

SUNCORP group

CASE STUDY



- Suncorp Personal Insurance Division
- Largest general insurer of Australians by Gross Written Premium (GWP) and second largest general insurance company in New Zealand
- Australia-wide workshop roll-out as an integral part of Suncorp's 'Brighter Healthier You' strategic employee wellbeing program
- The 'Supporting a Resilient Team' workshop targeted team leaders and increased their knowledge and skills to effectively manage mental health and psychological wellbeing challenges

Participation in the 'Supporting a Resilient Team' workshop resulted in significant increases in knowledge, attitudes, and wellbeing-targeted behaviours:

- **Increased knowledge** about the topics of mental health, wellbeing, and resilience
- **Decreased negative attitudes** toward mental health
- **High readiness to transfer learning** to the workplace
- Significant **increases in confidence** to manage both personal and team members' wellbeing challenges
- Significant **increases in wellbeing-related behaviours** that were targeted by the workshop (e.g., manage stress effectively, build trust and rapport with employees)
- **Improvements in productivity, personal wellbeing, and relationship quality** between leaders and team members

"It was very interactive and I enjoyed that part of it, it was related to our professional and personal life and I found that extremely useful."

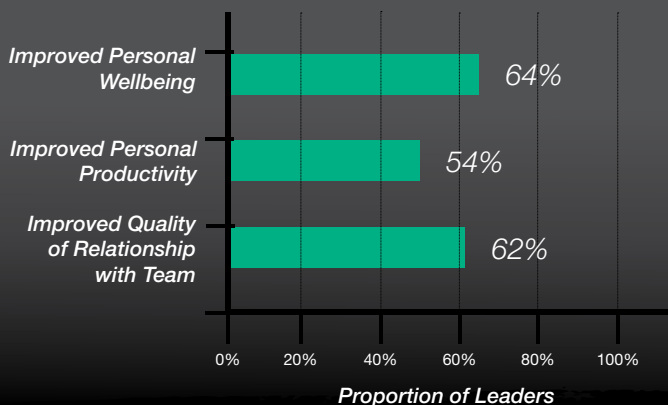
"It was amazing - learnt a lot and it would be great to have something for my team or have more sessions once every 6 months."

"I found the workshop very informative and well structured, provided some really useful and simple tools to help start conversations."

For greater detail on the methodology behind Sentis' compelling results, read on!

35% reduction in recorded mental stress incidents*

Percentage of leaders that reported improvements in wellbeing, productivity, and relationships with their teams



*Compared to same period 2012-2013



CONTEXT

Suncorp is a leading Australian and New Zealand insurance, banking and superannuation group. In 2013, Suncorp identified mental health and wellbeing as a specific and emerging risk affecting their people. They are not alone. Recent reports suggest that mental health and wellbeing in the workplace is a significant challenge facing most businesses in Australia.

1. The Australian Psychological Society Stress and Wellbeing in Australia Survey 2013 identified that working Australians are reporting decreasing levels of wellbeing and rising stress in the workplace;
2. In 2013, Comcare reported that workplace stress and psychological injury is estimated to cost Australian businesses \$30 billion dollars in 2013 through direct and indirect costs associated with stress and psychological injury compensation claims, low engagement, and reduced productivity.

In fact, the SafeWork Australian Strategy 2012-2022 identifies tackling work related mental disorders as a national priority for the first five years of its workplace health and safety strategy. The good news is that organisations can take some very practical and tangible measures to address this issue and that the business case for promoting health and wellbeing in the workplace is strong. Research shows meaningful links between the psychological health of employees and reduced worker's compensation claims, decreased absenteeism and presenteeism, increased engagement, and improved productivity¹.



OBJECTIVES

Although Suncorp offers a comprehensive health and wellbeing program for its employees, there was a need for a specific intervention to help leaders identify and support employees experiencing mental health issues and reduced wellbeing. As an innovative, forward thinking and people-focused group, Suncorp

wanted to take the next step to establish and maintain personal wellbeing, including mental health within their organisation. To achieve this, Suncorp initially targeted enhancing leaders' capacity to understand mental health and promote employee resilience.



SOLUTION

Suncorp partnered with Sentis to design and deliver a program for Suncorp's leaders focused on developing the knowledge and tools to support team members who may be experiencing difficulties coping with various life stressors.

As a result, the 'Supporting a Resilient Team' program was created. It was designed to enhance leaders' knowledge and skills relating to two key outcomes:

1. Increasing awareness of key indicators and strategies to effectively support employees who may be experiencing mental health challenges;
2. Development of techniques for enhancing personal resilience for both personal application and leadership strategies for encouraging resilience in team members.

The program was structured to accommodate organisational tolerance for face-to-face training, reach remote/regional employees, promote training transfer, and leverage existing Learning Management Systems. Further, the program was designed to ensure an impactful, relevant, and engaging experience for Suncorp participants — critical ingredients for successful training transfer and organisational return on investment. Additionally, assessment tools were integrated within the program to measure changes in attitudes, knowledge and skills, as well as monitor the extent to which learning was employed in the workplace and the impact on key business variables (e.g., absenteeism, productivity, engagement).

