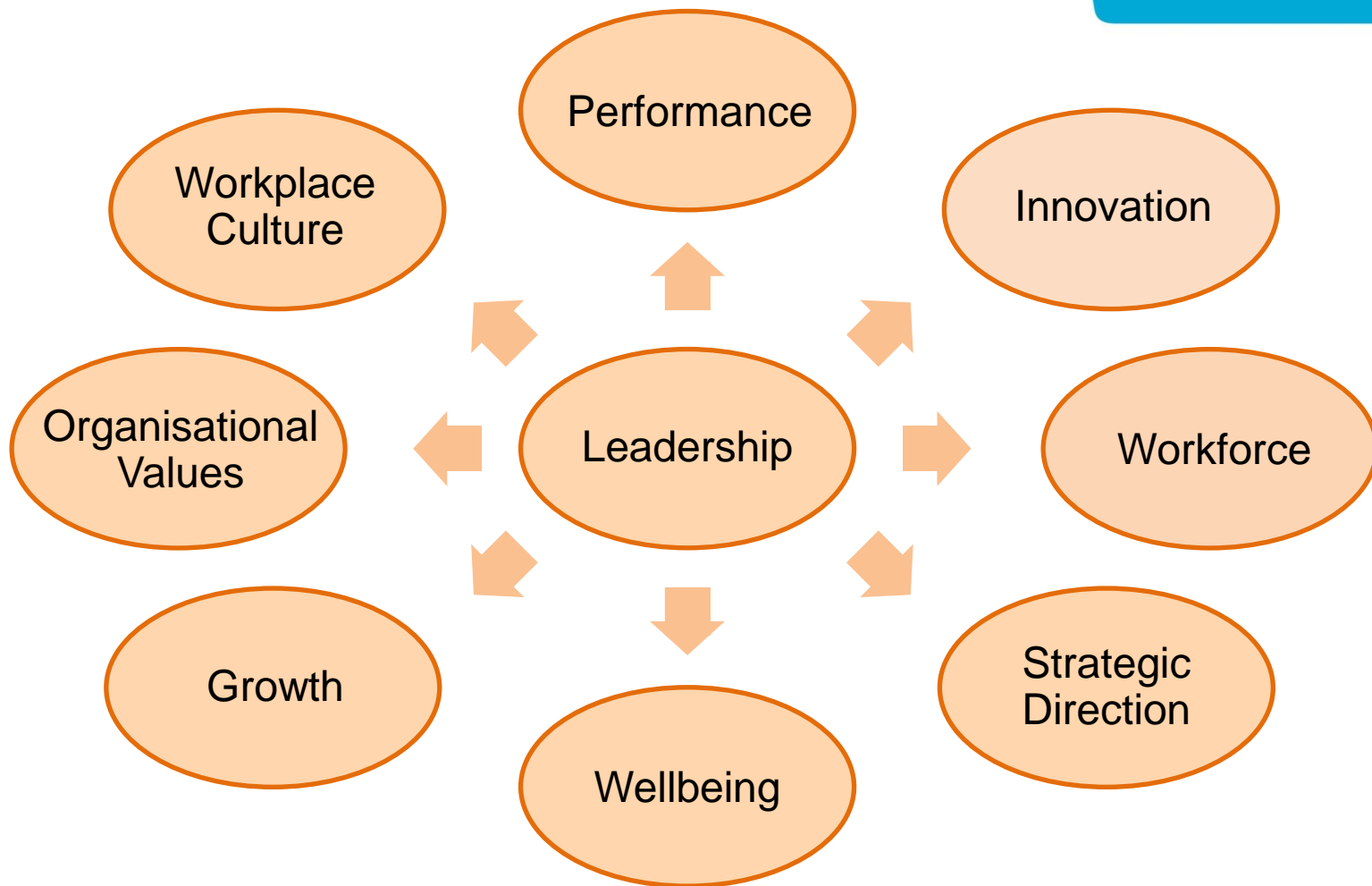




How to create a mentally health workplace?

