



# Guide on hosting a volunteer speaker

Beyond Blue Speakers Team

2025

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**Beyond Blue** Guide on hosting a volunteer speaker



# The program

Beyond Blue Speakers are community members who volunteer their time to speak about their personal experience with a mental health condition.

Beyond Blue Speakers undergo training guided by Beyond Blue's Clinical Governance Team and the National Standards of Volunteer Involvement.

Premier Partner Australia Post proudly sponsors the speakers program.



A Beyond Blue Speaker's presentation generally includes:

Information and statistics about mental health in Australia

A brief explanation of anxiety and depression

Reasons for the changes that led to their mental health decline

The signs and symptoms they experienced

Their recovery process

How they care for and manage their mental health today

Reflections on what their mental health journey has taught them

# The program

**Minimum 30 days' notice**

**Minimum of 15 attendees**

**Attendees are 15+ years of age**

**Allocate a 45-minute time slot**

## Criteria for hosting a Beyond Blue Speaker

To accommodate our high volume of requests, we require at least 30 days' notice to identify and schedule the most suitable speaker for your event.

As our speakers volunteer their time, we ask for a minimum audience of 15 people to ensure their stories reach and benefit as many people in the community as possible.

Due to the sensitive nature of the topics discussed, we recommend the audience is at least 15 years of age. If minors are present, a teacher or guardian must accompany them to ensure appropriate support and guidance.

Beyond Blue Speakers present 25–30 minute talks, plus time for questions, totalling 45 minutes. Each talk is thoughtfully crafted to share their personal journey and convey powerful messages of hope, recovery, and resilience, ensuring the full time is used for maximum impact.

**If your event is unable to meet the criteria, please email [speaker@beyondblue.org.au](mailto:speaker@beyondblue.org.au) to access alternative resources for your event**

# Pre-event

After placing a request for a Beyond Blue Speaker to attend your event, a member of the Speakers Team will contact you to inform you that they have begun searching for a suitable speaker in your area.

**Once a speaker has been secured for your event, you will receive a confirmation email from the Speakers Team member managing your request.**



Please read the confirmation email carefully, it will include:

## Disclaimer

Our Beyond Blue Speakers lived experience story may involve sensitive content. To ensure the wellbeing of your attendees, we recommend sharing the disclaimer - which includes information about where to access support - in the lead up to and on the day of the event.

## Speaker Bio

A one-page document with information about the speaker attending your event. Please use the Speaker Bio as a way to introduce the speaker on the day to the audience.

## Impact measuring

Feedback helps Beyond Blue measure the impact of the program. You will receive a digital copy of the Attendee Survey - a short 4-question survey to be shared with attendees after a speaker has shared their story.

**[Learn more about our impact measuring method here.](#)**

# Pre-event

As the event organiser, it is your responsibility to check in and confirm event details with the speaker prior the event.

**Please contact your confirmed speaker via phone or email:**

1. **one week** in advance
2. **one day** before the event



## Your role in the lead up to the event

### In-person events

Please ensure you provide parking or public transport information, details on how to access the venue and a dress code if necessary.

### Virtual (online) events

Please ensure you have organised, emailed and tested the link to the online session (e.g. Microsoft Teams) to the speaker. On occasion, the speaker confirmed for your event may live in another state so please check the time difference before contacting them.

**If there are any changes to the event, such as the date, time and/or venue please notify both the speaker and the speakers team with the updated information right away.**

# What if we only have a 10-minute slot available for the speaker to share their story?



We spend a considerable amount of time with each speaker crafting their story to ensure it covers their entire journey and conveys Beyond Blue's key messages of hope, recovery and resilience.

**Beyond Blue Speakers are trained to give their talks from 25-30 minutes, plus time for a discussion and questions (45 minutes in total)**

We are mindful that shortening the timeframe requires the speaker to condense their story, and as a result it can lose impact and key messages.

