# 10 step guide to staying mentally healthy at work

Developed in conjunction with Beyond Blue, this guide is designed to help small businesses create mentally healthy workplaces, especially during busy times.

## Keep work hours in check

**1. Take breaks when you can and create boundaries between life and work.**
Take regular breaks to stretch, move and rest your mind for a moment between tasks or jobs. If working from home – at the end of the day, close your computer and focus on your home life, not work.

**2. Challenge yourself to outsource, delegate or say 'no'.**
Taking on too much may feel like a short-term fix during peak periods, but in the long run can lead to stress and burnout. Think about whether this is something you regularly do, and give yourself opportunities to reverse this behaviour. Learning to say no, in addition to practical tips from other small business owners, are discussed in this video.

## Maintain a healthy lifestyle

**3. Physical health contributes to mental wellbeing.**
Try to maintain a good sleep routine, exercise as normal, eat well and limit your alcohol consumption, especially during busy work periods. A healthy lifestyle will help your body cope with external stressors.

**4. Take up a hobby.**
Developing an interest or hobby outside of your work (something that is just for you, or that you share with friends and family) will help you to create boundaries between your work and private life.

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## Create a mentally healthy work environment

**5. Develop a Wellbeing Plan for your business.**
Creating a mental health and wellbeing plan, for yourself and your business, will ensure you have strategies in place to protect your wellbeing and the wellbeing of your staff (if you employ people) through busy and challenging times. You can find <u>downloadable mental wellbeing plan templates and resources to support small business owners</u> at Beyond Blue's Heads Up website.

**6. Reduce the stigma.**
Encourage open and honest conversations about the pressures of life and work – at all levels of your business – to reduce the stigma around mental health conditions. Small business owner Fatimah shares <u>her mental health story here</u>, including what she learnt about her anxiety, its triggers, and how opening up can help. Also see Black Dog Institute's <u>Mental Health is Everybody's Business</u> training.

**7. Ensure zero tolerance to discrimination and bullying.**
Both are common sources of mental health issues in business. Ensure policies and procedures are up to date in this area, and that all staff are aware of these. You can find further resources from <u>Heads Up</u>, <u>Safe Work Australia</u> or <u>The Australian Human Rights Commission</u>.

## Support others

**8. Put support strategies in place.**
As an employer, there are infinite ways to support your team:
• Monitor their workload.
• Have regular catch ups.
• Provide recognition for a job well done.
• Sit down together for coffee and chat about your lives outside of work.
For more advice and resources on supporting others, including tips on starting conversations around mental health, visit <u>Heads Up</u>.

## Stay connected and access support

**9. Reach out when you need support.**
Join a business network or find a business mentor to talk through the pressures you're feeling. Specialist support is also available if you're experiencing financial difficulty or stress. Some useful resources include <u>My Business Health</u> and the <u>Small Business Debt Helpline</u>.

**10. Access free mental health coaching.**
<u>NewAccess for Small Business Owners (NASBO)</u> is a free mental health coaching program developed by Beyond Blue offering flexible phone and video call support options for small business owners. Access up to six sessions with a coach and learn how to manage stress and improve mental wellbeing. Information on further training programs can be found <u>here</u>.
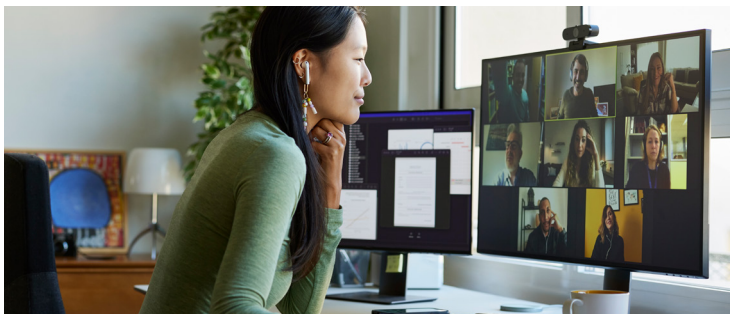
When we connect, we feel better. That's why, with our partner Beyond Blue, we're helping to connect more people with mental health information and with each other. Learn more <u>here</u>.

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