Balancing the Risks and Rewards
Managing Depression and Anxiety
at work and at home

Dr Nicole Hight
Deputy Chief Executive Officer
Beyondblue; the national depression initiative
The facts

- Around one million Australian adults live with depression.
- Over two million have an anxiety disorder
- Around 160,000 young people (16-24 years) live with depression
- These conditions can be serious, debilitating and life-threatening
- Less than *half* of those experiencing depression seek help
Why people don’t seek help?

- Lack of awareness, knowledge and understanding

“My mother once said to me regarding an episode of depression ‘just put some lippy on love – that will make you feel better’”
Why people don’t seek help

• Don’t know signs and symptoms

“My grandmother has lived with depression for many years – but only recognised it as depression a year ago…we just thought she was a negative person”
Why people don’t seek help

• Lack of access to effective treatments

“I didn’t want to go and talk to the local GP – I ended up driving to another town 300km away to see someone who did not know me personally.”
Why people don’t seek help

• Stigma

“People in my local town knew that I suffered from depression, and would cross the road to make sure they didn’t come near me”

“How often do you see flowers and chocolates brought into a psychiatric ward?”
beyondblue

• *beyondblue* established 2000
• Just commencing third term (2010 – 2015)
• Calls to infoline
• Hits to website
• Requests for information
Let’s focus on two settings: work and at home.....
The Workplace
Depression Costs

In Australia each year:

• Over 6 million working days are lost due to depression alone.

• More than 12 million days of reduced productivity

• Undiagnosed depression costs workplaces $4.3 billion in lost productivity
  – On average, every full-time employee with untreated depression costs an organisation $9,665 per year.
Not well managed

• Individual reluctant to disclose
  
  “Now I am unlikely to be considered for promotion – I am considered to be inadequate – even when I’m well!”

  “I was asked to chart the days that I would be taking off sick over the rest of the year, and when I couldn’t do that I ended up losing my job”

• Managers unsure how to help

• False perceptions about what is helpful
  
  80% said helpful to encourage them to take time off work or take a holiday
  60% said helpful to suggest that they go on stress leave

Highet, 2010
Why address in the workplace?

• **Work provides a lot of social interaction**
  – Important social environment

• **Time spent at work**
  – more time at work than anywhere
  – important to maximise the social and medical benefits there
  – ensure people safe & assisted to use appropriate forms of health care.
What can I do @ work

• Learn more
  – Links to website from intranet
  – Information in the workplace

• Educate others
  – beyondblue Workplace programs
    • Role of managers
    • Role of employees

• Participate
  – Anxiety and depression awareness month, Movember

www.beyondblue.org.au
At home
The facts

- Antenatal depression affects around 9 per cent of women during pregnancy
- Postnatal depression affects around 16 per cent of women after birth
“I was in a black hole that I couldn’t get out of”

“I felt disconnected as if the world only revolved around the baby and that everybody only cared about the baby … that everything I did had to be done for the baby …..like I’d lost myself”

It is being in a a place where everything is black at a time of your life where you are thinking everything is going to be wonderful….such expectations for having a baby and experiencing just pure joy…………for me it was zero joy”
Why

- People don’t know or understand PND
- Women hoping condition will pass on its own
- Stigma – feeling of failure
- Grief – Not the experience I always wanted
- Denial – it's not PND
What bb Doing?

• National Perinatal Depression Initiative
• Clinical Guidelines
• Routine Screening
• Training for Health Professionals
• National Advertising Campaigns
What can we do at work

• Be aware – men and women
• Raise awareness – link to bb information and campaigns
• Stay in touch
• Talk about it – help reduce the stigma
Closing

• Depression and anxiety is common and serious
• Workplace is a great way to promote awareness, understanding, reduce stigma
• Be creative – it will help your staff
• It will help your organisation
• Opportunity to show real leadership
Balancing the Risks and Rewards
Managing Depression and Anxiety
at work and at home

Dr Nicole Highet
Deputy Chief executive Officer
Beyondblue; the national depression initiative