



Australian Government



Global trends and their local impact on mental health

Presented by
Beyond Blue

Welcome

'In the spirit of reconciliation, I respectfully acknowledge the Traditional Owners and Custodians of Country throughout Australia and their continuing connection to land, waters and community. I would like to pay my respect to them and their cultures, and Elders past and present'.

Access the presentation slides : tpb.gov.au/webinar-hub

What we will cover today

- ✓ TPB health and wellbeing policy
- ✓ Global trends and their local impact on mental health
- ✓ Available support
- ✓ Supporting your clients
- ✓ Q&A



Mental health and wellbeing CPE



- We recognise it's important to manage your mental health and wellbeing and our CPE policy helps support you.
- The CPE activities you undertake must be relevant to the services you provide.
- These activities need not be limited to your technical knowledge.
- Other areas such as practice management and ethics are also relevant and important.
- CPE activities can include up to 10% of educative health and wellbeing activities.



Global trends and their local impact on mental health

How tax practitioners can support themselves, and their clients.

Tax Practitioner Board webinar
Presented by Beyond Blue

Irene Verins, Senior Advisor
Luke Martin, Senior Advisor

23 May 2024



Support is available

National Debt Helpline
1800 007 007

moneysmart.gov.au



Beyond Blue

24/7 mental health support service

1300 22 4636
beyondblue.org.au

headspace

Online support and counselling to young people aged 12 to 25

1800 650 890 (9am-1am daily)
For webchat, visit: headspace.org.au/eheadspace

Kids Helpline

24/7 crisis support and suicide prevention services for children and young people aged 5 to 25

1800 55 1800
kidshelpline.com.au

1800RESPECT

24/7 support for people impacted by sexual assault, domestic violence and abuse

1800 737 732
1800respect.org.au

Lifeline

24/7 crisis support and suicide prevention services

13 11 14
lifeline.org.au

Suicide Call Back

24/7 crisis support and counselling service for people affected by suicide

1300 659 467
suicidecallbackservice.org.au

Mensline

24/7 counselling service for men

1300 78 99 78
mensline.org.au

QLife

LGBTI peer support and referral

1800 184 527 (6pm-10pm daily)
qlife.org.au (online chat 3pm-12am daily)

If you are concerned about someone at risk of immediate harm, call 000 or go to your nearest hospital emergency department.



Why consider trends?

Increase **awareness** of **social forces** that may be impacting your clients, their business and families – and yourself.

Even just the consideration of what **we can control** and **what is outside of our control** is important to maintain our mental health and wellbeing.

The challenges impacting our mental health are becoming increasingly complex

VUCA = Volatile | Uncertain | Complex | Ambiguous

Social cohesion

is declining. More people are feeling lonely and isolated

Political discourse,

polarisation and the endless news cycle is a source of constant division and negativity

Economic

uncertainty, inequality and the cost-of-living crisis continues to erode mental health

Environmental issues

are increasingly a source of anxiety, displacement and trauma as incidences of adverse weather events and climate change increase

Technological progress

is a double-edged sword. Technology offers new mental health solutions and opportunities to connect, but also brings risks

And the consequences are clear...

Mental health indicators demonstrate a **steady decline in adult mental health** since 2016

ABS reported a **50% increase** in incidence of **youth mental health conditions** 2007-2022

Psychological distress and loneliness are rising - almost half of 15–24-year-olds



Economic Trends

- 34.2 % of Australians were finding it **difficult or very difficult** to get by on their income
- **62 % spent less** on groceries and essential items
- 36% households experienced **food insecurity**,
- Falling behind with their loan/ rent payments has **more than doubled**

“The last time I couldn’t afford enough food for the family, I just got creative in the kitchen for the kids and didn’t eat myself.

I ate Milo and bikkies from the work staff room to tide me over.

