNING ACTIVITY: NICK'S EXPERIENCE – PART 2



When watching the clip, pay attention to Nick's co-worker, Bill. Note down what strategies you observed Bill using when talking to Nick.

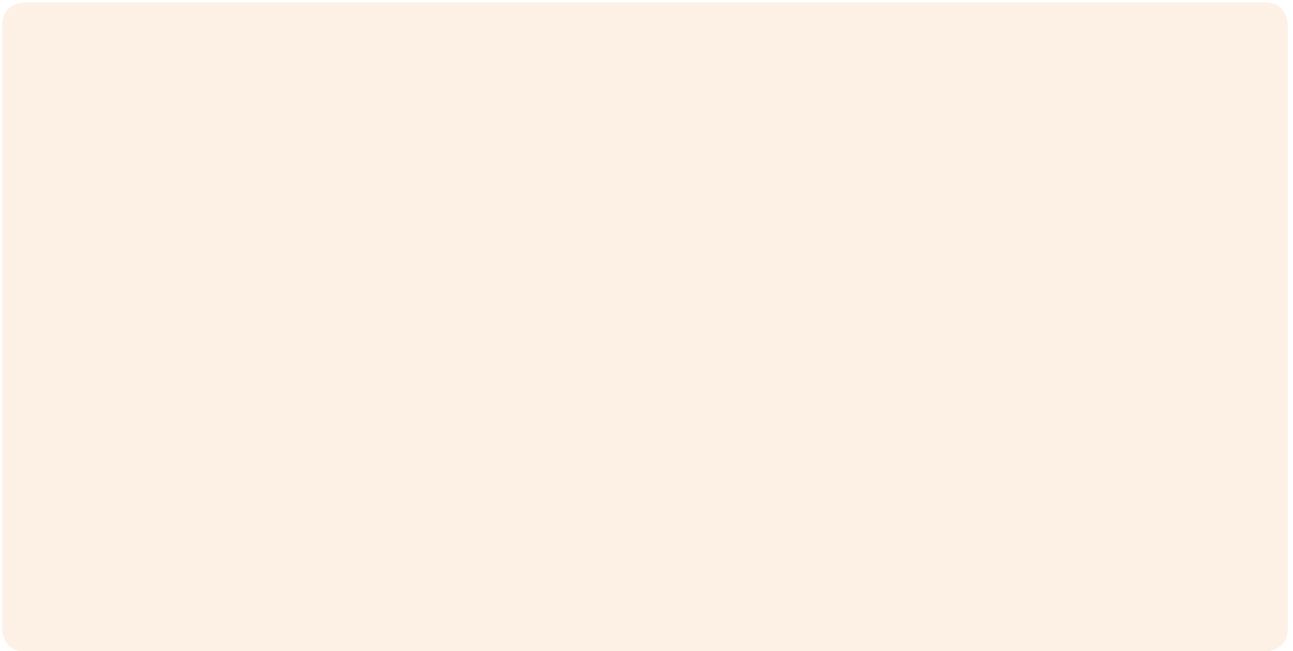
If needed, a transcript of this clip can be found in Appendix 1.

