

Student Mental Health Survey

This year, at the Big Meet in Brisbane, a four-question survey was conducted to gain an understanding of student/graduate mental health and whether candidates would share this information with a future employer.

This was prompted by the recent brief COVID-19 pandemic triggers 25% increase in prevalence of anxiety and depression worldwide[[1]](#footnote-1) from the World Health Organisation that indicated that since the start of COVID, global prevalence of anxiety and depression had increased by 25%.

The survey questions looked at:

1. Are you looking for work?
2. Do you have a mental health condition?
3. Would you share this information with an employer?
4. Brief explanation of decision

Our aim in collecting this information is to highlight to employers the thoughts on this topic from students and graduates allowing them the opportunity to look at ways to engage and support graduates with mental health conditions in upcoming graduate rounds.

# What did we find?

* 24 graduates looking for work completed the survey
* 37.5% (9) identified as having a mental health condition
* Those who did identify as having a mental health condition, 66.67% said they will not share this information with an employer
* Of the 62.5% (15) who identified they did not have a mental health condition or preferred not to say, only 23.08% claimed they would share this with a future employer if things changed for them in the future

## What positives did students and graduates feel in sharing mental health information with a future employer?

* To be more flexible and understanding when I need to take a break even though I can still get the work done
* Provide support and trust that is needed to start a working relationship, though it is difficult and nerve racking to express with someone you do not know even though you would be working with them in the future
* Wanting to be part of a company where needs can be supported, and sharing will help me perform better
* Sharing in confidence builds trust and a good employer will understand and cater to the needs and accommodate with respect
* Being honest will help determine if the company will genuinely care for your needs as an employee
* I might be willing to share after I have worked for some time and built a rapport
* Everyone at some stage will develop mental health condition and this has come to light after Covid hit

## What perceived negatives did the students and graduates have to sharing mental health information with a future employer?

* Employer’s perception might affect their impression of my ability to perform my work tasks
* Negative reaction/opinion that would consequently impact success
* Judgement and bias
* Don’t believe the employer will understand, in fact, most will use this as a way to target work
* Will limit employment opportunities even if they say it won’t
* If it is not going to affect my work, I will not tell
* Perception that mental health is a liability
* Being sidelined by employers since they would require more needs
* Nobody would like the person with a mental health condition as an employee

## Resources to build confidence in supporting students / graduates

* JobAccess Employer Toolkit to help create a disability confident environment - <https://www.jobaccess.gov.au/employers/employer-toolkit>
* Beyond Blue Better mental health in the workplace, free online resources - <https://www.headsup.org.au/healthy-workplaces>
* Black Dog Institute – Mental health toolkit - [https://www.blackdoginstitute.org.au/education-services/workplaces/mental-health-toolkit](https://www.blackdoginstitute.org.au/education-services/workplaces/mental-health-toolkit/)
* Sane - <https://www.sane.org/information-and-resources/facts-and-guides/mental-illness-and-the-workplace>
* USEP graduates with disability – <https://www.adcet.edu.au/graduate-employment/usep-toolkit>
* GradWISE graduates with disability - [https://wiseemployment.com.au/gradwise-graduate-jobs](https://wiseemployment.com.au/gradwise-graduate-jobs/)
* Australian Network on Disability: [https://www.and.org.au](https://www.and.org.au/)

*All respondents went into the draw to win a Samsung Galaxy TabA7 Lite for sharing their insight.*

*2022*

1. <https://www.who.int/news/item/02-03-2022-covid-19-pandemic-triggers-25-increase-in-prevalence-of-anxiety-and-depression-worldwide> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)