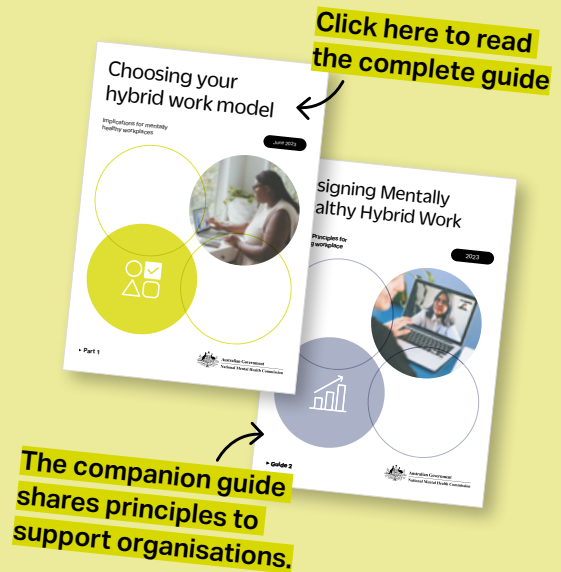# Choosing a hybrid work model

Many organisations in Australia currently use forms of hybrid work that were established during COVID-19 and have grown organically.

Quick Reference

Click here to read the complete guide

Choosing your hybrid work model
Implications for mentally healthy workplaces
June 2023
▸ Part 1
Australian Government
National Mental Health Commission

Designing Mentally Healthy Hybrid Work
Principles for a mentally healthy workplace
2023
▸ Guide 2
Australian Government
National Mental Health Commission

The companion guide shares principles to support organisations.

Key takeaways

- ⊕ Workers want flexibility and involvement in decision making when it comes to when and where they work.

- ⊕ There are 5 common hybrid work models.

- ⊕ Every model can both positively and negatively affect mental health in your workplace, because every organisation, job role and worker has different needs and expectations.

Research has identified 5 common hybrid work models. No 'one-size-fits-all' hybrid work model suits all organisations. Your organisation must decide on a model that reflects:

- overall organisational needs
- the types of work and roles people perform
- the unique needs of different departments
- your workers' individual needs and circumstances.

Understanding each model can:

- guide your choice of the hybrid work model best suited to your organisation
- further refine your current model
- enable you to proactively develop a plan to control and manage the psychosocial risks of a specific hybrid work model while benefiting from its positive aspects.

1. Office First

The worker **predominantly works in the office** (or on site) but occasionally works remotely.

Great for
- Better visibility with managers and peers
- Relationship building opportunities
- Career development

Watch out for
- Reduced worker satisfaction
- Little autonomy for workers
- Lower self-perceived job performance (in part, due to a reduced ability to work undisturbed)
- Higher incidence of work–life interference

Suggested supports
- Provide areas for deep concentration work or private conversations
- Support work–life balance
- Create autonomy

2. Fixed Split

The worker is office-based for a **specified number of days per week** which are **decided by the employer.**

Great for
- Reduced burden of coordinating work across different locations and team members
- Better opportunity to work undisturbed

Watch out for
- Greater monitoring by managers
- Lower worker satisfaction
- Flexibility limitations
- Poor work-life boundaries

Suggested supports
- Create autonomy
- Establish clear parameters
- Support staff to develop strategies to manage

3. Flexible Split

The worker is office-based for a **specified number of days** which are **decided by the worker.**

Great for
- Less negative impact of work on home life
- Improved opportunities to provide role clarity verses other hybrid work models

Watch out for
- Less visibility with managers and peers
- Reduced use of workers' skills
- Fewer opportunities to build professional networks
- Fewer opportunities to receive high-quality feedback

Suggested supports
- Cultivate workplace relationships
- Promote learning and development
- Optimise job tasks

4. Fully Flexible

The **worker is free to choose their work location** every day.

Great for
- High worker satisfaction
- High worker autonomy
- Better skill use
- Better self-perceived job performance
- Better opportunity to work undisturbed

Watch out for
- Potentially less visibility with managers and peers
- Potentially fewer opportunities to build professional networks
- Fewer opportunities to receive high-quality feedback
- Implicit support for 'always on' culture

Suggested supports
- Establish role clarity
- Create hybrid working guidelines
- Cultivate workplace relationships
- Manage work–life balance

5. Remote First

The worker **predominantly works remotely** but works in the office (or on site) occasionally.

Great for
- High worker autonomy
- Better opportunity to work undisturbed
- Better self-perceived job performance
- Work-life boundaries tend to be blurred, but to a lesser extent than other models

Watch out for
- Less visibility with managers and peers
- Fewer opportunities to build professional networks
- Fewer opportunities to receive high-quality feedback

Suggested supports
- Cultivate workplace relationships
- Promote learning and development

If you or someone you know needs support, our **urgent help page** lists support services you can reach out to now. In an emergency, please call 000.

Mentally Healthy Workplaces