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## **#175 - Evaluating workplace initiatives to improve mental health and wellbeing**

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### **Objectives/aims**

Employers in Australia are recognising an increasing need to play a key role in providing mentally healthy workplaces for all workers. The ongoing monitoring and evaluation of workplace mental health and wellbeing initiatives is paramount to ensuring that intended outcomes and audiences are being reached, and to provide real-time data for adjusting resources and activities to achieve the intended results. This presentation outlines evaluations of two mental health initiatives undertaken by Comcare and the use of results to improve and upscale their implementation. The first case study is of the NewAccess mental health coaching service, developed by Beyond Blue, which represents an innovative model of care that focuses on prevention and early intervention of mild to moderate anxiety and/or depression. The second case study is of Comcare's Mental Health-Related Stigma Awareness Program and assesses the quality of developed resources for managers and supervisors, measuring changes in knowledge, attitudes and behaviour associated with mental health-related stigma.

### **Methods**

The first evaluation was conducted by an external provider and used mixed methods and five data sources, including surveys with participating agencies, and return on investment analysis. The second evaluation is an internal one and demonstrates Comcare's efforts to strengthen its in-house evaluation capacity. It uses website analytics, three rounds of surveys and in-depth interviews with key stakeholders.

### **Main findings**

Evaluation of NewAccess found the program was effective with a 72% recovery rate and an 89% satisfaction rate among workers. Improvements were also observed with regards to levels of engagement and job satisfaction, and levels of absenteeism and presenteeism (when comparing responses pre-and post-service). The second evaluation is currently in process and the presentation will share preliminary findings, including lessons learned from action research undertaken during a pilot.

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