Danna, K., & Griffin, R.W. (1999). Health and well-being in the workplace: A review and synthesis of the literature. *Journal of Management*, 25, 357-384.



OUR PROCESS

Phase 1: **Aligning the Program with Suncorp Goals and Priorities**

Sentis aligned the Supporting a Resilient Team program with Suncorp's goals and priorities. Sentis consultants and Suncorp management worked closely during the critical preparation phase to determine the most effective content, process and tools for the program.

With the help of Suncorp, Sentis engaged in a comprehensive scoping process involving onsite visits and numerous individual and group interviews with Suncorp leaders. This process was essential to garnering an accurate and thorough understanding of the challenges and opportunities facing Suncorp and developing a program suited to meeting these needs. In addition, Sentis delivered a pilot version of the program to senior Suncorp leaders and invited feedback as part of the process. Based on this information, Sentis developed the Supporting a Resilient Team program to positively impact wellbeing of leaders and their teams.

Phase 2: **Encouraging Engagement through Program Delivery**

Critical to the success of any wellbeing intervention is the delivery of relevant information and development of critical skills through engaging methods. Through comprehensive scoping and preparation in Phase 1, Sentis developed the Supporting a Resilient Team program that was highly relevant to leaders at Suncorp and aligned with the goals and priorities of the organisation.

Sentis facilitators utilised videos, role-play activities and dialogue with program participants to deliver program content focused on recognition of indicators that team members are experiencing difficulties coping, review of skills and strategies for developing personal resilience, and tools and strategies for engaging in effective supporting conversations and interactions with team members. Program participants provided highly favourable feedback on the program, noting that the program was highly enjoyable and useful to their jobs, and provided information they could apply to their job right away.

Phase 3: **Encouraging Ongoing Reflection and Use of Program Skills and Strategies**

Post-program embedding promoted continuous learning and the application of newly-acquired knowledge and skills. Sentis worked with Suncorp to provide program participants with resources that could be retrieved on the organisation's website, included factsheets, videos, and animations that provided supplementary information to that covered in the program. Participants were encouraged to take advantage of these resources in their ongoing journey toward Supporting a Resilient Team.



IMPACT

Over 600 leaders at Suncorp participated in the Supporting a Resilient Team program. Post-program participant feedback and commentary was overwhelmingly positive, with participants reporting both enjoyment and high practical utility of the content:

- **98%** found the workshop useful to extremely useful to their job
- **97%** found the workshops enjoyable to extremely enjoyable
- **98%** would recommend the workshop to others
- **5.4 OUT OF 6** = average rating of participants indicating they learned something they could immediately apply back in the workplace
- **5.7 OUT OF 6** = average rating of participants indicating the workshops were carried out professionally
- **35%** decrease in the number of mental stress incidents recorded (compared to the same time period in 2012-13)

“This was the most professional and well-presented workshop I have ever attended.”

“I believe the workshop and facilitators understood their audience and ensured there was equal input from participants, really enjoyed it.”

“I found this very valuable both for the workplace and on an individual level, this was extremely interesting.”

“I believe each scenario will bring with it, its own challenges. However with this workshop, I strongly feel I will be able to tackle any barrier/challenge... This course is absolutely fantastic!”

Following the implementation of the Supporting a Resilient Team program, Sentis’ Research Team undertook efficacy research to determine program impact on the wellbeing of leaders and their teams. This efficacy research focused on three areas:

- 1) Assess whether the program objectives had been met
- 2) Identify and pre-empt roadblocks and challenges to success
- 3) Collect scientific evidence of ongoing program success

To meet these objectives, a multi-phase data collection effort was employed. Program participants completed surveys prior to program participation, immediately after participation, and one month following

participation. Results of the study demonstrated a positive impact on knowledge and attitudes with respect to mental health, and significant improvements in program-targeted behaviours such as engagement in wellbeing “check-ins” with team members. In addition, program participants indicated that they had experienced increased personal wellbeing, increased personal productivity, and more positive relationships with their team since participating in the Supporting a Resilient Team program.

- On average, participant’s knowledge of mental health issues increased by **36%**
- Overall, participants’ confidence to manage team members’ wellbeing issues increased by **20%**
- **64%** of participants reported experiencing better personal wellbeing as a result of the program
- **54%** of participants reported feeling more productive at work due to the program
- **62%** of participants reported more positive relationships with their team members following the program
- Participants reported that they undertook informal ‘check-ins’ with more of their team members after the program

Conclusions

Working closely with Suncorp management, Sentis was able to develop and deliver a customised program that directly addressed the challenge of supporting leaders to manage employee mental health and wellbeing issues. Participants reported high levels of enjoyment and usefulness of the program which translated into a positive impact on their confidence to support team members more effectively.

Furthermore, participants used the strategies and tools learned in the program on the job, which resulted in significant increases to perceived productivity, wellbeing, and team relationship quality. The positive feedback from participants and evidence of positive individual, team, and organisational changes are promising indicators that Suncorp has made even further inroads toward achieving their goal of maintaining a favourable wellbeing culture and securing positive outcomes for their workforce and shareholders.