



Minding your business

Free mental health training and support for Tasmanian Small Businesses*

3 Conversations Small Business Owners Need to have to Keep Staff Mentally Healthy

 **Lifeline** Training
Tasmania & Support

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Government

3 Conversations Small Business Owners Need to have to Keep Staff Mentally Healthy

As a small business owner, having open and supportive conversations with your staff about mental health and wellbeing is essential for creating a healthy and productive work environment. Here are three essential conversations you should have.

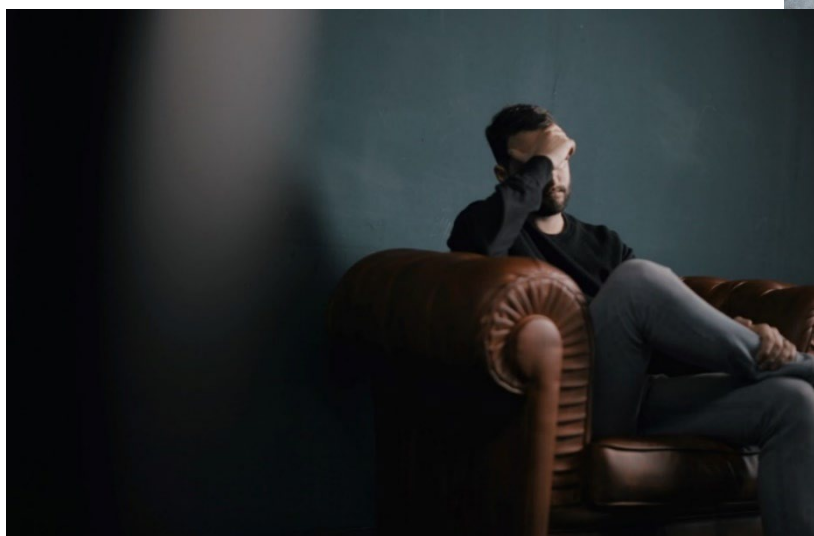
CONVERSATION 1

'We talk openly about mental health.'



CONVERSATION 2

'Pay attention to stress and burnout – balance is everything!'



CONVERSATION 3

'It's normal to reach out for professional support.'

1

“We talk openly about mental health!”

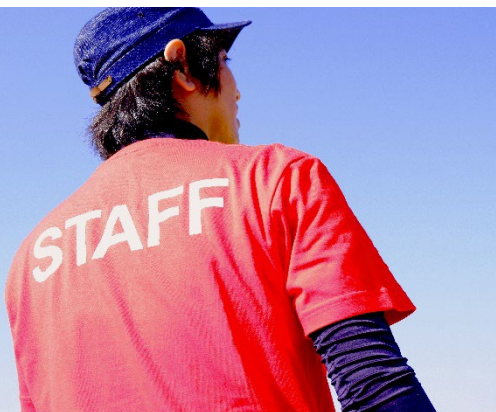
During this conversation, emphasize that it's okay to talk about mental health and that seeking help or taking time off for mental health reasons is not a sign of weakness. Make sure your employees know that you prioritize their well-being and that you're available to listen if they need someone to talk to.

Talk to your staff about the importance of mental well-being and how it impacts their overall performance and job satisfaction.

Start by creating a culture of openness and understanding around mental health.

Key Ideas for leading the discussion:

- * We talk openly about mental health challenges we've faced. We are role models for reducing stigma.*
- * You are welcome to share your experiences, but you don't have to. If you do, we will keep your story confidential. Please also respect other staff members confidentiality.*
- * We don't judge people for having mental health challenges. In fact, we've noticed it often make people stronger and more empathic – great customer engagement skills!*
- * Having a mental health challenge is completely normal – around 20% of the Australian population face mental health challenges annually.*
- * If you wish to go and build your skills in learning about and supporting others with mental health challenges, we will definitely support this.*
- * You can expect us to occasionally check in on you and your wellbeing as it has a large impact on your performance and job satisfaction.*
- * We want you to know that we care about you as a person, not just as an employee who we pay to do a job.*



2

“Pay attention to stress and burnout – balance is everything!”

