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## Cost of living pressures overtake COVID-19 worries as the main cause of stress, survey shows

Cost of living pressures have overtaken COVID-19 as the main concern for people, according to a new Beyond Blue community sentiment survey released on World Mental Health Day.

Beyond Blue surveyed 1500 people nationally to identify stressors impacting people's mental health and wellbeing, with the findings revealing increasing interest rates, high inflation, worries about the cost of living, war in Ukraine and what the future may hold as the main causes of concern.

The survey revealed a general sense of unease, with people operating at a lower level than pre-pandemic days and adults weighed down by work challenges and cost-of-living rises.

The findings are consistent with current conversation themes on Beyond Blue's popular and trusted online peer support forums.

Compared to the same time last year, fewer people are seeking advice about the impact of the pandemic, and more are discussing family and relationship stress and anxiety.

Almost half (48 per cent) of those surveyed say they felt lost when it came to their mental health and wellbeing. Just as many (46 per cent) felt their problems did not warrant seeking support.

**Beyond Blue CEO Georgie Harman** reminded people of the benefits of using the Beyond Blue Support Service and digital tools.

"Although we are moving away from COVID-19 as being a major source of worry, people are telling us they're still adjusting," Ms Harman said.

"Survey respondents say a lack of social connection, isolation, negative self-worth are lingering feelings, and that things aren't quite back to normal just yet.

"No problem is too big or small. Seeking support at the first sign you're not feeling quite yourself can make it easier to bounce back and maintain good mental health."

The survey also revealed people wanted a diverse range of supports for their mental health and wellbeing including online mental health tips, digital tools and someone to talk to too.

Ms Harman said Beyond Blue's online forums were a simple, moderated safe space where people connect and get support from others for their mental health challenges anonymously.

"We know that longstanding issues with service access, availability and affordability have been exacerbated by the pandemic, meaning finding support for your mental health is particularly challenging at the moment," she said.

"There are steps you can take to manage your own mental health and wellbeing while you're on a waitlist or worrying about what to do, and digital supports are a great place to start."

More than 50,000 people visit Beyond Blue's forums each month to chat about a range of topics including relationship problems, depression, anxiety, gender identity, grief and thoughts of suicide.

"We've recently made massive changes to the forums, making them more accessible and easier to use, allowing the community to receive compassionate support from others who get it, no matter where they are, right at their fingertips." Ms Harman said.

To find out more about Beyond Blue's online forums, visit [forums.beyondblue.org.au](https://forums.beyondblue.org.au)

Copies of Beyond Blue's commissioned survey are available on request.

**For interviews, contact Sarah Farnsworth on 0428 645 457 or [sarah.farnsworth@beyondblue.org.au](mailto:sarah.farnsworth@beyondblue.org.au)**

**ENDS**

**Beyond Blue Support Service:** 1300 22 4636 or [beyondblue.org.au/getsupport](https://beyondblue.org.au/getsupport)

**Coronavirus Mental Wellbeing Support Service:** 1800 512 348 or [coronavirus.beyondblue.org.au](https://coronavirus.beyondblue.org.au)