Therese Fitzpatrick
Leader, Workplace and Workplace Program





- 1. What is a mentally healthy workplace?**
2. What actions can you take?
3. What resources are available to help you?



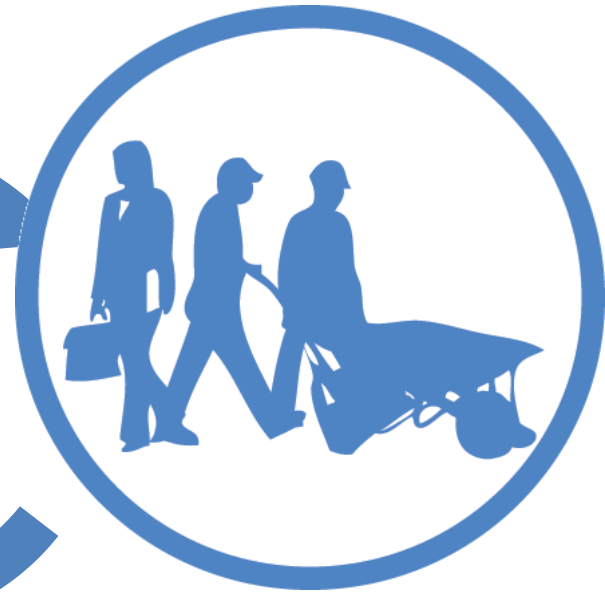
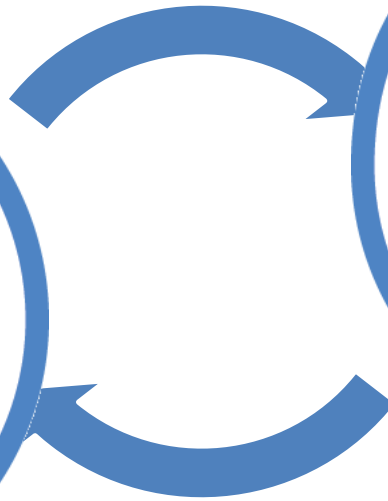
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A mentally healthy workplace “promotes and protects their employees’ mental health and can have a positive impact on productivity, creativity, staff retention and being perceived as an employer of choice.”

The relationship between mental health and the workplace



Individual



Workplace

Benefits of a mentally healthy workplace



- Reducing financial costs
- Reducing risk
- Meeting legislative requirements
- Improving employee engagement
- Meeting your corporate social responsibilities

Critical success factors



- Commitment from senior leaders
- An internal champion
- Employee participation
- A sustainable approach
- Planning and evaluation
- Supporting policies and procedures

