



**Victorian
Small Business
Commission**

Real-world strategies for mental wellbeing

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*Victorian Small Business
Commissioner*



We're here for small business

The VSBC is an independent government agency that:

- **advocates** on issues affecting people in small business
- raises awareness of your **rights and responsibilities**
- helps you to avoid or **resolve disputes**





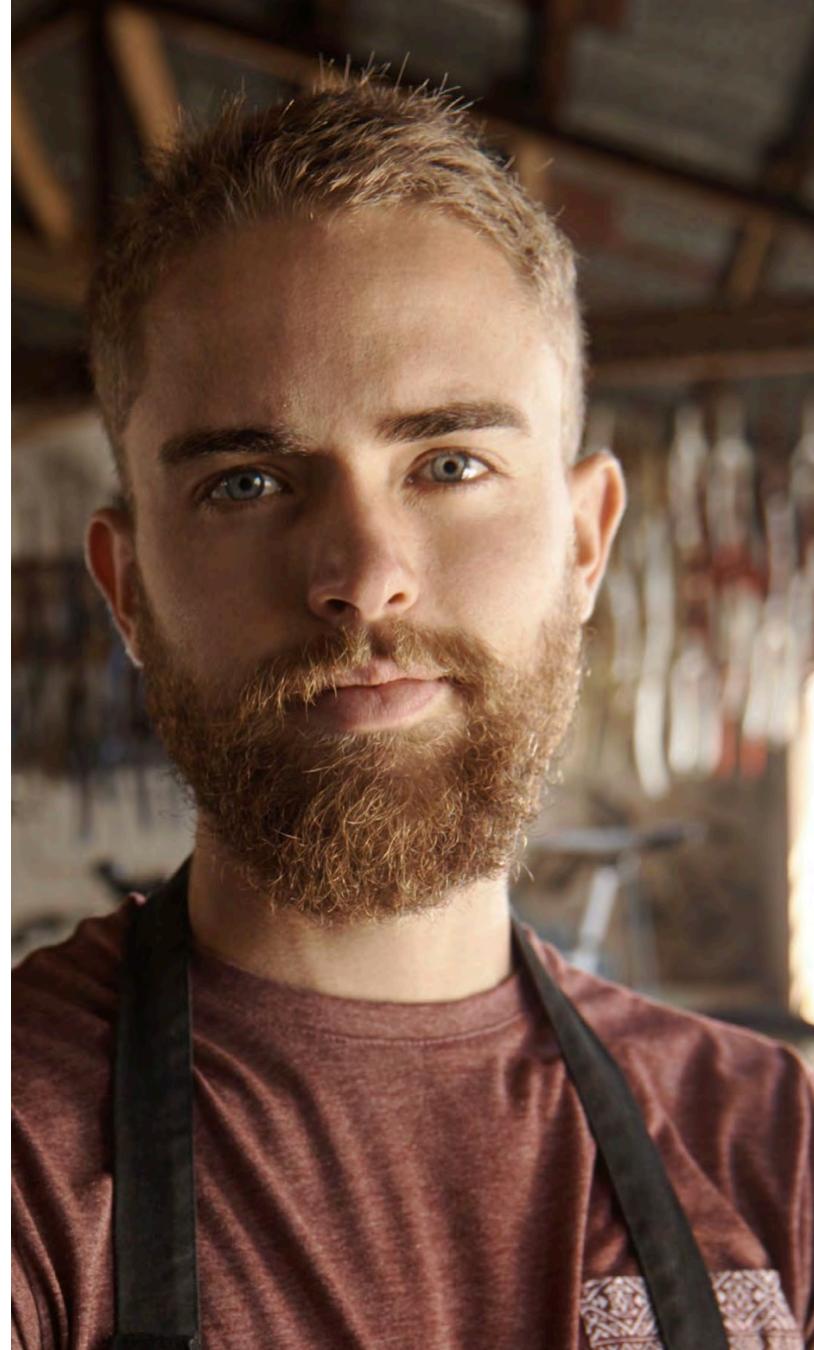
Responding to coronavirus

The VSBC is offering:

- **free mediation to commercial tenants and landlords** under the Commercial Tenancy Relief Scheme
- **help to resolve small business disputes** e.g. over unpaid invoices
- **mental health support** to small business owners

Looking after your mental health

- Many business owners are focused on getting their businesses through the pandemic and looking after family and staff
- They might not have prioritised their own mental health



New small business owner's guide



Our new guide to creating a mental health plan can help you to:

- start thinking about mental health
- identify your stressors
- recognise changes in yourself
- plan steps you can take in response

Developed with Beyond Blue

Download your copy [here](#)



Mental health plan: Alex Smith

01 Stressors – business and personal

What do I find really challenging at the moment?