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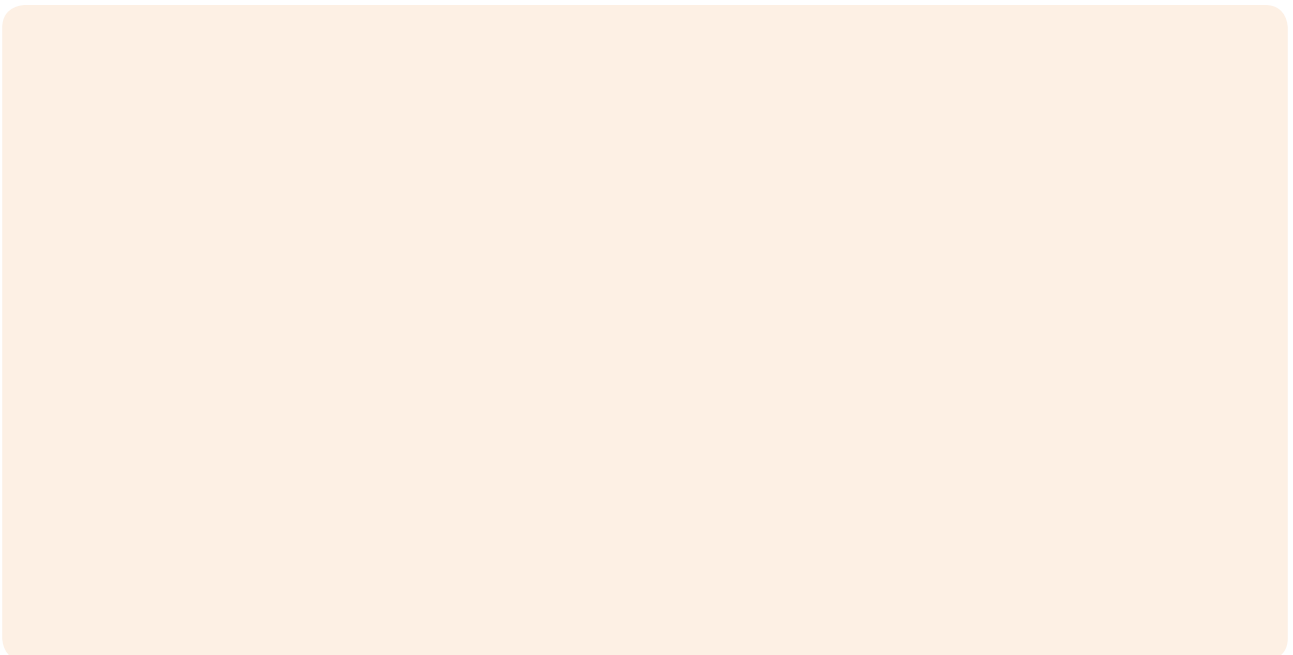
STARTING A CONVERSATION

LEARNING ACTIVITY

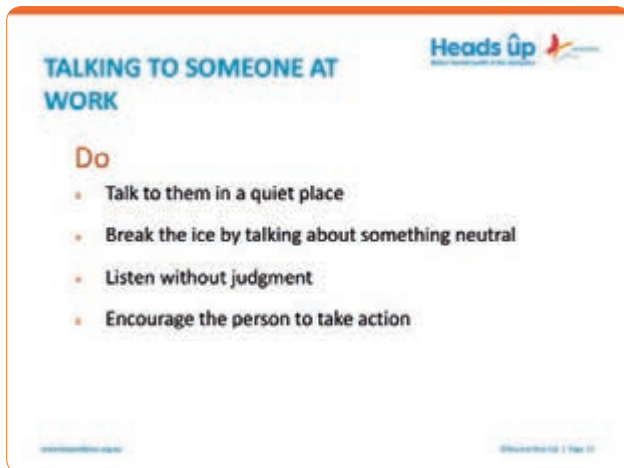
Discuss and write down how you would approach Nick.



Discuss and write down a few opening lines that you would be comfortable using.



TALKING TO SOMEONE AT WORK



TALKING TO SOMEONE AT WORK

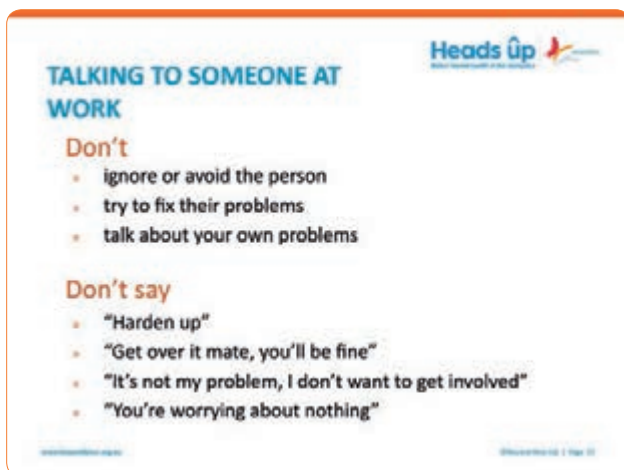
Heads Up
Mental Health First Aid

Do

- Talk to them in a quiet place
- Break the ice by talking about something neutral
- Listen without judgment
- Encourage the person to take action

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Notes



TALKING TO SOMEONE AT WORK

Heads Up
Mental Health First Aid

Don't

- ignore or avoid the person
- try to fix their problems
- talk about your own problems

Don't say

- "Harden up"
- "Get over it mate, you'll be fine"
- "It's not my problem, I don't want to get involved"
- "You're worrying about nothing"

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Notes

FOLLOWING UP

Use this space for any further notes, including some of the ways you might follow up with a staff member.