Mental health impacts

- Having a job doesn't protect from distress
- Financial pressures had a negative impact on mental health for 83%
- Living in financial stress long term can lead to shame, anxiety and hopelessness
- Cost was the No 1. barrier for accessing mental health support
- Gender also plays a role in economic stress and poor mental health



Social Trends

Satisfaction with life and the direction of the country has declined

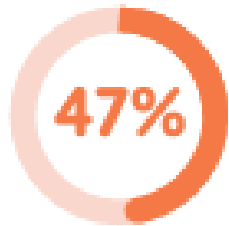
Belonging, feelings of safety and **trust in institutions** has declined (for 18-24 years particularly)

One in 6 Australians are experiencing severe loneliness (Often/Always) with 18–24-year-olds experiencing the greatest loneliness

- Loneliness and social isolation are also linked to anxiety, depression, suicide, and dementia and can increase risk of cardiovascular disease and stroke.
- Loneliness is stigmatized



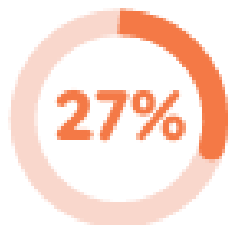
PERCEPTIONS (AND MISCONCEPTIONS) OF LONELINESS



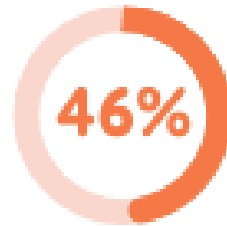
Nearly 1 in 2 Australians **believe** people would feel less lonely if they just knew more people



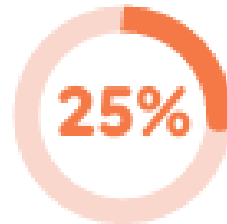
2 in 5 Australians **believe** loneliness only affects people 65 years or older



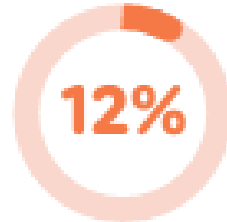
More than 1 in 4 Australians **think** making new friends should always be easy



Nearly 1 in 2 Australians **describe** people who are lonely as having negative traits



1 in 4 Australians **think that** people who are lonely are less worthy than others



More than 1 in 10 Australians **believe** there is “something wrong” with people who are lonely



More than 1 in 4 Australians **think** their community believes being lonely is a sign of weakness

Environment trends

- Most Australians (80%) experienced some form of natural disaster since 2019
- More than half (51%) feel their mental health has been impacted
- There is a clear rural-urban divide when it comes to experiences of extreme weather
- Compound events = cumulative impacts
- Ecological grief and eco-anxiety
- The death toll from heatwaves in Australia exceeds that for any other environmental disaster.



Technology use

- Digital technologies simultaneously present great opportunities and challenges
- 25.21 million internet users = 94.9% 20.80 million social media users = 78.3 %
- Four in five children own at least one screen-based device (ownership as young as 4)
- Parents concerned about negative impacts of digital media and technologies on
 - child's physical activity levels (73%),
 - child's attention span (62%) and
 - child's time for, and interest in, playing (62%).
- Parents believe impact of digital media and technologies on their children **has been more positive than negative** on child's mathematical abilities, reading abilities, and social skills and friendships.
- Indicators of **psychological distress have been increasing at a higher rate for 13-25-year-olds, compared to others in Australia.**



