

Mental Health for FIFO Workers

The issue of FIFO work and mental health risks has received greater exposure in recent times. Earlier this year the West Australian Government released Australia's first FIFO Mental Health Code. It's estimated that there are more than **60,000** FIFO workers in WA alone.

FIFO work can be an excellent choice for people looking to grow their careers. But it is essential we acknowledge the unique mental health challenges that come from this type of long-distance working life.

Simple ways to look after your wellbeing in the FIFO industry:

- **Keep fit.** Get regular, daily exercise. Go for a walk, bike ride, bush walk, swimming, yoga, get good quality sleep.
- **Eat well.** If you eat nutritious snacks and meals, you're giving your body and your brain the nutrition it needs for optimal functioning.
- **Entertain yourself.** Read, write a letter or email etc.
- **Pamper yourself.** It's not something truck drivers or FIFO workers do a lot of, but consider a massage, go lie on the beach or in a park or take a relaxing bath. It does wonders for time out and relaxation.
- **Around the house.** Cook something new, listen to music, play in the backyard with your children or pets etc.
- **Stay connected.** Call a friend for a chat or spend time with family and less time in front of the TV or computer screen.
- **Reduce or eliminate** coffee, nicotine, and alcohol.
- **Stick to a regular sleep pattern** (when you can, even on the weekend).
- **Ensure your bedroom temperature isn't too warm** – cooler conditions help you get to sleep and stay asleep.

Mental Health Awareness in your workplace:

When FIFO workers are taken on, they (and their families) must be given education about the challenges they will face, as well as continued access to support. They should be informed about the effects that the work can have on relationships and learn about appropriate coping mechanisms. Friends and family should also be given information on the signs of mental health issues, so that they can watch out for signs of distress. Seek support from HR or colleagues wherever you can.

- In the FIFO industry you often realise that going home after lengthy periods away can make you feel like a 'visitor' it is important to be aware that fitting back into the family routine is required.
- Do not expect that everyone will drop everything because you're home. As negative as this sounds it is the reality and it will help reduce expectations at both ends.
- The same applies with friends and extended family. Not everyone will be available at your whim because you're home. This does not mean you cannot stay connected or that you are not important.
- Beyond Blue offers free resources and support for FIFO workers
<https://www.beyondblue.org.au/personal-best/pillar/in-focus/looking-after-your-mental-health-as-a-fly-in-fly-out-worker>



To arrange a free confidential appointment today please call us on

1300 130 130

E: enquiries@daccordoas.au
W: www.daccordoas.au

