

## R U OK? MANAGING MENTAL HEALTH IN THE WORKPLACE

September 9th 2021 was R U OK? Day, a national day of action that is dedicated to reminding each other that it is ok to ask are you ok, and support those that are struggling with life. In the role as an Employment Relations Advisor at CMSolutions, we receive many queries every day from volunteers, asking how to deal with employees that are psychologically ill or in a worst case scenario, placed a WorkCover claim stating that work has stressed them out.

So how do we manage this and still encourage our employees to come forward and talk with our employer about mental health, and managing it in the workplace?

Mental health From the manager/organisation's point of view:

- It is important to recognise the signs of common mental illnesses (i.e. anxiety and depression) as early as possible.
- Speak with the employee and understand their perspective, and make adjustments that are in line with their role and legislative requirements.
- Provide resilience training, and ensuring that the employee has a comprehensive understanding of their role and the expectations that come with it.
- Foster a culture of trust, tolerance and openness towards conversations surrounding mental health
- Have monthly catch ups with your employees and see how they are doing, both at work and outside the workplace.

Every employer also has a responsibility to provide a safe and healthy workplace. This is a legal obligation and the Work Health and Safety Act 2011 specifically states:

From a workplace health and safety perspective, the Work Health and Safety Act 2011 states:

*Section 27 (1) Duty of Officers*

*If a person conducting a business or undertaking has a duty or obligation under the Act, an officer of the person conducting the business or undertaking must exercise due diligence to ensure that the person conducting the business or undertaking complies with that duty or obligation.*

Similarly, the Work Health and Safety Act 2011 states that employees need to:

- take reasonable care his or her own health and safety; and
- take reasonable care that his or her acts or omissions do not adversely affect the health and safety of other persons; and
- comply as reasonably as they can with any reasonable instruction that is given by the person conducting the business or undertaking the business to comply with this Act; and
- co-operate with any reasonable policy or procedure of the person conducting the business or undertaking relating to health or safety at the workplace that has been notified to workers.

If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact CMSolutions on 07 3852 5177.