<p>Family and parenting</p> <p>Changes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ↑ Scrutiny of parenting ↑ Parental guilt and challenges ↓ Parental life satisfaction ↑ Children attending formal childcare 	<p>Education pressures</p> <p>Changes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ↑ Academic focus from pre-school ↑ Requirements for higher level qualifications ↑ View of academic success as a metric of 'good' parenting ↓ Acceptance of non-academic pathways 	<p>Employment pressures</p> <p>Changes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ↑ Youth unemployment & underemployment ↑ Qualification requirements for attaining a 'good' salaried, stable job ↑ Casualisation of the workforce & gig economy • Low wages growth, particularly for young people 	<p>Physical health</p> <p>Changes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ↓ Young people's sleep quality and quantity ↑ Focus on obesity and body image 	<p>Sociocultural shifts</p> <p>Changes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ↑ Polarisation in public debate ↑ Exposure to discrimination ↑ Individualistic culture & loneliness ↓ Perception of personal safety ↑ Fixation on the 'thin ideal' 	<p>Uncertainty about the future</p> <p>Changes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ↑ Awareness of global crises e.g. climate change ↑ Sense of accountability for children and young people to fix issues ↑ Concern about individual futures e.g. housing affordability
<p>Digital tech impact</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ↑ Info and avenues for comparison 	<p>Digital tech impact</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ↑ Global comparisons ↑ Opportunities for distraction 	<p>Digital tech impact</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 24/7 'hustle culture' = constant work & self-improvement 	<p>Digital tech impact</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ↑ Mechanisms of sleep procrastination ↑ Avenues for comparison 	<p>Digital tech impact</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ↑ Awareness of social issues 	<p>Digital tech impact</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ↑ Volume of info and pressure
<p>Mental health impact</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ↑ Parental anxiety and distress increases children's anxiety and distress 	<p>Mental health impact</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ↑ Burnout & stress ↑ Anxiety & sense of hopelessness 	<p>Mental health impact</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ↑ Burnout & stress ↑ Anxiety & sense of hopelessness 	<p>Mental health impact</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ↑ Rates of anxiety, depression and suicidal ideation from less sleep ↑ Eating disorders 	<p>Mental health impact</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ↓ Sense of belonging and safety, challenging identity formation = ↓ mental health ↑ Eating disorders 	<p>Mental health impact</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ↓ Mental health • Even young children presenting with anxiety about global crises

Figure 1. Overview of possible drivers of increased mental ill-health across six domains

The concerns of parents of children (5-12)

60%

More than half of parents are concerned about their child's mental health.

1 in 3 are extremely concerned

1 in 3

Parents report poor mental health.

Unsettled (22%)

Struggling (8%)

Parents top concerns

For their kids

1. Bullying (54%)
2. Screen time (51%)
3. Social media (39%)
4. Stress of learning (39%)

For themselves

1. Cost of living (68%)
2. Lack of time (50%)
3. Work demands (33%)

2024 Beyond Blue Community Survey (n = 1000 parents)

The digital divide

11 per cent of Australians are "highly excluded" from digital services, meaning they do not have access to affordable internet or don't know how to use it.

That equates to about 2.8 million people.

"It's limiting people's ability to participate in society and access services that they need for their lives – we're talking about some of the vulnerable, low-income people in the country not able to access the services designed to assist them."



What can we do about it?

