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I have lived experience of depression and anxiety arising from workplace issues. My submission relates to cost and loss of productivity in the workplace. From the statistics I have seen, common law payouts for mental health related injuries are the highest of any category, yet only a smaller fraction of the total number of injuries. My experience in the workplace is that employers have spent almost zero time and expense on understanding, communications and implementing policies related to mental health. The “just get over it” approach is the norm from my perspective. There are many ways overt, covert, subtle, deliberate or unintentional methods that lead to mental health issues for employees. Employers are not trained nor equipped to deal with this properly. Employees often do not know the origins of the issue, nor how to communicate with this ignorance. Employees know the stigma attached to mental health issues, and whether unintentional or otherwise employers know that it is unlikely to be talked about. I see none of this improving until employers( in particular ADF and Small Businesses) have policies and practices in place of the sort with which the AFL Players Association, the AFL Commission and the AFL Clubs have agreed on and already producing good results. I have spent many days and hours in group sessions for depression and anxiety and an overwhelming majority of issues are work related. There is a substantial financial carrot waiting for employers to reduce their costs by working to improve their knowledge and practices on this issue, but an X-ray of a slipped disc or broken leg or other visual injury they see easily. They need to be able to see mental health injury. It requires a different perception, any of those with mental health injuries arising from the workplace can recognise the why and how it starts, and they know the cost and the pain.

Employers need help with this, I believe that insurers are failing to properly engage with employers on best practice for this.

I submit this humbly, but hope that what I write rather poorly, can be interpreted and genuinely understood that I seek only less of the damage being caused.