My stressors	What I can do now to stop them from happening
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Knowing which government supports I can access and what I need to do to look after my staff — Not being able to visit family and friends — Trying to pay rent when I have far fewer customers — Adapting to working from home 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Call Business Victoria (13 22 15) to find out if I can apply for the Business Support Fund — Try using Skype and FaceTime instead of calling — Call my landlord to talk about my situation and if they don't agree to negotiate rent relief, visit the VSBC's website for help — Read about working from home safely and productively

02 Mental health red flags

What changes in me help me to know I might need support?

My flags	Actions I can take when they happen
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Not being able to sleep properly — Thinking it's all too much — Feeling anxious 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — See my doctor — Talk to a counsellor — Go for an early jog each morning

03 Support people and resources

Which trusted contacts can I turn to for help?

My supports	Steps I'll take now
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Doctor, Lifeline (13 11 14), Beyond Blue — Business Victoria, business mentor — DHHS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Access Beyond Blue's support service — Call my mentor — Bookmark DHHS's web page and get across their FAQs

04 If I need to take time out

What I can do	How I'll plan for this now
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Ask Fran to run the business until I get back — Draw on available supports (e.g. tax relief, Centrelink) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Speak with Fran — Visit the Business Victoria website

05 Returning to work after taking time out

How I can do this and support my mental health	How I'll plan for this now
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Cut back to 2 days a week for the first few weeks — Keep connected 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Talk to the team about my plan — Reconnect with SANE's lived experience forum

My business and personal stressors

- What do I find really challenging in my life right now?
- What could I do to stop these stressors from happening?

My stressors

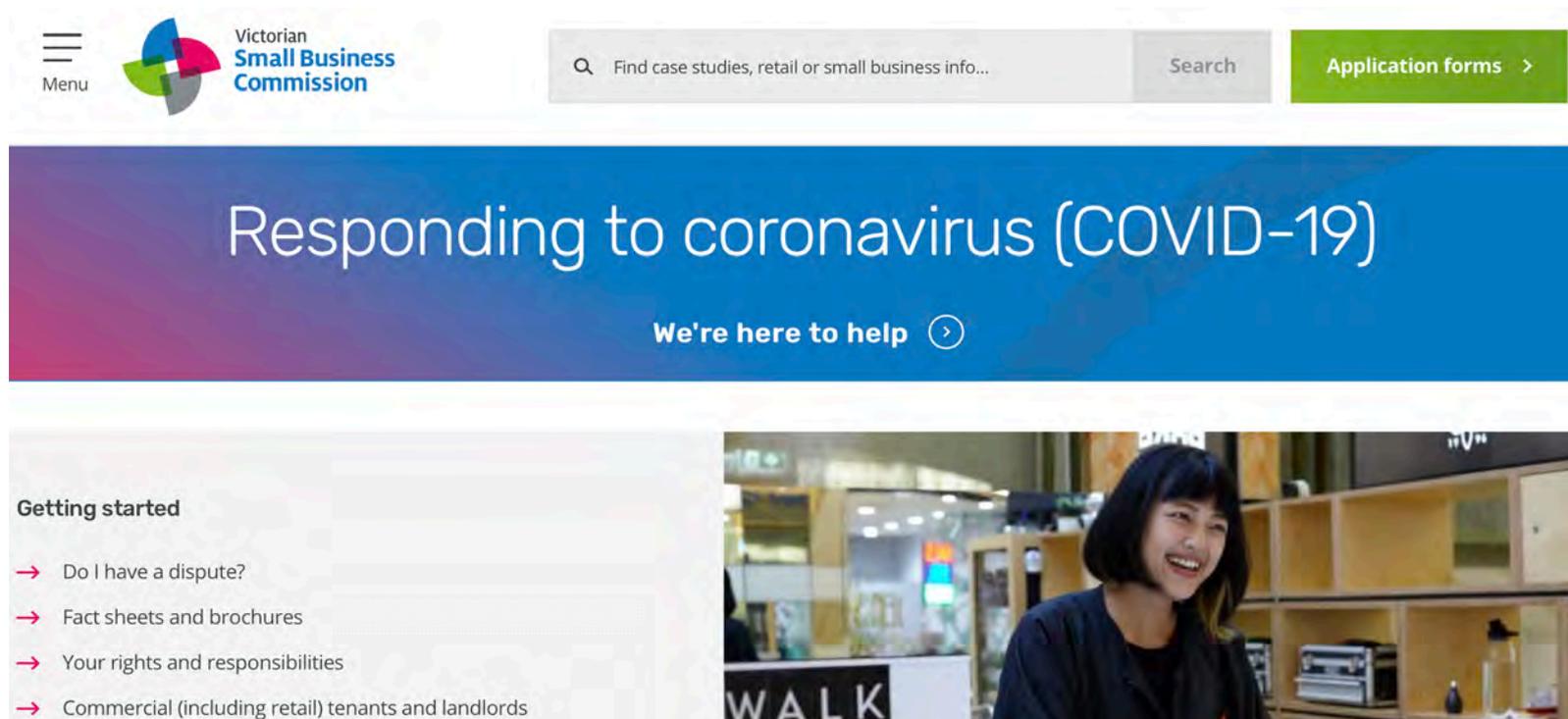
- Knowing which government supports I can access and what I need to do to look after my staff
- Not being able to visit family and friends
- Trying to pay rent when I have far fewer customers
- Adapting to working from home