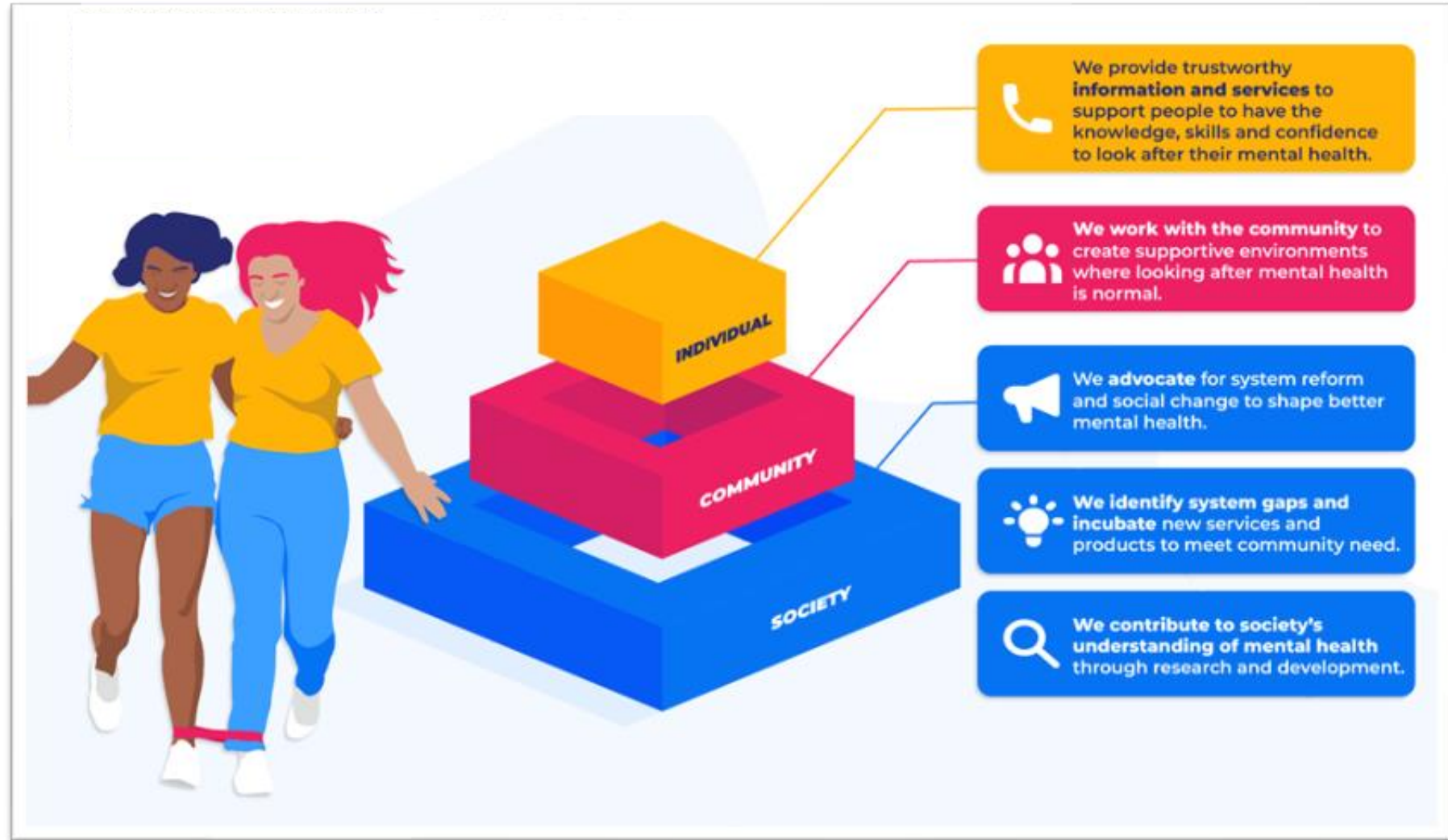
Collectively & Individually

Beyond Blue's way forward

Earlier

Easier

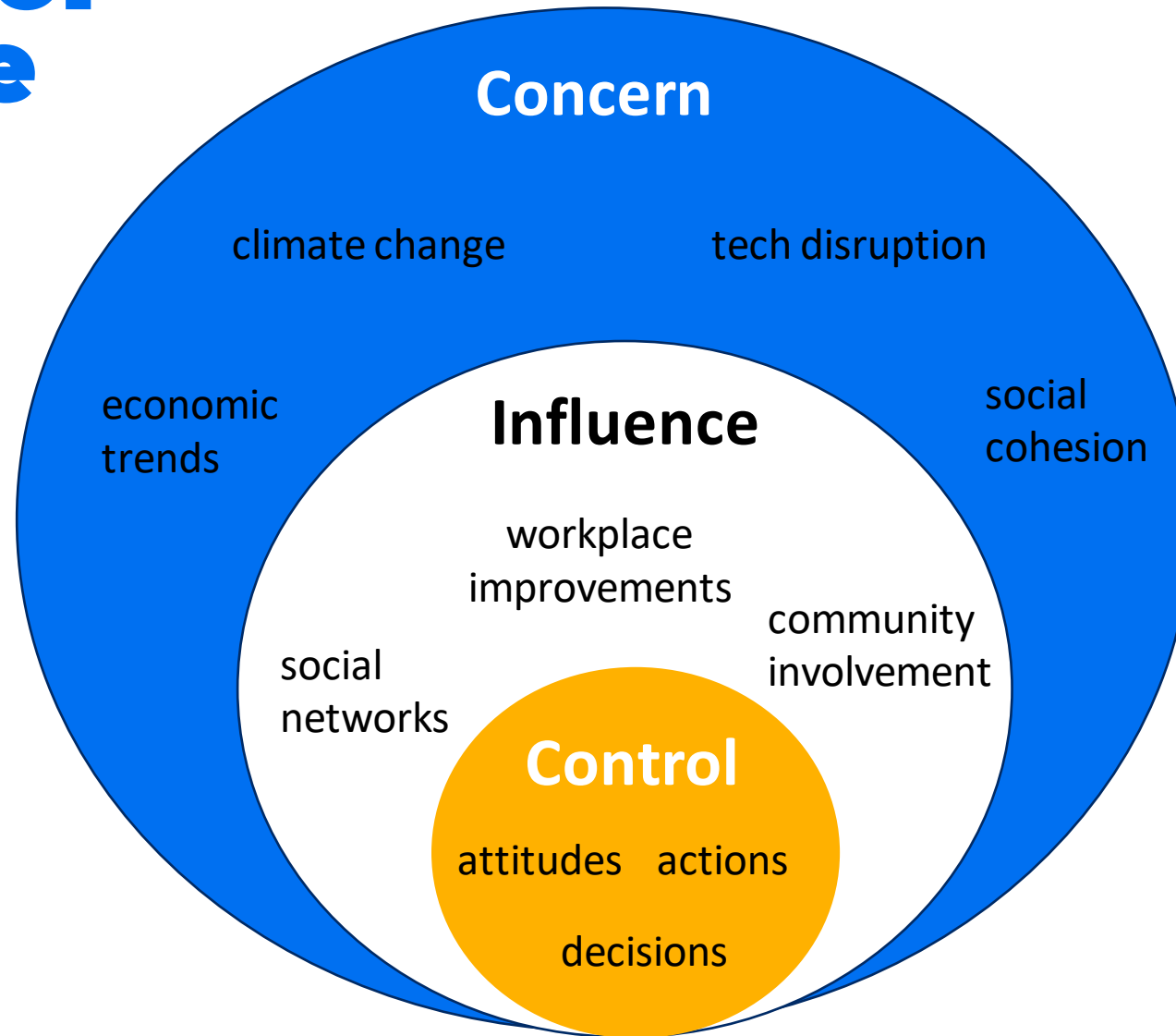
Together



Mental health continuum

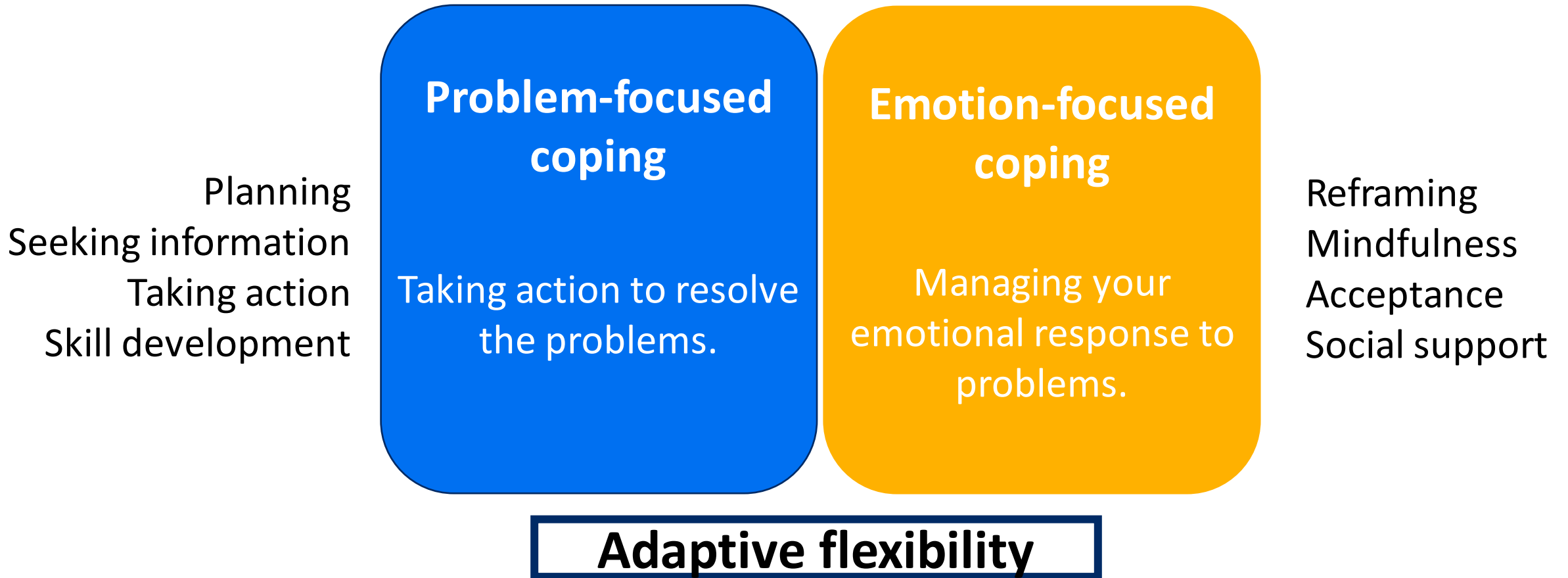


Spheres of influence



Covey, 1989

Coping styles



Lazarus & Folkman, 1984

Wellbeing Action Tool



Wellbeing Action Tool

We understand that everyone is unique. That's why finding what works for you is the key to maintaining your mental wellbeing.

We created the wellbeing tool to empower you to identify and take action on the things that work in three easy steps:

- 1 Identify what works for your mental wellbeing.
- 2 Reflect on why those actions work for you.
- 3 Plan to do them regularly to strengthen your mental wellbeing.



1 / 3

Ready to set your PACE?

Take action across these four areas to strengthen your mental wellbeing.

Pause



In a world that can feel overwhelming, sometimes taking moments to pause is essential. Take the time you need to rest and reflect. To practise self-care. To engage in positive self-talk.

Act



