

Staying well at work in trying times



What this fact sheet covers:

- Key points to remember as a manager to support your teams' mental health
- Key points to remember to reduce stress during difficult times and prioritise your wellbeing

As we start 2022 facing new, albeit not entirely unfamiliar, uncertainties that affect all aspects of our lives, it is more important than ever to consider the toll placed on our wellbeing by these factors and the implications for our mental health, especially in terms of our working lives. This is not how anyone wanted things to go and it's reasonable to feel a range of emotions from angry, to despondency, to anxiety and overwhelm.

None of have been unaffected by the consequences of the easing of restrictions, the omicron variant, and the dramatic rise in cases throughout the country. Whether we have contracted COVID ourselves, have had loved ones who have, or are continuing to vigilantly protect ourselves and others from the disease, one cannot help but feel a general sense of exhaustion and fatigue, especially at a time we all needed respite. This fatigue is compounded by social isolation, parenting concerns and day-care closures, cancelled plans and holidays, testing barriers and so much uncertainty about where this all goes now.

In a workplace setting, we have seen the impacts of illness and isolation leading to overwork and burnout especially in frontline workers, supply chain problems, financial strain of lost work, job insecurity or long-term work sustainability especially for small businesses.

Working-age Australians are experiencing dramatically elevated psychological distress over the last two years compared with pre-pandemic levels. While the current situation is likely to exacerbate this as the fears, frustrations, and fatigue continues. Financial distress and overall work and social impacts triggered by COVID-19 have been shown to be associated with worse mental health, even after accounting for demographic factors and job loss.





Key points to remember as a manager to support your teams' mental health

- Maintain regular catch-ups with your team
- Look out for signs of struggle.
- Set up regular 1:1 meetings with staff you're concerned about.
- Try to provide support, both in and beyond the workplace.
- Keep an eye on your own mental health.

Key points to remember to reduce stress during difficult times and prioritise your wellbeing

As individuals now more than ever it is important to prioritise your mental health and wellbeing. This is an ongoing strain that continues to ask so much of us, but we can take some solace in the incredible resilience we have all shown already.

There is not a lot we can do to alleviate the global uncertainties but there are things we can do to keep ourselves as healthy as possible. These things include:

- Acknowledge the difficulties of this time but practice gratitude too where you're able.
- Rely on reputable news and information.

- Continuing to look for balance where possible. Planning to include achievement, connection, and pleasurable activities into every day, even in small ways.
- Channelling uncomfortable energy into action or kindness and assistance of others.
- Limit or try to prevent engaging in behaviours that feed your feelings of distress or anxiety.
- Stay focused on the present, on what you can control, rather than speculating about an unpredictable future.
- Notice the thoughts and emotions you experience (as well as the triggers for these) but don't surrender to them.
- Look after your body (through sleep, diet, exercise, and limiting use of drugs and alcohol).
- Stay connected with others.
- Remember to breathe.
- If you're feeling like you're not coping, get professional advice.

For more COVID-19 resources for managers and employees please visit: www.blackdoginstitute.org.au/resources-support/coronavirus-resources-for-anxiety-stress/managers-workers/



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