Session overview



1. What is a mentally healthy workplace?

2. What actions can you take?

3. What resources are available to help you?

Good Practice Framework



Develop & implement policies

Improve workplace culture & job design

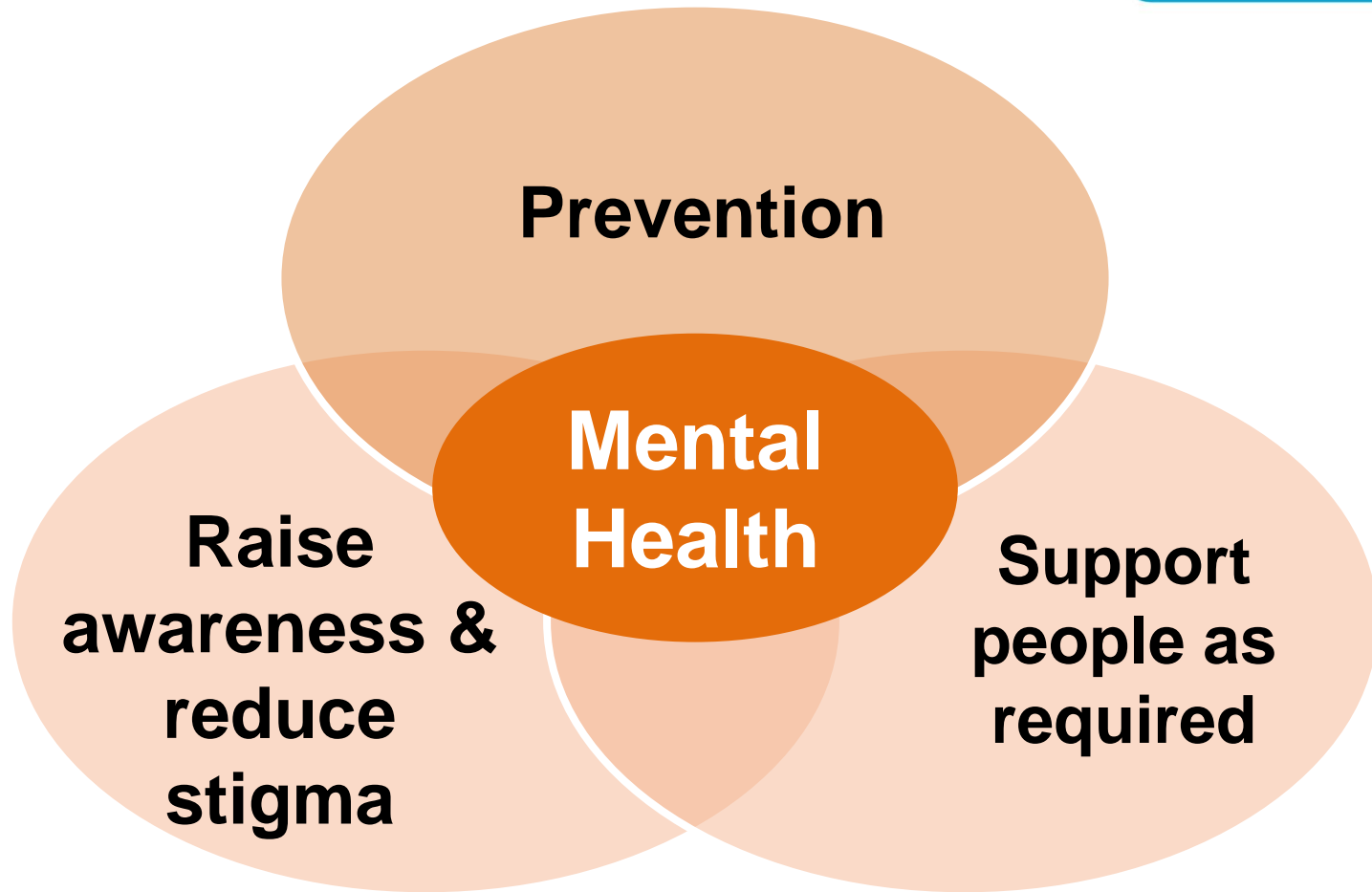
Build organisational and individual resilience

