



# mental health benefits of work and study

## If you're having a tough time, getting into work and study might be the last thing on your mind, but it can really help your mental health.

Whether you're struggling to get out of bed or having a tough time in other ways, we're here for you. You don't have to wait until you feel 'ready' to get involved in work or study, we can support you wherever you're at.

Studies have shown that young people experiencing mental health difficulties can often work if they are given the support they need. And although returning to work and study may have its challenges, research suggests that it is likely to improve your progress towards good mental health and wellbeing.

There are lots of reasons why we might stop or find it hard to start working or studying, such as:

- feeling inexperienced or unprepared to enter the workforce or to go to university or TAFE
- having had a negative experience in the past
- experiencing mental health difficulties or stress in your personal life
- having other responsibilities such as caring for someone else
- having a disability or physical health concerns
- COVID-19 impacts
- being unsure of where to start or what options are available
- time off school or lack of any career advice at school.

Studies have shown that the longer you are not working or studying, the harder it can be to get back into it. Sometimes we face tough times or things happen that impact our confidence or ability to work or study. When this happens it's easy to withdraw or get stuck in a rut that feels hard to get out of.

On the other hand, working or studying can play a really positive role in our lives. It can help you feel more confident, empowered and connected. It's about building a routine, setting yourself goals and working to achieve them. Getting into work and study can be the best thing you do for your wellbeing.

Working or studying can play a really positive role in our lives. It can help you feel more confident, empowered and connected.

'Don't hesitate in waiting to be at a specific stage of readiness. The team started with me from what I felt was rock bottom for me and within 3 months I made progress I never thought I would. I went on to continue doing these things because I had a team that did and still does believe in me and what I want to do.'

Young person from headspace Work & Study Online



## Here are some examples of how work and study can help you to build your confidence and even give you a boost in other areas of life.

If you're finding it hard to get into work or study remembering these things might help you stay motivated.

### Keep learning new skills

Through working or studying, you can build an understanding of your strengths and values, learn skills to help you negotiate, problem solve and communicate. Work and study can also help you to develop skills that are useful in other areas of your life, such as managing stress, anxiety, and difficult situations.

### Making connections

Working or studying can help you stay connected with people, places, and routines. Being connected with others can help you overcome challenges and see things from a new perspective. Getting into work or study is a great way to meet like-minded people who may even have similar interests and passions. With time, you can often build a group of people who care about you, and you will learn a lot along the way.

### Build confidence and self-esteem

Through work and study, you can develop skills, practise strategies that support good mental health, and grow your confidence in new and challenging situations or environments. Learning new skills and overcoming challenges can build a sense of accomplishment as well as confidence and self-esteem in all areas of your life.

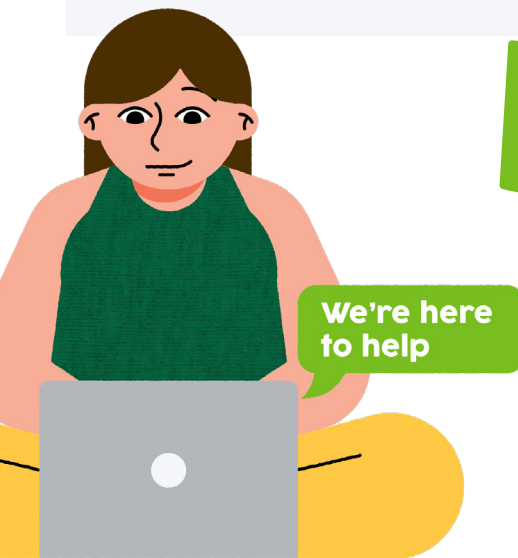
### Learn how to cope through tough times

Any skill can be learned through practice, and resilience is no different. Feeling confident and knowing how to manage setbacks can have a positive impact on your mental health and wellbeing. You can build resilience by coping and learning from tough times. What you learn you can often take into other parts of your life, not just work.



### Make it matter

Work and study can give us a structured and routine environment, which can really help you stay motivated and engaged, and something to feel proud of. Motivating yourself is hard! But working towards something that really matters to you can be really empowering and inspiring. We suggest taking some time to consider your values and why they matter to you – then doing the same with your company's values. A job or study environment will often feel more 'right' when these values align and it's easier to connect your purpose to your work.



### Getting support

The headspace Work & Study programs are tailored to your needs and can support you in developing the skills and confidence to reach your work or study goals.

It's totally free and we have options for you to participate online via webchat, video chat or phone, as well as face to face at over 50 of our headspace centres.

“It was really helpful to have both [supports]. I started out with work and study support and when we realised I also needed other support we teamed up with mental health [support]. [We] all worked together towards my goals in study, future work, and mental health issues including anxiety and depression inside and outside of the learning/workplaces. Having both teams meant I didn't have to drop one area to focus on another and in a way where having both wasn't ever overwhelming.”

Young person from headspace Work & Study Online

For more information on mental health benefits and work and study support scan the QR code:



If you or someone you know is going through a tough time you can get help and support from headspace, your school, TAFE or university wellbeing service or your local health provider. For more information, to find your nearest headspace centre, or for online and telephone support, visit [headspace.org.au](https://www.headspace.org.au).

If you need immediate assistance call 000 or to speak to someone urgently, please call Lifeline on 13 11 14 or Suicide Call Back Service on 1300 659 467.

headspace National Youth Mental Health Foundation is funded by the Australian Government.

 **headspace**  
National Youth Mental Health Foundation

The headspace Clinical Reference Group have approved this clinical resource. Fact sheets are for general information only. They are not intended to be and should not be relied on as a substitute for specific medical or health advice. While every effort is taken to ensure the information is accurate, headspace makes no representations and gives no warranties that this information is correct, current, complete, reliable or suitable for any purpose. We disclaim all responsibility and liability for any direct or indirect loss, damage, cost or expense whatsoever in the use of or reliance upon this information. 22 June 2023.