What I can do now to stop them from happening

- Call Business Victoria (13 22 15) to find out if I can apply for the Business Support Fund
- Try using Skype and FaceTime instead of calling
- Call my landlord to talk about my situation and if they don't agree to negotiate rent relief, visit the VSBC's website for help
- Read about working from home safely and productively

Rent relief and leasing advice

- [Victorian Small Business Commission](#): 13 8722



The screenshot shows the top navigation of the Victorian Small Business Commission website. On the left is a menu icon and the logo. In the center is a search bar with the placeholder text "Find case studies, retail or small business info...". To the right of the search bar is a "Search" button and a green button labeled "Application forms >". Below the navigation is a large blue banner with the text "Responding to coronavirus (COVID-19)" and "We're here to help" with a right-pointing arrow icon. Below the banner is a "Getting started" section with a list of links: "Do I have a dispute?", "Fact sheets and brochures", "Your rights and responsibilities", and "Commercial (including retail) tenants and landlords". To the right of the list is a photograph of a smiling woman in a retail setting.

Business support

- [Business Victoria](#) coronavirus hotline: 13 22 15

Coronavirus (COVID-19) business support

Easing of restrictions and support to help your workplace plan
and respond to coronavirus

On this page

- ✓ [Economic Survival and Jobs Package](#)

Not what you're looking for?

- [Hospitality Industry Guidelines for coronavirus](#)

My ‘mental health red flags’

- What changes in me help me to know I might need extra support?
- What can I do to stop them from happening?

My flags	Actions I can take when they happen
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Not being able to sleep properly — Thinking it’s all too much — Feeling anxious 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — See my doctor — Talk to a counsellor — Go for an early jog each morning

People and resources I can call on

- Which trusted contacts can I turn to for help?
- What can I get moving on now?

My supports

- Doctor, Lifeline (13 11 14), Beyond Blue
- Business Victoria, business mentor
- DHHS

Steps I'll take now

- Access Beyond Blue's support service
- Call my mentor
- Bookmark DHHS's web page and get across their FAQs

Mental wellbeing support

- [Beyond Blue's Coronavirus Mental Wellbeing Support Service](#): 1800 512 348



How business owners, leaders and managers can manage their mental health

Strategies for business owners, leaders and managers to look after their mental health during the COVID-19 pandemic

Back to work: how to manage reopening your business

As coronavirus restrictions ease, small businesses must manage the transition back to work for them and their staff.

How managers can lead the way to healthy work

How to help your employees with back-to-work

What if I need to take time out?

- What can I do if I need to step away from my business?
- How can I plan for this now?