A large, empty, light orange rounded rectangular box intended for notes. It occupies most of the page below the introductory text.

SUPPORTING SOMEONE WITH ANXIETY OR DEPRESSION IN THE WORKPLACE

WITH SUPPORT PEOPLE CAN ... 



- ▶ recover from anxiety and depression
- ▶ continue to work effectively and be productive
- ▶ have fulfilling and meaningful lives

Work plays a vital role in recovery

© 2014 Heads Up

Notes

Large empty area for notes.

WHERE TO FIND MORE INFORMATION AND SUPPORT



The image is a flyer titled 'SUPPORT OPTIONS' with the 'Heads Up' logo in the top right corner. The text on the flyer provides contact information for 'beyondblue', including the website www.beyondblue.org.au, a phone number (1300 22 4636), and an email/chat link (www.beyondblue.org.au/getsupport). It also mentions that workplace-specific information is available at www.headsup.org.au. There are small logos for 'beyondblue' and 'Heads Up' at the bottom of the flyer.

beyondblue RESOURCES

- The *beyondblue* Support Service gives every person in Australia the opportunity to talk through his or her concerns with a mental health professional. The Support Service is contactable via phone, web chat and email.
- Free resources are available to download from the *beyondblue* website (www.beyondblue.org.au/resources) along with further information and videos. Printed booklets, fact sheets and flyers can also be ordered via the website, or through the Support Service.
- Free workplace specific information and resources are available from www.headsup.org.au or by calling the *beyondblue* Support Service.

Notes

OTHER USEFUL WEBSITES

OTHER USEFUL WEBSITES

Man Therapy
www.mantherapy.org.au

Just Speak Up
www.justspeakup.beyondblue.org.au

Youth *beyondblue*
www.youthbeyondblue.org.au

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Notes

OTHER SUPPORT OPTIONS

OTHER SUPPORT OPTIONS

- Lifeline: **13 11 14**
- Suicide Call Back Service: **1300 659 467**
- Men's Line Australia: **1300 78 99 78**
- SANE: **1800 18 SANE (7263)** www.sane.org
- A local GP

Employer-provided support options may include:

