

# Mental health and the workplace with childhood-onset heart disease (CoHD)



CoHD refers to a range of heart conditions that develop during childhood, including congenital and acquired heart conditions which originate in childhood but have lifelong implications. As people enter the workforce, they may continue to face the physical and emotional challenges associated with their condition.

## Employees with CoHD may experience

### **Fatigue:**

Bouts of fatigue can impact productivity and job performance.

### **Low self-esteem:**

Concerns about physical appearance and capabilities may affect self-esteem.

### **Overworking:**

Employees may push themselves too hard to keep up with colleagues, leading to burnout.

### **Stress and anxiety:**

Ongoing health concerns and potential for medical emergencies can increase stress and anxiety levels.



Creating a supportive workplace for people with CoHD starts with understanding and flexibility.

Employers can make a profound impact by building a safe and inclusive work environment which offers access to mental health resources, flexible work hours for medical appointments and procedures, and leading with compassion.

It's essential to respect the privacy of all individuals, maintaining confidentiality regarding health conditions. By promoting mental health awareness and support, you can help employees with CoHD feel valued and empowered, ultimately creating a more caring and productive workplace.

## Tools to support staff with CoHD:



### Mental health programs

Encourage employees to take advantage of employee assistance programs (EAPs) for regular mental health check-ins.



### Workplace flexibility:

Offer flexible working hours and the option to work from home when needed to accommodate medical appointments and rest.



### Compassionate leadership:

Train managers to adopt a compassionate and understanding approach to support employees with disabilities, health, or chronic conditions.



### Reasonable adjustments:

Be prepared to make reasonable adjustments to workloads and deadlines to prevent burnout.



### Promoting work-life balance:

Encourage a healthy work-life balance to reduce stress and improve overall well-being.

## Resources



### HeartKids Helpline

The HeartKids Helpline offers support and guidance to those impacted by CoHD, including families, caregivers, health professionals, and anyone seeking information or referrals. Contact the Helpline on **1800 432 785** or speak to our staff on **webchat** via [heartkids.org.au](https://heartkids.org.au)



### Beyond Blue

Offers mental health support and resources tailored to the workplace.

W **Beyond Blue**  
T 1300 22 4636



### Heads Up

An Australian initiative that provides resources for creating mentally healthy workplaces.

W **Heads Up**  
T 1300 22 4636

[heartkids.org.au](https://heartkids.org.au) | [1800 432 785](tel:1800432785) | [office@heartkids.org.au](mailto:office@heartkids.org.au) | © HeartKids

This fact sheet was reviewed and updated by HeartKids in June 2024. It was endorsed by the HeartKids Clinical Advisory Committee at the time of publication. Clinical information might change after this date. The information in this fact sheet is general. It is not a substitute for medical advice from your doctor. Always talk to your doctor about matters that affect your or your family's health. Have feedback about our resources? Contact [office@heartkids.org.au](mailto:office@heartkids.org.au).