Planning for taking time out

- It's important to develop a plan of action in case you need to step away from your business while it's still operating
- Steps could include:
 - training a staff member to manage the business until you get back
 - outsourcing the work or job sharing
 - considering putting your work on hold
 - talking to your clients about your situation to see how they might be able to support you

Return to work strategy

It's a good idea to consider:

- how you'll maintain your mental health treatment
- the hours you'll work and tasks you'll do
- who you need to talk with about your strategy
- what you plan to do differently



Workplace wellness

Heads Up offers a range of resources for small business owners including:

- online training and strategies for supporting staff
- a template for developing a mental health and wellbeing policy
- help in minimising job stress
- help in having conversations with a team member you're worried about

Looking after my staff

- If your staff are working remotely it can help to share tips on how to work from home safely and productively
- If you've had to stand down staff, there are resources that might help, such as guidance in promoting a positive mindset if you've lost your job

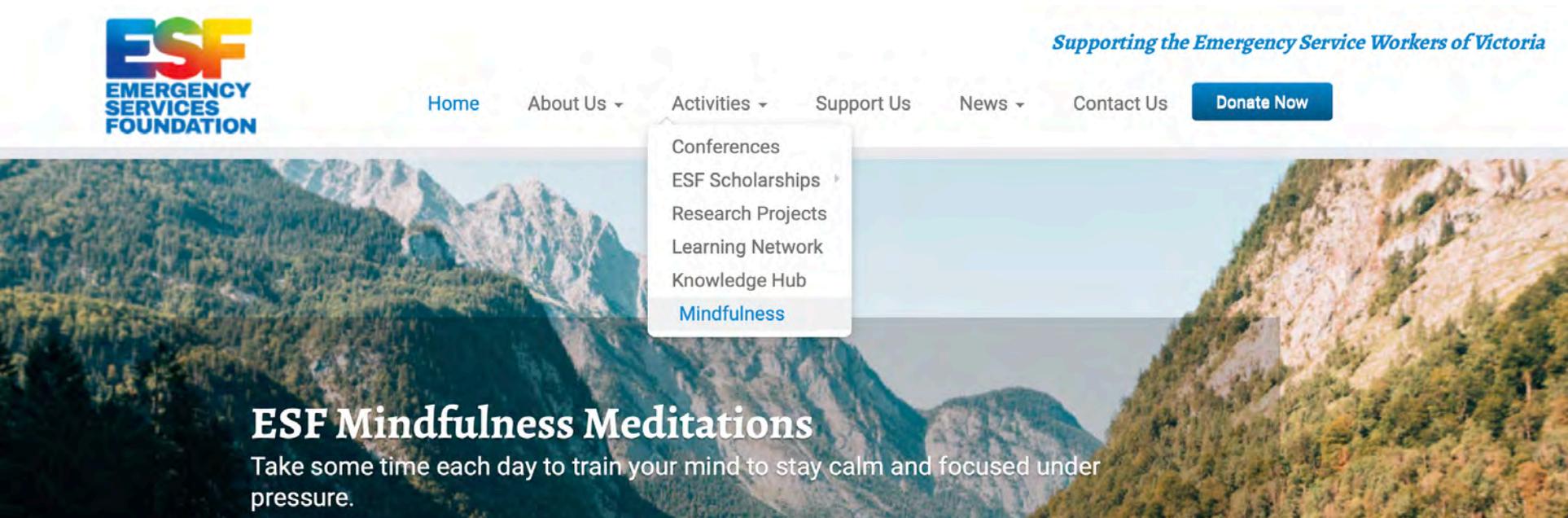


Tips for mental wellbeing

- Stay connected with friends via FaceTime, social media or talking on the phone
- Keep fit through daily walks or online workout classes
- Get accurate information on business supports
- Access Beyond Blue's coronavirus support service for information on managing your wellbeing and access to trained counsellors 24/7
- Read [Beyond Blue's guide to help you support other small business owners](#) who are going through a tough time

Mindfulness

- Request access to the Emergency Services Foundation's mindfulness meditations [here](#)



The screenshot shows the website for the Emergency Services Foundation (ESF). The top navigation bar includes links for Home, About Us, Activities, Support Us, News, and Contact Us, along with a prominent blue 'Donate Now' button. A dropdown menu is open under 'Activities', listing 'Conferences', 'ESF Scholarships', 'Research Projects', 'Learning Network', 'Knowledge Hub', and 'Mindfulness'. The 'Mindfulness' option is highlighted. Below the navigation, a banner features a scenic mountain landscape with the text: 'ESF Mindfulness Meditations' and 'Take some time each day to train your mind to stay calm and focused under pressure.' The tagline 'Supporting the Emergency Service Workers of Victoria' is visible in the top right of the banner area.



We're here to help



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