Taking action is about doing the things that help you feel good and thrive. This might come from caring for your body or taking positive steps towards a goal. These actions could be small, big, or somewhere in the middle.

Connect



Having a sense of connection can help you feel safe, grounded and valued. Think about how you invest in your relationship with others or with your community. With nature or spirituality. Or with something else.

Enjoy



Think about the things that you know help spark joy in your day, whether big or small. Embrace them by making time for them. Or try something new.

Community co-design **insights**

**Many
small
moments**

**Experts in
their own
experience**

**A simple
recipe**

How it works – 3 simple steps

1

Identify what works

Pause



Connect



Act



Enjoy



2

Reflect on why

Pleasant memories & feelings

Connection to who and what matters most

3

Plan to do them

A gentle intention.

Small actions performed regularly to gain the benefits.

Wellbeing Action Tool

A quick intro

A plan on a page

Tips & suggestions

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1 What works for you 2/3

1 What works for you

Try to know yourself, your life and your strengths. Start with what already works. Think about what you do that makes you feel good and build from there.

Write down 3 things under Pause, Act, Connect and Enjoy that you do for your mental wellbeing.

Example: I've chilled out days at home

Pause

Act

Connect

Enjoy

2 Why this works

Reflect on why those actions work for you. Reminding yourself how something makes you feel can help motivate you to do it.

Think about the last time you did each of these things. How did it help you? List a motivating reason or memory to watch.

Example: remember how good sleeping down felt

Pause

Act

Connect

Enjoy

3 Plan to do them

It's the small things done regularly that really help. Plan how often you'd like to do these actions to enjoy the benefits.

Think about when and how often you'd like to do each of these things. Start with simple patterns to create a habit.

Example: once a week, daily on the weekend

Pause

Act

Connect

Enjoy

Need more support? Check out Beyond Blue's free services <https://www.beyondblue.org.au/our-services>

Cheatsheet

These suggestions are backed by research, and a good place to get inspiration to add to the things that work for you.