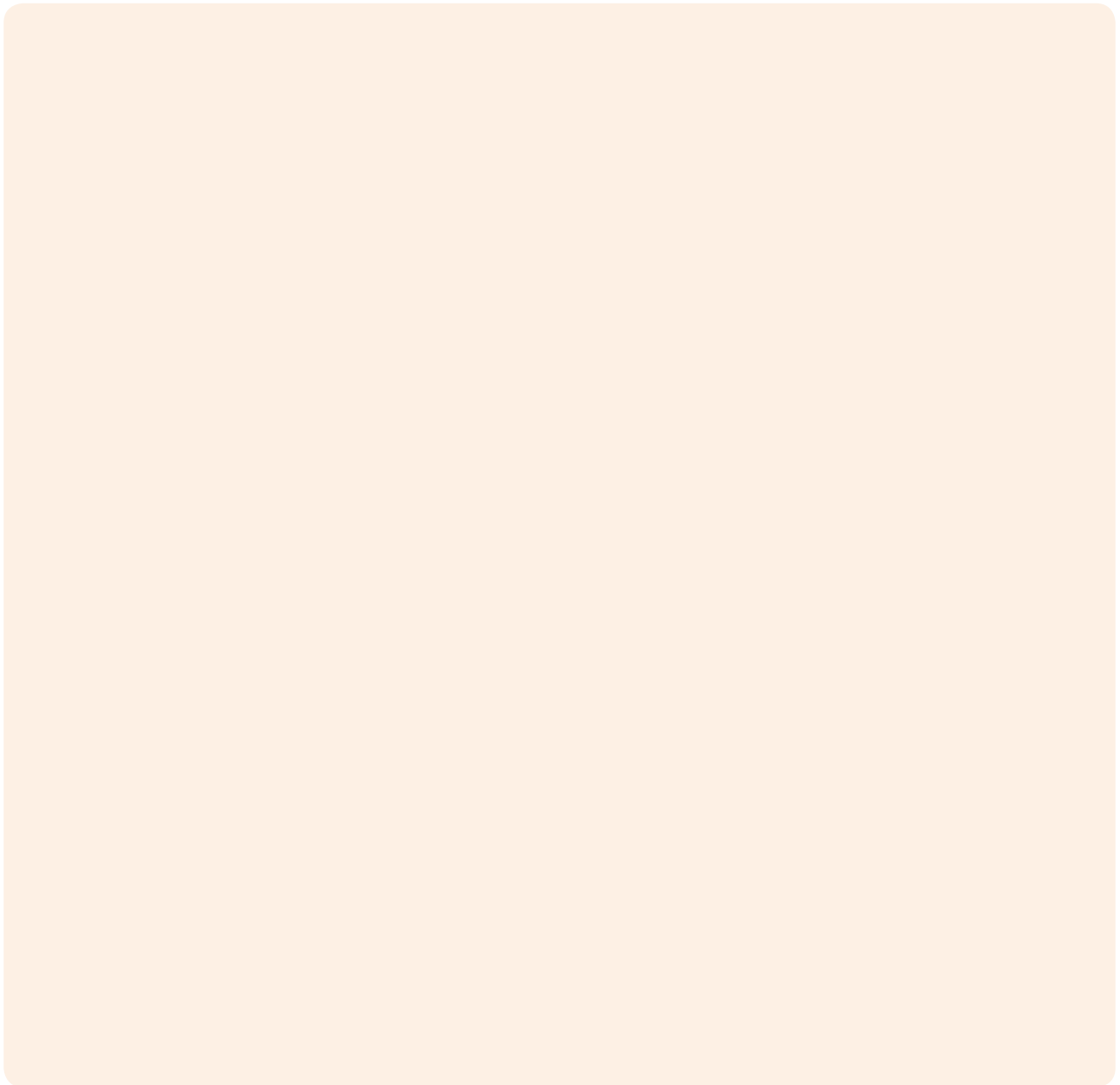
- Human resources (HR)
- Employee Assistance Program (EAP)
- Peer support programs
- Chaplain or counsellor programs

www.beyondblue.org.au Beyondblue Handbook | Page 27

Notes

CONCLUSION

Write down some of the key pieces of information from this topic that you would want to pass on to your staff. Responses should be specific to your workplace and staff's needs.



SUPPORTING RESOURCES

- *Take action on mental health in the workplace* wallet card.

SUMMARY

Write down the key pieces of information from this workshop that you want to pass on to your staff.

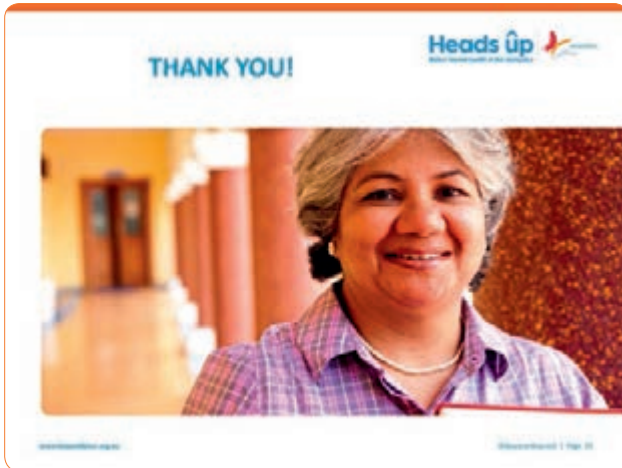
TIPS AND CONSIDERATIONS FOR TOOLBOX TALKS



LEARNING ACTIVITY: TOOLBOX TALKS

Discuss the questions in the slide and write the responses below. Responses should be specific to your workplace and staff's needs.

CONCLUSION



If this training has brought up any personal concerns, please contact the *beyondblue* Support Service on **1300 22 4636** or you can email or chat online at www.beyondblue.org.au/getsupport

Notes

A large, empty, light orange rounded rectangular area intended for participants to take notes.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: TRANSCRIPTS

OLI'S EXPERIENCE WITH ANXIETY

The first signs that something wasn't right for me was that I could no longer wake up and be okay with the day. Everything that was putting forward was going to be an extreme challenge for me. Snowballing worries is probably the hardest thing that I've ever come to terms with.

