



Measuring mentally healthy workplaces

Many people are aware of the importance of mental health at work, but sometimes it is difficult to know where to start, or how things are tracking.



Key takeaways

Measuring how mentally healthy your workplace is does not need to be hard and can help you:

- ◆ **Figure out what is and is not working to make your workplace more mentally healthy**
- ◆ **Solve specific challenges related to your organisation or workplace**
- ◆ **Comply with work health and safety obligations**
- ◆ **Improve your business practices and meet goals**
- ◆ **Improve your mental health and that of your workers**

Why measurement matters

Measurement is key to a continual improvement approach.






Measuring how mentally healthy your workplace is

▶ 1. Identify your goals

Knowing what you want to achieve and what areas to focus on helps you identify what data you need.

A good place to start is with the 3 pillars set out in the Blueprint for mentally healthy workplaces:

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Protect
Identify and manage work-related risks to mental health
- 
Respond
Identify and respond to support people experiencing mental ill-health or distress
- 
Promote
Recognise and enhance the positive aspects of work that contribute to good mental health

Measuring how mentally healthy your workplace is cont.

▶ 2. Use existing data sources

Gathering data from your day-to-day operations can be an easy and efficient way to understand your workplace. You probably already collect most of the data you need. You can also gather new data through observations, work diaries or surveys.

Remember, you will need to consider how you will use, protect, store and dispose of personal information you collect. The *Privacy Act 1988* and the *Australian Privacy Principles* set out the rules and responsibilities for managing such data.

The guide provides sample measures for the Protect, Respond and Promote pillars, including:

- **Records about workers**
(e.g. leave, resignations, workers' compensation)
- **Work records and diaries**
(e.g. hours worked, tasks, duties)
- **Workplace interactions**
(e.g. between workers, with customers/clients)
- **Financial data**
(e.g. cost of injury, lost time, mental health resources)
- **Worker meetings**
- **One-to-one chats**
- **Surveys**
- **Wellbeing self-checks**

▶ 3. Interpret your data

Interpreting your data helps you review your actions and plan new actions. These questions can help you uncover the story behind the data:

- How has your performance changed, compared with expectations, past results, benchmarks or rules of thumb?
- What does the data tell you about an issue or question?
- Are there other explanations for a result?
- Are you missing any data?
- Are any of the results conflicting?

▶ 4. Communicate your results

It is a good idea to share your plan for measuring the organisation's progress with your team. This builds trust and encourages people to participate, which makes it more likely you will collect good information. Sometimes, it might be useful to share results with people outside your organisation, such as advisors, customers or clients, to communicate your achievements and performance.



Tips for success

- **Keep good records** – It makes it easier to look at trends over time. But remember, record keeping needs to be confidential and secure.
- **Consider how you can use surveys** – Free online surveys can be useful because they provide all the questions and come with detailed instructions. But they may not be anonymous if you have a small number of workers.
- **Remember measurement can change behaviour** – People often change their behaviour when they know they are being observed or they have an incentive to achieve a goal.
- **Watch out for unintended consequences** – Sometimes, goals can create the opposite outcomes (e.g. goals to reduce conflict can increase stress).
- **Beware of some common pitfalls:**
 - Indicators that do not relate to your problems do not add value.
 - A single measure or indicator may not tell the whole story.
 - Problems may not have a single cause—often, several factors will contribute.



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