

PURPOSE

This guide provides a summary of mental health surveys which may be useful for businesses to share with employees to raise mental health awareness. This guide is aimed at supporting the business' approach to workplace mental health, rather than a direct tool for employees.

BACKGROUND

A guide on mental health survey tools was suggested to help increase awareness of the resources that are available. These can be used to help both the business and their employees be aware of the potential mental health challenges they may be experiencing. Additionally, this increases avenues for individuals and managers to discuss challenges, particularly in the context of the workplace.

Businesses should consider how the use of surveys for the above purposes complements and relates to your organisation's broader approach to workplace mental health. As such, businesses should ensure there are appropriate pathways and support tools for concerns raised by individuals within survey outcomes.

SURVEY TOOLS

There are sometimes misconceptions about what these types of surveys can and cannot provide, or how the results are captured and used. Therefore, it is important to share information on the survey's purpose, and to proactively address data protection concerns. It is critical to note that any awareness raising surveys are not clinical tools and the use of any surveys that are more appropriately used in clinical settings should not be used.

There are two types of surveys that may be useful in workplace settings:

- Self-reflection surveys that help provide an indication of potential psychological distress and encourage participants to seek support based on their results
- An assessment survey that encourages an individual to consider their working environment, and any psychological health at work risks they may be experiencing.¹

A suggestion and further information on a survey for each type is below.

Anxiety and Depression Checklist

Beyond Blue uses the *Kessler psychological distress scale (K10)*. This can help individuals to understand if they are experiencing psychological distress that might potentially relate to anxiety and depression. Anxiety and depression are the two most common mental health disorders in Australia.² These disorders can be linked to stress and what is sometimes referred to as 'workplace stress'³.

The K10 survey requires participants to reflect on how distressed they have been over the past four weeks. There are 10 questions relating to signs of anxiety and depression. Participants rate their response on a scale between 'none of the time' and 'all of the time'.

The K10 survey is available on Beyond Blue's website as the [Mental health check-in](#). Beyond Blue's also advises that information is anonymous and is not traced back to individuals. Beyond Blue recommends surveys should not be completed on behalf of someone else. Instead, [resources and tips](#) are available (also on their website) for talking to someone you may be worried about.

¹ It is important to note that employers are responsible for managing these risks and these types of surveys do not relieve obligations under WHS laws (although they may help organisations to put in place measures that then help them to comply with these obligations).

² Black Dog Institute, [Facts and figures about mental health \(2020\)](#)

³ Heads Up, [Workplace stress](#)

***People at Work* psychosocial risk assessment**

The *People at Work* psychosocial risk assessment is a survey tool jointly funded and developed by Australian work health and safety regulators and is complemented by a range of free supporting tools and resources to help businesses respond to survey results. The survey is Australia's only validated and evidence based psychosocial risk assessment survey tool, with benchmarking that measures related hazards and factors.⁴

Some psychosocial risks in the workplace include:

- High or low demand jobs
- Poor support and workplace relationships
- Low role clarity
- Poor organisational change management
- Poor environmental conditions, remote or isolated work
- Violent or traumatic events.⁵

The *People at Work* survey is part of a five-step process businesses can use to identify, assess, and control risks – these are:

1. Gaining commitment from senior leaders to champion the implementation of the *People at Work* survey and supporting process
2. Conducting the survey with employees and informing them about its purpose and how information will remain confidential
3. Accessing and analysing results, and taking deep dives on key issues through focus groups
4. Responding to the results by developing an action plan
5. Monitor and review the action plan, and regularly repeating the five-step process

The [***People at Work Survey***](#) is available on the Commonwealth government's people at work website and has learning modules and workplace resources to help businesses deliver the survey.

WHERE IS HELP AVAILABLE?

In addition to any support that may be available within your organisation, employees can be referred to the following external services:

- Arrange an appointment with your GP
- Australian Government's Head to Health website – available [here](#)
- Beyond Blue – by phone at 1300224 636 or by website [here](#)
- The Black Dog Institute's website – available [here](#)
- Lifeline – by phone at 131 114 or by website [here](#)

This business guide provides a summary only of the subject matter covered, without the assumption of duty of care by Consult Australia. The summary should not be relied on as a substitute for legal or other professional advice.

⁴ WorkSafe Queensland, [People at Work - Overview](#)

⁵ SafeWork Australia, [Psychosocial hazards](#)