The feeling of going from a state of, I guess, calmness when I first woke up and it was almost instantaneous that somehow my thoughts would just be flooded with everything at once. And I'll think about the meeting that I had, and then almost instantaneously the thought about the meeting turned into about the thought of whether or not I'd done the right thing for the meeting, which then turned out to be the thought of whether or not the people in the meeting liked me, are they going to not like me now because I'm proposing the wrong stuff? Am I going to end up losing my job? Which then somehow went from being about a professional aspect to a personal aspect where I started attacking myself and it turned from are these people going to like me to, Am I going to like me? Do I like me? What am I possibly adding to any of these situations and why am I turning up?

So, when I came to the realisation of what was going on and then I realised that for once in my life I wasn't going to be able to fix this myself. I quickly looked into my options, and when I say quickly, I let it go on for much longer than it ever needed to.

In the initial stages I met a bloke at work who worked in a department and he was the biggest guy I've ever seen; he was a bear covered in tattoos. And, very quickly, I built a relationship with him because I found out he was going through exactly what I was going through. And it got me to a place where I realised that I could finally start to look into treating this. I picked up the phone, I went and saw my GP and they referred me.

Yeah, it was inevitably the best thing I've ever done.

The moment that my doctor told me that I was dealing with an anxiety condition was truly just an instant sense of relief. And by no means do I try and deplete the seriousness of that.

It did give me great sense and direction in terms of what I needed to do to deal with my anxiety.

I'm in a job now that's tenfold more stressful than I was two years ago and I take it with a grain of salt. I've learned how to breathe properly, I've learned how to calm my anxieties because everything can be fixed. And, there's absolutely nothing that can't. If you're at the early stages and you feel that you might be, particularly treading down the line of anxiety disorder, my first port of call would be to encourage you to get information, to access information, and there are so many portals to do it.

And what you quickly find is the moment that you start being able to tread water with what's going on, the battle becomes just a little bit easier.

NICK'S EXPERIENCE – PART 1

Nick: Arrrrrgg! This bloody thing. They haven't given me the right part. This is hopeless.

Dianne: Hey Nick, Toyota nearly done? Got the owner on the phone.

Nick: No it isn't. We're all under the pump out here. It's all right for you guys in the office.

Bill: Calm down mate. It's not her fault.

Nick: Well it's not my fault. You blokes are under the pump too right?
Yeah, just ignore me fellas. Geez I'm sick of this joint.

Bill: Calm down Nick. No one's got it in for you mate.

Nick: Doesn't feel that way. Anyway, I need to get on with it.

(Phone)

Nick: I can't just magically produce money we don't have, Kate. I'm doing everything I can. No, no. Just ring them and put them off. I can't do every bloody thing. Kate? What's her problem?

NICK'S EXPERIENCE – PART 2

Bill: Can I sit down?

Nick: Yeah, if you want.

Bill: New phone?

Nick: Yeah, I've had it a couple of weeks. But, I can't work out how to text properly.

Bill: Ah, right. We've worked together for well, I suppose 10 years now. I say we'd know each other fairly well.

Nick: Yeah, I suppose.

Bill: Is everything going all right? You seem to be stressed and angry.

Nick: Nothing. I'm fine.

Bill: Well you don't seem fine. Is everything alright at home?

Nick: It's nothing I can't handle.

Bill: Well it's affecting your work. You can't speak to Dianne how you did the other day. And throwing things around the factory, you know that's dangerous. Can I help? It's just between you and me.

Nick: Everything's just getting on top of me at the moment. Kate can't work because of her back. We're trying to pay the mortgage, school fees, bills ... all on one income. It's just killing me. We haven't had a holiday in years.

Bill: Well have you spoken to anyone? You know, there's a hotline you can ring, it's free and confidential. I'll get you the details.

Nick: Mate, I'll be fine, it's just a rough patch.

Bill: Do you remember my mate Paulie?

Nick: Yeah.

Bill: He had a terrible time last year. Everything that could go wrong did go wrong. I mean he nearly lost his house. He was just stressed out to the max and he was such an easy-going bloke. And then he spoke to someone.

Nick: I can't find the time for anything. But yes ... yes yes look you're right. I do need to do something.

Bill: Well I'll get the number.

Have you spoken to the boss? Marco is really good like that. He can do something with your shifts. Give you a few extra hours. When I was going through the divorce, he was fantastic. He was really good.