1 What works for you - tips

Pause	Take a shower or bath
Meditate	Stretch
Journal	Practice self-compassion
Have a rest day	Speak to yourself positively
Say no to something	Check my feelings in helpful
Challenge unhelpful thoughts	Make space for unpleasant feelings
Act	
Eat a healthy meal	Exercise at home
Drink enough water	Go to sleep early
Go for a walk	Celebrate an achievement
Clean my space	Cook a meal from scratch
Do some yoga	Complete a small task
Wakes at the same time each day	Take a break from alcohol

2 Why this works - tips 3/3

Remember how it feels... Remember how it smells... Remember how it tastes... Remember how it sounds... Remember how it feels... Remember how it smells... Remember how it tastes... Remember how it sounds...

3 Plan to do them - tips

When planning your actions, it's useful to think about realistic patterns or routines that will work for you. Try not to stress about achieving goals that seem 'big' or being hard on yourself when you fall short. In the end the most important part is making a commitment to your mental wellbeing.

I'm alright and others are far worse off than me. But...

I'm not sleeping well.

I'm concerned about ...

I'm drinking more.

I'm having trouble switching off.

I'm exhausted.

I can't relax.

I'm easily frustrated.

I can't focus.

I can't get a break.

Things are taking me longer to do.



The signs

Physical	Feelings	Thinking	Behaviours	Financial
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sleep • Weight • Sore • Tired • Stomach pain • Trouble breathing • Tightness in chest <p>Not feeling well</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overwhelmed • Worthless, hopeless • Indecisive • Low confidence • Irritable or restless • Afraid • Tense <p>Not feeling one's self</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Negative thoughts • Poor concentration • Scattered • Racing thoughts • Worrying • Intrusive thoughts • Control <p>Changes in thinking</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Productivity • Social withdrawal • Impulsive • Avoidance • Defensive • Late • Alcohol or drugs <p>Changes in behavior</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of savings • Lack of budgeting • Behind on payments • Poor or impulsive financial decisions • Financial helplessness or hopelessness <p>Not financially well</p>

Have the conversation



Ask

Ask is everything OK?

Your support
may make
all the difference.



Listen

Don't interrupt.

Keep what they
say private.

Be open-minded.



Support

Reassure them
they're not alone.

Be patient.

Help them explore
their options.

First steps to getting support

Have a conversation with
family and friends



Make an
appointment
with your **GP**



Workplace **EAP**

Visit the Australian governments

Head to Health

website for a library of
online programs



Visit
beyondblue.org.au
or another
mental health website



Connect with others
on the
Beyond Blue
online forums

See a
NewAccess coach

(only available in some areas nationally)



Need immediate support?

Contact the
Beyond Blue Support Service
1300 22 4636

What is NewAccess for Small Business Owners?

- Beyond Blue started NewAccess over 10 years ago when we noticed a real gap in the mental health system in Australia.
- We created a dedicated version of NewAccess for Small Business Owners - NASBO - in 2021.
- NASBO is Australia's first and only national mental health support service specifically for small business owners.
- It is available nationally, it's **free**, and it doesn't require a referral from a GP.
- This service offers up to **6 sessions**, and participants are also provided **follow-up** sessions at one-month and six-month post coaching sessions.
- Participants are equipped with a range of practical mental health **tools**.



NewAccess for Small Business (NASBO)

An evidence-based program designed for small business owners, delivered by mental health coaches with small business experience.

The difference from my headspace now to 7 weeks ago is like night & day. My Coach gave me all the tools I need to continually improve and stay positive.



NewAccess Work participants saw a

72%

Improvement in symptoms of mental health, and improved functioning in the workplace

(Multiple workplace evaluations)

