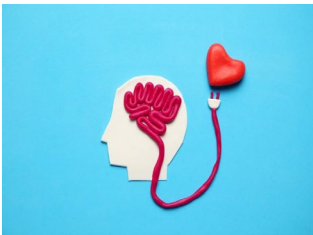


Free mental health support service for small business owners launches

A national awareness campaign about a free tailored mental health support service for small business owners has begun, amid new research revealing the emotional toll on small business owners during the past year.



A new national awareness campaign has been launched to raise awareness about Beyond Blue's New Access for Small Business Owners program – a free and confidential mental health coaching program to give small business owners, including sole traders, the support they need.

Applauding the campaign, the Australian Small Business and Family Enterprise Ombudsman Bruce Billson stressed the importance of small business owners knowing that help is available if they need it.

"New Access for Small Business Owners offers free one-on-one telehealth sessions with specially trained mental health coaches providing evidence-based advice on strategies for managing stress," said Mr Billson.

"Crucially, the New Access for Small Business Owners program is delivered by coaches that have experience in small business. It really helps to know that the person you're speaking with understands what it takes to run a small business."

New research released by Xero has found almost seven out of 10 (68 per cent) of 500 small business owners surveyed reported the past 12 months have been more emotionally draining than any other year they've been in business.

Moreover, it revealed small business leaders have collectively lost more than 8 million hours of sleep each week due to the demands of running their small business.

"We know many small business owners have been hit hard throughout the pandemic, particularly with going in and out of lockdowns and restrictions, and that has understandably taken a toll," said Mr Billson.

"It's important small business owners understand if they look after their mental health, they can also help their business."

Beyond Blue's New Access for Small Business Owners program is available now.

The ASBFEO also offers support tool My Business Health at mybusinesshealth.gov.au

More about New Access

New Access for Small Business Owners is aimed at anyone aged 18 or over who owns a small business, from any industry including sole traders. For the purposes of program eligibility, a small business is defined as 20 or fewer employees.

A person is not eligible for the program if they are:

- currently seeing a psychologist or psychiatrist; or
- dealing with severe/complex mental health issues.

Importantly, New Access is designed to appeal to people who might not otherwise seek support for their mental health and to provide support early, preventing symptoms from potentially getting worse.

The program avoids clinical language, does not require a doctor's referral and is delivered by relatable coaches – in this case people who have owned their own small business – making it an ideal service for small business owners.



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