Nick: Maybe I should.

Bill: Well it might make you feel better, and I'll get that information and I'll give it to you after lunch tomorrow. Why don't you make an appointment to see Marco?

Nick: Thanks Bill.

Bill: Five o'clock yet?

Nick: Not even close ...

APPENDIX 2: TOOLBOX TALK OUTLINES

TOOLBOX TALK 1: ABOUT ANXIETY AND DEPRESSION

(May be modified to suit your work site)

Audience: Staff members and colleagues

Duration: 5 minutes

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Be aware of the prevalence of anxiety and depression.
- Understand the signs and symptoms that indicate someone is at risk of/may be experiencing anxiety and/or depression.
- Be aware of the personal risk and protective factors associated with anxiety and depression.

KEY POINTS

1. THE PREVALENCE OF ANXIETY AND DEPRESSION

- Anxiety and depression are serious health conditions.
- Around 3 million people in Australia are living with anxiety and depression at any given time.
- 1 in 6 women and 1 in 8 men are likely to experience depression in their lifetime, and 1 in 3 women and 1 in 5 men are likely to experience anxiety in their lifetime.
- Anxiety and depression affect people at all stages of life, but the prevalence is highest during prime working years.
- Less than 50 per cent of people who experience a mental health condition take action by getting the treatment and support they need.
- Untreated depression is a major risk factor for suicide. Suicide rates are double the national road toll and are particularly high for men.

- These conditions not only affect the person who is experiencing them, but there is a flow-on effect to the person's partner, family members and carer/s.

2. COMMON SIGNS OF ANXIETY AND DEPRESSION

An anxiety condition is more than being stressed and is different to everyday experiences of feeling worried or anxious.

Some of the signs and symptoms of anxiety include:

- difficulty sleeping, feeling restless and on edge
- feeling overwhelmed, panicked and/or irritable
- constant worrying, reoccurring/obsessive thoughts
- avoiding particular situations or people
- increased alcohol or other drug use.

Recognising these signs and symptoms early is important as the sooner a person takes action, the better the outcome.

A person may be depressed if, for two weeks or more, they have felt sad, down or miserable most of the time or have lost interest or pleasure in most of their usual activities.

Some of the signs and symptoms of depression include:

- loss of interest in work, hobbies and doing things they normally enjoy
- lack of energy, difficulty sleeping or sleeping more than usual
- irritability, feeling overwhelmed, difficulty concentrating
- increased use of alcohol and other drugs
- thinking or feeling hopeless or worthless.

3. PERSONAL RISK AND PROTECTIVE FACTORS FOR ANXIETY AND DEPRESSION

While there is no single cause of anxiety and depression, there are a number of known risk factors. Generally, anxiety and depression are not a result of a single event, but from a combination of factors.

Some risk factors include:

- death of a loved one
- relationship and family problems — sick kids, divorce
- personal or family history of anxiety and/or depression
- financial problems
- job stress
- physical injury or illness
- caring for someone who is unwell
- loneliness or isolation.

If certain protective factors are in place, these will reduce the risk of a person experiencing anxiety and/or depression.

Some protective factors include:

- support from family and friends
- exercising regularly
- eating well
- good sleep patterns
- hobbies.

SUPPORTING RESOURCES

- Poster
- *Anxiety and depression: An information booklet*

The information booklet can be ordered from the Heads Up website or via the *beyondblue* Support Service.

TOOLBOX TALK 2: THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE WORKPLACE AND MENTAL HEALTH

(May be modified to suit your work site)

Audience: Staff members and colleagues

Duration: 5 minutes

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Understand the impact of mental health conditions on the workplace.
2. Recognise work-related risk and protective factors.
3. Understand the importance of raising awareness.
4. Understand the importance of reducing stigma.

KEY POINTS

1. THE IMPACT OF ANXIETY AND DEPRESSION ON THE WORKPLACE

If someone has anxiety and/or depression and is not able to work, or is continuing to work without treatment and support, this can have a negative impact on the individual, the team and the workplace.

Some impacts on the individual may include:

- increased days off
- personal finances being affected (if someone has no sick leave)
- reduced quality of life.

Some impacts on the workplace may include:

- lower team morale
- reduced workload and productivity of the team.

The workplace can affect mental health in both positive and negative ways and, conversely, an individual's mental health can have an impact on the workplace.