Raise awareness & reduce stigma

Support people experiencing mental health problems

Facilitate access to psychological support services

Approaches to mental health in the workplace



Prevention



Improve workplace culture

Improve job design

Build organisational and individual resilience

Risk and protective factors



Chronic illness

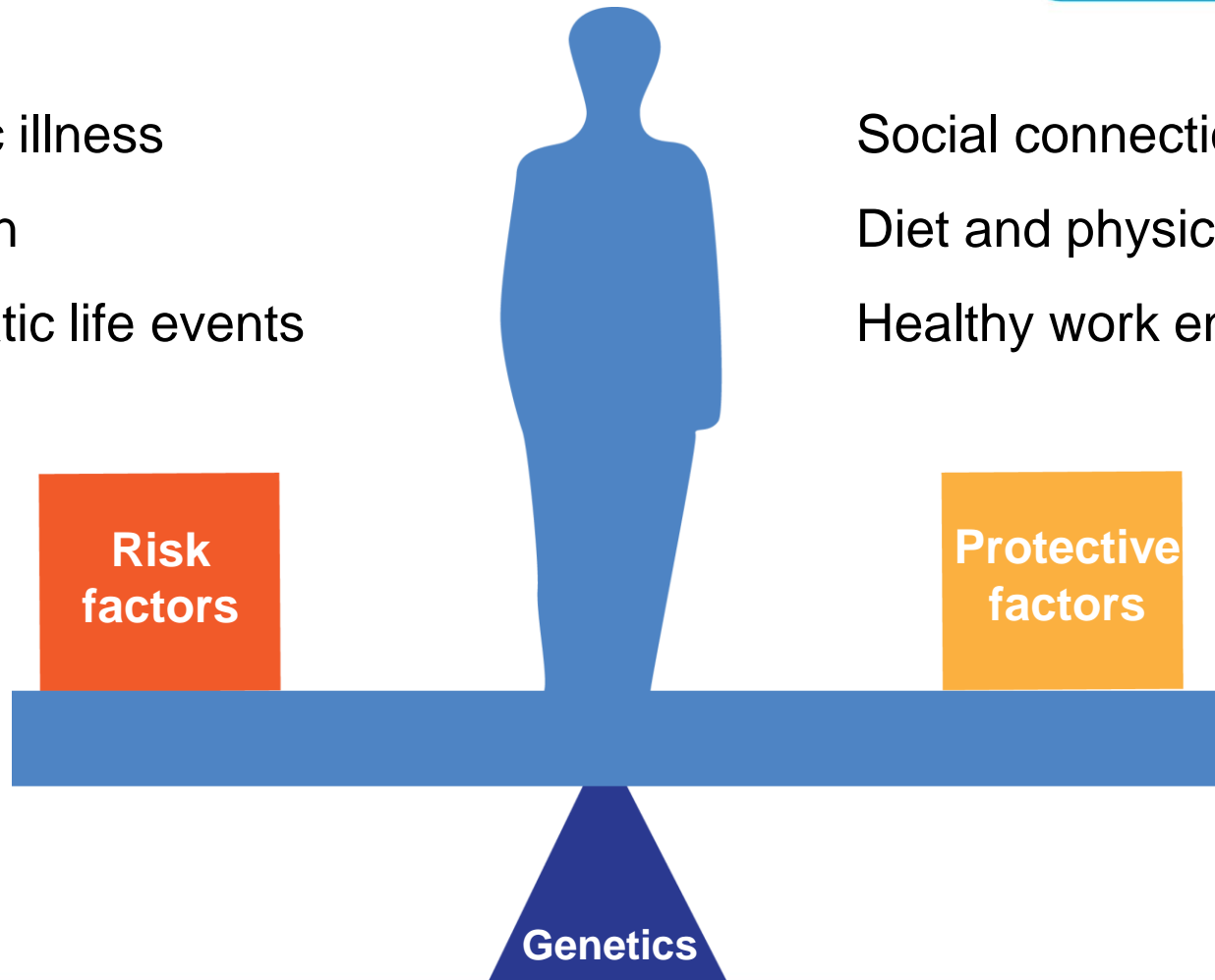
Isolation

Traumatic life events

Social connection

Diet and physical activity

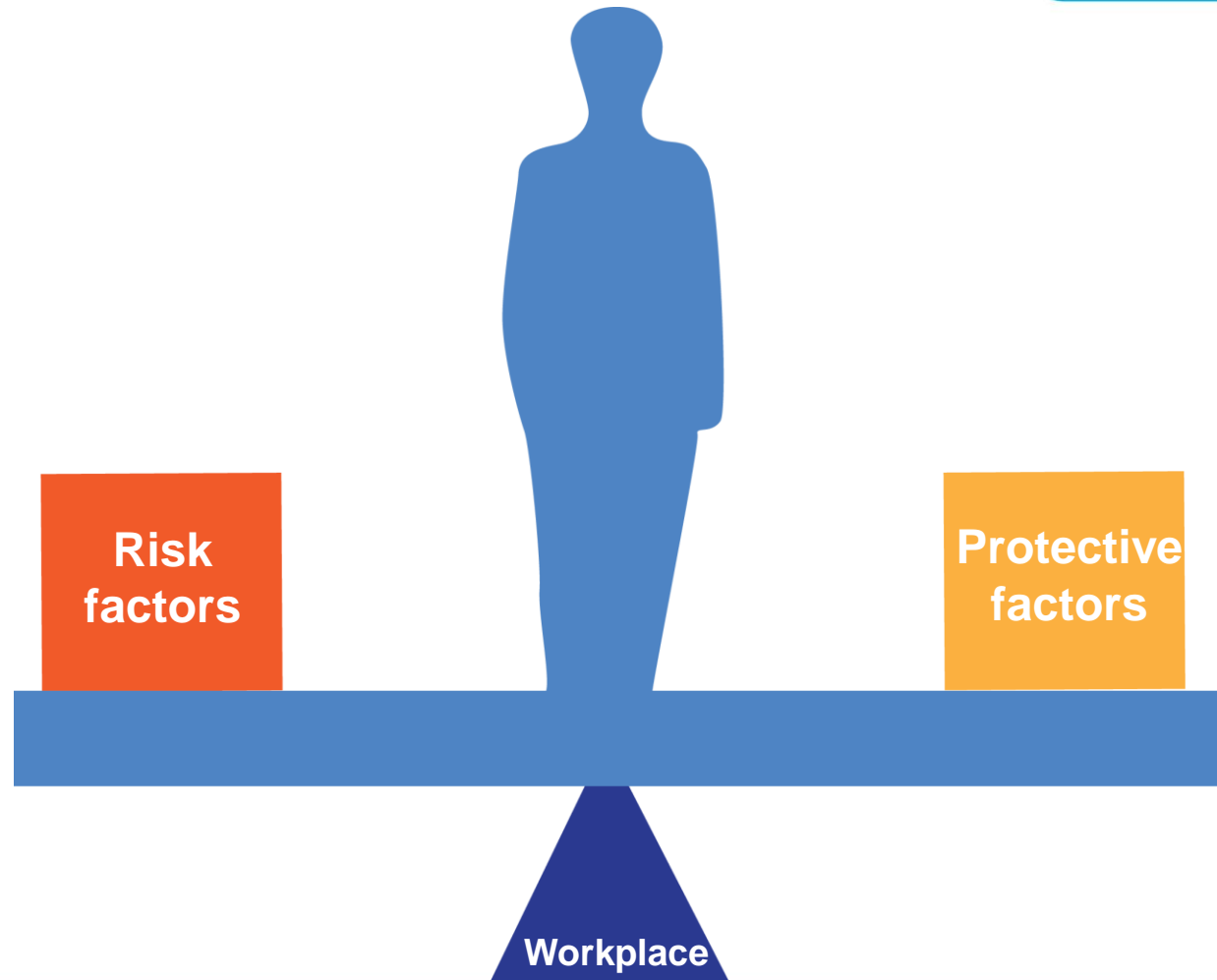
Healthy work environment



Risk and protective factors in the workplace



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Risk factors in the workplace



Job stress:

- High job demands
- Low job control
- Low social support at work

Linked to a 2 to 3 fold increase in depression and anxiety disorders

LaMontagne, A.D., Keegal, T.,
Vallance, D., Ostry, A. & Wolfe, R. (2008)

Psychosocial working conditions that contribute to job stress



- Work overload or pressure
- Lack of control and participation in decision making
- Unclear work role
- Job insecurity
- Long working hours
- Bullying
- Poor communication
- Inadequate resources

Source: Vic Health Report: *Workplace stress in Victoria: Developing a systems approach* (2006).

