

Around 45% of Australians will experience a mental illness at some point in their life between the ages of 16 and 85¹. Mental illness may develop at any time with most employees successfully managing their illness with little to no impact on their work, others may require workplace support for a short period of time, while a minority will require ongoing workplace supports and strategies.

With unhealthy work environments or workplace incidents able to cause considerable stress and exacerbate or contribute to the development of mental illness, it is not something organisations should ignore. It is estimated that Australian businesses lose over \$6.5 billion each year² by failing to provide early intervention/treatment for employees with mental health conditions.

DEIB strategies to consider

- Promote mental inclusion by giving access to educational and mental health resources.
- Encourage a healthy work life blend and monitor adherence with an open and ongoing dialogue.
- Ensure leadership teams are vocal in support and leading by example.
- Provide flexible and sustainable ways of working and support open and ongoing dialogue.

Benefits of supporting Mental Health

- Research shows that for every dollar spent on identifying and supporting workers³ with their mental health yields close to a 500% return in improved productivity.
- Flexible and sustainable working practices not only support workers with mental illness but also benefits other employees in the workplace.
- Adherence to OHS and Disability and Discrimination legislation, resulting in lower risk of litigation.
- Creates a safe and inclusive organisational climate improving both the mental wellbeing of all employees alongside improving retention and reducing absenteeism.

1 Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2023). Prevalence and impact of mental illness.

2 Australian Human Rights Commission (2010). Workers with a Mental Illness: A Practical Guide for Managers

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