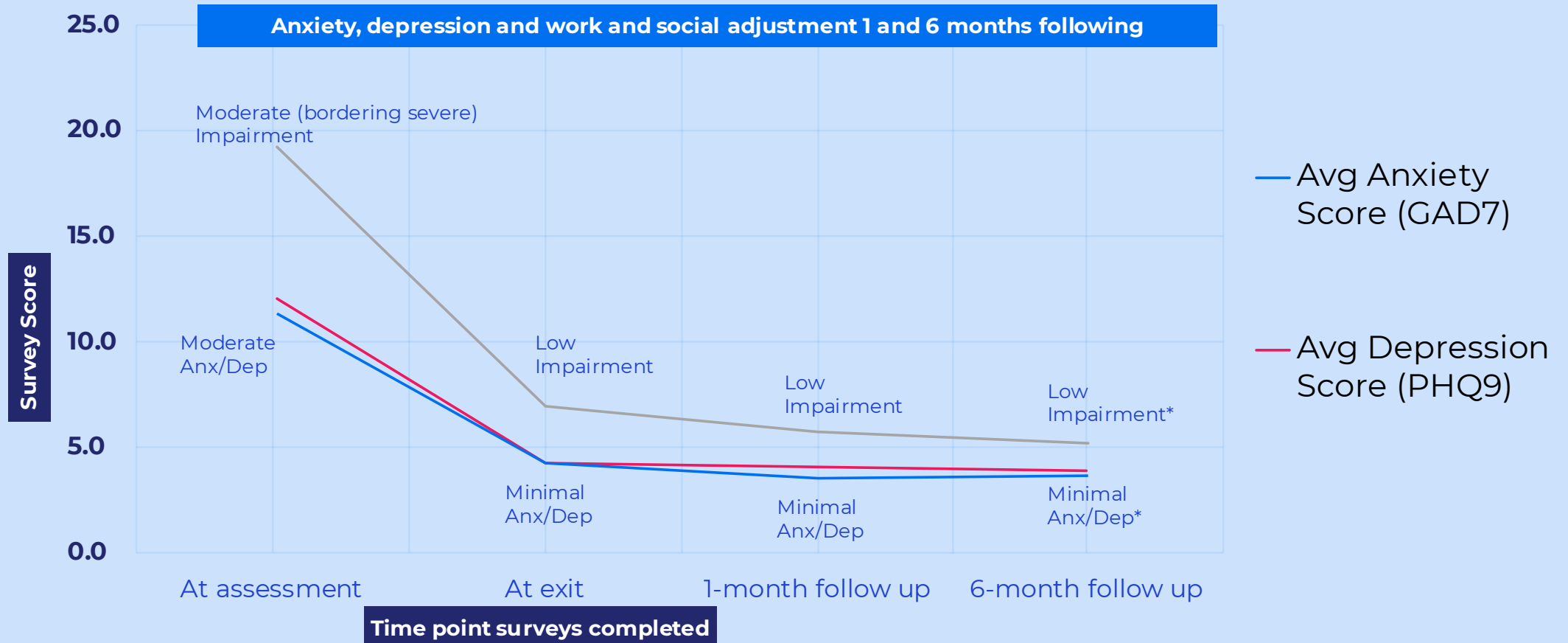
More than

people in the community have used our service over the past decade, with

7/10

showing lasting improvements in overall mental health.

We know it works



* Average survey scores for the subset of all participants (n=146) who completed the GAD7, PHQ9 and WSAS scoring instruments or one if the NewAccess services

Other Beyond Blue supports



Connect with our online peer support community

Anonymously read, share and learn from people who understand what you're going through. Share your lived experience with our welcoming peer support community at the Beyond Blue Forums.

[Visit our Forums](#)



Talk or chat online to a counsellor

If you're going through a hard time right now, the Beyond Blue Support Service is available 24/7 for brief counselling. Most calls last around 20 minutes.

Our counsellors will listen and help you find the extra mental health help you need.

Get free, confidential counselling (local call costs apply):

[Call a counsellor on 1300 22 4636](#)

[Chat to a counsellor online](#)

Accessibility and language support are available for telephone counselling.

[Learn more about the Beyond Blue Support Service.](#)



Any questions?



Thank you

**Helping all people in Australia
achieve their best possible
mental health.**



Stay in touch with the TPB



tpb.gov.au



tpb.gov.au/contact



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1300 362 829

Overseas enquiries
+61 2 6216 3443

Our enquiry lines are open
Monday to Friday 9 am to 5 pm
(Sydney time)



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