

COVID-19 pandemic and your mental health

COVID-19 has impacted small business owners worldwide. Whether your business has closed due to the pandemic or is still in operation, it's important to look after your mental health and wellbeing.

As a small business owner, you may have been juggling various challenges such as adapting your business to COVID-19 rules and regulations, managing employees and payments, and dealing with customer frustration towards restrictions. Navigating these challenges can cause a great deal of stress.

Signs your mental health is impacted

With the unpredictable nature of COVID-19, it's understandable that you may feel worried about what will happen next, both in your personal and business life, including your financial situation. Consider seeking support for your mental health if you are experiencing or are concerned about any of the signs or symptoms listed below.

Prolonged decreased energy or fatigue: You feel constantly drowsy no matter how much sleep you've had.

Difficulty concentrating or making decisions: You can't hold your attention on important tasks and even small decisions seem difficult and overwhelming.

Loss of interest in hobbies: You have stopped doing something you once enjoyed, and have not made an effort to re-establish your hobby.

Persistent feelings of sadness or emptiness: Things that may once have brought you joy don't seem to affect you, or cannot overpower the feelings of sadness.

Anger or irritability: Feeling agitated without reason and overreacting to minor inconveniences.

Feelings of panic or dread: You find yourself anticipating the worst.

Restlessness or racing heart: You feel on edge and anxious often.

Lack of confidence: You do not trust your own judgement and have lower self-esteem than usual.

Changes in eating behaviours: Eating notably more or less every day.

How can you improve your mental health and wellbeing?

If you are concerned about your mental health and wellbeing, consider implementing some of these basic techniques into your daily life.

Set a daily routine: Try to go to bed and wake up at the same time every day, eat meals at regular times and schedule activities during your day.

Do more exercise: 30 minutes of physical activity a day is recommended. You might consider breaking this into smaller periods by walking 10 minutes at lunch, or doing short activity bursts throughout your day.

Reduce screen time: Spending extensive hours on screens impacts our ability to sleep as well productivity and efficiency levels at work. It's important to keep on top of the time spent on digital devices.

Practise self-care: Look after yourself and make time for things you want to do. Learn some relaxation and breathing exercises and perform them regularly.

Be more social: Connect with friends and family daily, even if it's virtually. Talk to somebody you trust if you are feeling down.

Try to focus on the positive: Perhaps list three good things that happened to you today, no matter how small.



Further reading and resources

There are a lot of mental health resources for small businesses impacted by COVID-19. Please see the readings and resources below to access further support.

Ahead for Business

Supporting the mental health and wellbeing of Australian small business owners.

www.aheadforbusiness.org.au

NewAccess for Small Business Owners

A free and confidential mental health coaching program, developed by Beyond Blue, to give small business owners the support they need.

www.beyondblue.org.au/get-support/newaccess/newaccess-for-small-business-owners

Coronavirus Mental Wellbeing Support Service

Provides information, advice, and strategies to help you manage your mental health and wellbeing during COVID-19.

www.coronavirus.beyondblue.org.au

COVID-19 updates

The latest official coronavirus news, updates and advice from the Australian Government.

www.australia.gov.au

Head to Health COVID-19 support

A variety of COVID-19 information including facts, mental health resources, managing financial stress, where to access mental health services, and information for parents.

www.headtohealth.gov.au/covid-19-support/covid-19-support

Work and your mental health during the coronavirus outbreak

Information on what to expect and how to look after yourself if you lose your job as a result of COVID-19.

www.headsup.org.au/your-mental-health/work-and-your-mental-health-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak

Safework Australia small business and COVID-19

Coping with some of the workplace difficulties of COVID 19 such as stress around transmission, looking after staff mental health, and dealing with customer aggression.

www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/covid-19-information-workplaces/industry-information/retail/mental-health