2. WORKPLACE RISK AND PROTECTIVE FACTORS

Staff would all be familiar with risk and protective factors linked to WH&S and the importance of being aware of them. Similarly, there are workplace risk and protective factors linked to mental health that are also very important to recognise and act on.

In the previous toolbox talk we looked at general risk and protective factors for anxiety and depression. In this toolbox talk, risk and protective factors specific to the workplace will be addressed.

Some work-related risk factors to be aware of include:

- conflict at work
- bullying
- job insecurity/redundancy/job loss
- poor work-life balance
- lack of support
- high workloads/not enough work
- (include any others specific to your workplace that you have identified).

Some work-related protective factors include:

- good leadership
- strong team morale
- peer support
- involvement in decision making
- flexibility
- access to support
- social activities
- (include any others specific to your workplace that you have identified).

3. RAISING AWARENESS

Another way to increase protective factors in the workplace is to raise awareness of anxiety and depression. This can be achieved through toolbox talks, such as these, talking openly about mental health conditions in the workplace, by promoting resources, and by encouraging everyone in the workplace to participate in events that raise funds and awareness of health issues, including mental health. R U OK? Day, for example, is a great way to raise awareness, show support, and get people talking.

4. REDUCING STIGMA

Stigma surrounding mental health conditions can prevent individuals who may be experiencing symptoms of anxiety and depression from getting the support they need.

Speaking openly about mental health in the workplace, just as one would about physical health, can help to reduce stigma. If someone has a back injury or a broken arm you would ask them how they are — it should be the same for people experiencing anxiety and depression.

Consider inviting someone to talk about their experience with anxiety and/or depression. This is a great way of improving understanding, raising awareness and reducing stigma. You can also direct workers to the *beyondblue* website and YouTube channels, which have a host of videos featuring people's personal stories of hope, recovery and resilience.

SUPPORTING RESOURCES TO HAND OUT

- *Taking care of your mental health in the workplace: A guide for employees*

This booklet can be ordered from the Heads Up website or via the *beyondblue* Support Service.

TOOLBOX TALK 3: TAKING ACTION TO SUPPORT A STAFF MEMBER

(May be modified to suit your work site)

Audience: Staff members and colleagues

Duration: 5 minutes

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. To increase confidence and skills to initiate a conversation.
2. Understand how to respond appropriately when approached by someone at work to discuss anxiety and depression.
3. Be aware of available support.
4. Be able to assist someone at work to access appropriate support.

1. TALKING TO SOMEONE AT WORK – DOS AND DON'TS

Talking to someone at work who you may be concerned about can be difficult and takes courage, but it could mean the difference between them taking action, sooner rather than later.

There is no single way to approach someone in the workplace as each person and situation will be different. It may not always go as planned, but the important thing is to have the conversation and encourage the individual to seek support.

Some good opening lines are:

- *I've noticed that ...*
- *What's going on for you at the moment?*
- *I'm concerned you might not be travelling too well ...*
- *I am worried about you ... are you OK?*
- *You don't seem yourself ...*

There are some important things to keep in mind when initiating a conversation. Remember to:

- talk to them in a quiet place
- break the ice by talking about something neutral
- listen without judgment
- encourage the person to seek support.

Some important 'don'ts' to remember are:

- don't ignore or avoid the problem
- don't try to fix their problems.

Don't say:

- *Harden up*
- *Get over it mate, you'll be fine*
- *You're worrying about nothing*

2. RECOVERY AND WORK

Once someone gets the right assistance and supports in place, they can recover from anxiety and/or depression and continue to be a productive and valued worker.

Some things their colleagues can do are:

- talk openly about anxiety and depression
- include them in work activities and conversations, e.g. ask them for a coffee, for lunch, to get involved in footy tipping etc.
- let them know you are there to talk if they ever need it
- encourage them to exercise, eat well and get involved in social activities.

3. AVAILABLE SUPPORT

There are a range of treatments, supports and services available to assist with recovery and the sooner someone seeks support, the better the outcome.

The *beyondblue* Support Service gives every person in Australia the opportunity to talk through his or her concerns with a mental health professional. People who access the service can receive a one-on-one counselling session focusing on addressing an immediate concern, as well as receive information and advice on continuing to seek support. The Support Service is contactable via phone, web chat and email.

beyondblue also has a range of free resources, including information, videos, booklets, fact sheets and flyers, available to view or download from its website. Free printed booklets, fact sheets and flyers can also be ordered via the website or through the Support Service.

