

Free mental health guide for small business advisers

Advisers, family and friends can support the mental health and wellbeing of Australia's 2.26 million small business owners through a free Beyond Blue guide available online.

The *Supporting small business owners to improve their mental health and wellbeing at work* guide provides business advisers such as accountants, bookkeepers, tax agents, industry associations and representative bodies, or family and friends, with practical tips about how to provide support without needing to be trained counsellors or clinicians.

The guide includes information such as:

- How to provide immediate support to a small business owner who is distressed;
- Recognising the signs of poor mental health;
- Planning and having a conversation with someone you're concerned about;
- What to do if the person doesn't want to talk about their mental health; and,
- How small business owners can improve their situation.

Ninety-seven (97) per cent of businesses in Australia are small businesses employing up to 19 people. Small business owners can face a number of challenges in starting and running a business, which can impact their mental health.

Beyond Blue CEO Georgie Harman said the guide was designed for advisers, families and friends because they were often the first to notice when small business owners experience mental health challenges.

"Almost one third of small business owners report having high levels of psychological distress, mainly due to long working hours, social isolation, customer demands, cash flow issues and conflicting demands between home and work," Ms Harman said.

"These factors can sometimes increase the risk of developing mental health conditions such as anxiety or depression. Small business owners have told Beyond Blue they want mental health resources to be available through their business networks so they can access the information through established and trusted contacts.

“The guide allows advisers, who often see first-hand how stress can affect small business owners, to play an important support role that goes beyond advice on accounts and assets. It can also help the loved ones of small business owners to provide support when work is getting on top of them.”

Spinn Business Solutions founder Tim Hoopmann said the guide simplified mental health literacy for small business advisers.

“This resource gives small business advisers and owners a great place to start,” Mr Hoopmann said.

“The guide’s ease of navigation makes it a very powerful tool that not only supports mental health, but it will also help their client’s business.”

Institute of Certified Bookkeepers Australia CEO Amanda Linton said the guide will allow small business advisers to be proactive in helping clients take control of their mental health.

“It means advisers can have a balanced conversation and realise while they can’t fix everything, they can be part of the solution by pointing their clients in the right direction,” Ms Linton said.

“The guide empowers business advisers to give someone else the tools to develop a support network, which is something I never had access to when I was running my own business.”

The guide also provides links to resources such as personal and workplace wellbeing plans, actions that small business owners can take themselves, and tips on how small business advisers can look after their own mental health.

It is available for download at bb.org.au/supportingsmallbusiness

The guide complements Everymind’s [Ahead for Business](https://www.aheadforbusiness.com.au) website and app for small business owners.

Mental health professionals are available at the Beyond Blue Support Service via phone 24/7 on 1300 22 4636 or via www.beyondblue.org.au/get-support for online chat (3PM – 12AM AEST or email responses within 24 hours).

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Beyond Blue

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