Protective factors in the workplace



- Strong leadership
- Strong team morale
- Employee consultation and involvement in decision making
- Collaborative peer working relationships
- Effective training
- Effective mental health policies and programs

Prevention strategies



- Is our culture a collaborative one in relation to assisting staff overcome difficulties?
- Do we have strong leadership in regards to mental health in the workplace?
- Are we aware of the mental health risks particular to our workplace?
- Do we have a plan to minimize workplace mental health risks?
- Is everyone in the workplace aware of relevant legislative requirements?

Awareness



Raise awareness about mental health problems

Know the signs and symptoms

Be aware of and reduce stigma

Depression and anxiety disorders



- Are diagnosable clinical illnesses
- Are different for different people
- Are different from feeling stressed
- Often occur together, or with substance use disorder
- Effective treatments are available

What is depression?



- Feeling sad, down or miserable/lack of interest or pleasure
- Lasts for more than two weeks
- Symptoms across the following areas:

Common signs of depression



Physical

- Disturbed sleep
- Appetite changes
- Sick and run down
- Fatigue

Feeling

- Overwhelmed
- Indecisive
- Lacking confidence
- Irritable

Thinking

- Negative thinking patterns
- Hopeless, helpless and worthless
- Suicidal thoughts

Behavioural

- Poor concentration
- Reduced Productivity
- Alcohol and other drug use
- Social withdrawal

What are anxiety disorders?



- There are a range of different disorders with different signs and symptoms
 - Generalised Anxiety Disorder (GAD)
 - Specific Phobias
 - Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD)
 - Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)
 - Panic disorder
 - Social phobia

Common signs of anxiety disorders



Physical

- Muscle pain
- Difficulty sleeping
- Restless and on edge
- Sweating

Feeling

- Overwhelmed
- Fearful
- Sudden, intense panic
- Irritable

Thinking

- Constant worrying
- Recurring / obsessive thoughts

Behavioural

- Avoidance
- Poor concentration
- Alcohol and other drug use



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Raising awareness



- Are all staff educated in relation to mental health?
- Do our policies include mental health?
- Are the policies clear, easy to understand and accessible?
- Do the relevant staff know how to implement the policies?
- Is mental health included in our health promotion initiatives?

Support people with mental health problems



Have conversations when you're concerned about someone

Make reasonable adjustments

Support access to psychological support

beyondblue principles when approaching someone you're concerned about



G

Get ready

U

Understand the situation

I

Initiate a conversation

D

Do try different approaches

E

Evaluate and reflect





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Recovery from depression and anxiety disorders...



- Is different for different people
- Is assisted by treatment
- Can be an up and down process
- Often involves an ongoing wellbeing plan

Effective management strategies – for the individual



- Talk to others – be collaborative
- Develop a work plan
- Make reasonable adjustments
- Ask them what to tell others in the team
- Manage absence if required

Effective management strategies – for the organisation/team



- Manage workloads
- Communicate appropriate information
- Consider the personal impact
- Manage stigma or misconceptions

Supporting people with mental health problems?



- Do senior staff know how to role model regarding early intervention for mental health problems?
- Are our managers/staff trained in early intervention strategies?
- What support mechanisms are in place for managers managing staff with mental health conditions?
- What external support is available to staff (e.g. EAP)
- Do we have policies in place regarding return to work and reasonable adjustments?

Session overview



1. What is a mentally healthy workplace?
2. What actions can you take?
- 3. What resources are available to help you?**

How can *beyondblue* assist you?



- National Workplace Program
- *beyondblue* websites
 - www.beyondblue.org.au/workplace
 - www.beyondblue.com/workplaceonline
- Range of free resources
- Support service 1300 22 4636

Where else to go for help?



- Mentally healthy workplace alliance
- SANE Australia
- Mental Health First Aid
- People at work
- Employee assistance providers
- Australian Workplace Barometer

In summary



A

Mentally healthy workplace has many benefits

W

ork can impact on mental health

A

ctions you take can make a difference

R

ecovery and work go hand-in-hand

E

veryone has a role to play



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Thank you.