Free workplace specific information and resources are available from www.headsup.org.au or by calling the *beyondblue* Support Service.

Other websites that might be useful resources are as follows:

- *beyondblue*'s Man Therapy website (www.mantherapy.org.au) encourages men to take action against anxiety and depression. Here men can assess their wellbeing, get answers to frequently asked questions about mental health and receive action-oriented advice on dealing with anxiety and depression.
- *beyondblue*'s Just Speak Up website (www.justspeakup.org.au) encourages new and expecting parents to share their stories — to promote awareness of perinatal anxiety and depression, reduce stigma and provide information on where to get help.
- *beyondblue*'s youthbeyondblue website (www.youthbeyondblue.org.au) aims to empower young people aged 12–25, their friends and those who care for them to respond to anxiety and depression. It supports and promotes environments and settings that build on the strengths of young people and responds to ongoing change.

Other useful support options include:

- Lifeline
- Suicide Call Back Service
- MensLine Australia
- A local GP
- Workplace HR department
- Employee Assistance Program (EAP) (if your workplace has one available)

Let your staff know that you have information and contact details for all of these services if anyone wants them.

SUPPORTING RESOURCES

- *Take action on mental health in the workplace* wallet card.

FURTHER RESOURCES AND CONTACTS

www.beyondblue.org.au

Learn more about anxiety and depression, or talk it through with our Support Service.

1300 22 4636

Email or chat to us online at

www.beyondblue.org.au/getsupport

WEBSITES (INFORMATION AND SUPPORT)

- www.headsup.org.au
- www.mantherapy.org.au
- www.youthbeyondblue.com
- www.justspeakup.org.au

OTHER IMPORTANT SUPPORT OPTIONS

Lifeline

13 11 14 www.lifeline.org.au

Lifeline is a 24/7 crisis support and suicide prevention service.

Suicide Call Back Service

1300 659 467 www.suicidecallbackservice.org.au

The Suicide Call Back Service is a 24-hour, nationwide service that provides telephone and online counselling to people 15 years and over who are suicidal, caring for someone who is suicidal, or bereaved by suicide.

MensLine Australia

1300 789 978 www.mensline.org.au

MensLine Australia is the national telephone and online support, information and referral service for men with family and relationship concerns.

The service is available from anywhere in Australia and is staffed by professional counsellors, experienced in men's issues.

SANE Australia

1800 18 SANE (7263) www.sane.org

SANE Australia is a national charity helping Australians affected by mental illness lead a better life through support, training, and education via their helpline and website.

A local GP

GPs are the best starting point for someone seeking professional help. A good GP can:

- make a diagnosis
- check for any physical health problem or medication that may be contributing to the anxiety and/or depression, or may affect your treatment
- provide information and discuss available treatments, taking the person's preferences into account
- work with the person to draw up a Mental Health Treatment Plan so he or she can get a Medicare rebate for psychological treatment
- provide support, brief counselling or, in some cases, more specialised talking therapy
- prescribe medication
- refer a person to a mental health specialist such as a psychologist or psychiatrist.

FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES ON WORKPLACE MENTAL HEALTH, INCLUDING ONLINE VIDEOS OF INDIVIDUALS' EXPERIENCES WITH ANXIETY AND DEPRESSION

Heads Up www.headsup.org.au

Heads Up was developed by the Mentally Healthy Workplace Alliance and *beyondblue*. This website is all about giving individuals and businesses free tools and resources to help them take action around mental health in the workplace. Heads Up can assist businesses to develop an action plan to create a mentally healthy workplace, and everyone in the workplace can find out about taking care of their own mental health, or get tips on having a conversation with someone they're concerned about.

beyondblue's official YouTube page

www.youtube.com/user/beyondblueofficial

Watch people from a range of backgrounds talk about their experiences, as well as videos from *beyondblue's* national awareness campaigns including Man Therapy, Get to know anxiety and Stop. Think. Respect. Workplace-specific videos are also available via dedicated playlists.



Housing Industry Australia (HIA)
is a proud supporter of *beyondblue*
and workplace mental health.



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 employees, 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.



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