During this conversation talk to your staff about the signs and symptoms of stress and burnout. Let your staff know that you will be observant of, and care about their mental health and wellbeing more than someone you pay to do a job.

Encourage them to speak up as early as possible if they notice signs of stress or burnout. Encourage the use of positive, strengths-based and supportive language as part of your workplace culture – it’s just how we do things around here.

Encourage the use of positive language in the workplace – it’s just how we do things around here.

Talk to your staff about the signs and symptoms of stress and burnout.

Encourage staff to speak up if they notice signs of stress.

Key Ideas for leading the discussion:

** We completely support work-life balance! We expect you to take regular breaks, use vacation time, any time-off-in-lieu, and engage in self-care activities.*

** We support flexible work hours where we can. Give us reasonable notice if you need appointments with generalist and specialist health care services.*

** We expect the whole team to pay attention to the language they use to ensure it is inclusive and not discriminatory. The language we use should also focus on building peoples strengths and be supportive in words and tone.*

** We celebrate successes and small victories – it keeps us connected, having fun and focused on achievement.*

** Be on the lookout for signs that you are in stress – headaches, fatigue, changes in sleep and appetite. Look out for mood swings, feeling overwhelm, anxiety, difficulty concentrating and not wanting to come to work.*

** Burnout is serious as it can be debilitating and take a long while to recover from. Make sure you talk to us if you start to feel like you can’t cope, start to become detached from life, become cynical about life and others, and just feel flat.*



3

“It’s normal to reach out for professional support.”

During this conversation talk to your staff about how normal it is to seek help from experts – in this context we are talking about seeking the skills of counsellors and psychologists - experts in working with the mind, emotions, wellbeing, and mental health challenges.

Seeking support is a sign of strength, humility, and wisdom. It shows you are proactive – a great workplace quality!

Seeking help from experts in their field is not only natural, it’s a smart move!

Key reasons why staff should reach out to a counsellor or psychologist:

- * *Counsellors and psychologist are experts at providing a safe space and starting awkward conversations about awkward topics*
- * *No one in society spends as much time helping people with thinking, feeling and behavioural challenges – they are the experts!*
- * *Stress management – they know heaps of techniques to help you refocus and manage your stress*
- * *Breaking negative patterns – they can help you gain insight into your unhelpful patterns and give you alternate patterns & strategies*
- * *Grief and loss support – they can offer you ideas to help you process emotions and find creative ways to keep moving forward*
- * *Addressing addictions – they can help address the underlying root causes and guide individuals toward recovery pathways*
- * *Anger – they have specialist knowledge and techniques for understanding root causes and strategies for managing anger*
- * *Increase wellbeing – it’s not always just the challenges – they are also great for taking your positive energy to the next level*
- * *Sports psychology – getting better at working with your mind is an essential part of performing better at the sport you love*



CONCLUSION

Would keeping good staff make running your business a lot easier?

Numerous studies show that paying attention to your staff's mental health and wellbeing is crucial for several reasons:

1. Employee Retention
 - Prioritising wellbeing builds loyalty, trust and commitment. People will hang around because they feel good being around a great culture.
2. Employee Productivity
 - When people feel good about themselves they want to contribute and make a difference, including at work.
3. Reduced Absenteeism
 - When we deal with stress while its small we don't get overwhelmed and take time off to recover.
4. Enhanced Team Morale
 - A positive environment where people feel supported and cared for, leads to better collaboration, creativity, fun and humour.

Minding Your Business

Free mental health training for your small business*

** up to 19 full-time staff or equivalent*

Are you Minding Your Business? If you're looking to keep you and your staff mentally healthy, register today to access Lifeline Tasmania and the Department of State Growth's Minding Your Business program. Tasmanian small businesses can receive free counselling support for staff and owners. Contact Lifeline Tasmania Training and Support on 1300 003 313. You can also email: training@lifelinetasmania.org.au or visit [lifelinetasmania.org.au/minding-your-business](https://www.lifelinetasmania.org.au/minding-your-business) to find out more.

Mobile: 1300 003 313

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