**If you are unable to extend the time allotted to a minimum of 30 minutes, please email [speaker@beyondblue.org.au](mailto:speaker@beyondblue.org.au) to notify the speakers team member.**

**We have a variety of alternative resources that can be shared on the day of the event, including:**

- Written stories to inspire,
- Condensed stories on our YouTube channel,
- Episodes from the Not Alone podcast,
- Downloadable mental health resources and information.

**The Speakers Team will be happy to email these resources to you.**

# Day of event

Your role on the day for an **in-person event**

## **Be present on the day**

To ensure the day runs smoothly, please be present on the day. If you can't attend, please provide the contact details of someone who can greet the speaker upon arrival. Make sure the speaker and the team are informed in advance.

## **Ensure there is space**

Ensure there is a designated space available for the speaker, such as a podium. Avoid any areas where attendees can be distracted by other activities.

## **Introduce the speaker**

Use the speaker bio provided in the email to introduce the speaker to the audience.

## **Respect their time**

Our speakers are trained to share their story within 25-30 minutes, plus time for questions. Please do not ask the speaker to shorten their story, as this will lose the impact and key messages.

## **Facilitate the Q&A session**

Beyond Blue Speakers can only answer questions based on their own personal experience. They are unable to provide clinical or medical advice.





# Day of event

## Your role on the day for a **virtual event**

### **Be present on the day**

If you can't attend the session, please provide the contact details of someone who can support the speaker joining online. Make sure the speaker and the team are informed in advance.

### **Ask for cameras on**

Please encourage attendees to turn their cameras during the session. Speakers feel more at ease and connected when they can see the audiences' responses to their story.

### **Introduce the speaker**

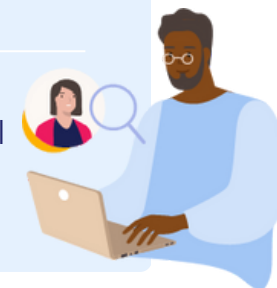
Use the speaker bio provided in the email to introduce the speaker to the audience.

### **Respect their time**

Our speakers are trained to share their story within 25-30 minutes, plus time for questions. Please do not ask the speaker to condense their story into a shorter timeframe, as this will lose the impact and key messages.

### **Moderate the chat**

Beyond Blue Speakers can only answer questions based on their own personal experience. They are unable to provide clinical or medical advice.



# Day of event: Q&A session

The question and discussion session is often the highlight of our speakers' and their audience's experience with the program.

Sometimes it can take a while for the audience to engage in the Q&A. Asking the first question can help break the ice and encourage others to join in. You can use any of the prompt questions below to get the conversation started:

**Question prompt:** What are some things you currently do for self-care to support your mental health?

**Question prompt:** What led you to decide to seek professional help? How did you make that decision?

**Question prompt:** What advice would you give to someone who is afraid to talk about their mental health because of fear of judgement?

**Question prompt:** How have you dealt with stigma surrounding mental health, especially in professional or social settings?








# Feedback

## Attendee feedback survey

Please share with attendees the QR code poster that was attached in your confirmation email. The anonymous survey includes 4 short questions and will take no longer than a minute to complete.

**If you would like to receive hardcopy versions of the survey, please contact the Speakers Team member managing your request with your postal address and the number of copies you would like to receive.**

**Please share your experience**

**After hearing a Beyond Blue Speaker, do you...**

have a greater awareness of the signs and symptoms of a mental health condition?

Strongly disagree   Disagree   Neutral   Agree   Strongly agree

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

## Event organiser feedback survey

Following the event, you will receive an email including a feedback survey to complete.

The event organiser feedback survey takes no longer than 2 minutes to complete. Your feedback is invaluable in helping Beyond Blue assess the impact of our program, refine our processes, enhance community experiences, and provide better support to our volunteers.

**Many of our speakers, who generously give their time to share their lived experience, consider thoughtful feedback as a meaningful reward for their efforts.**



# Next steps

After hearing from a Beyond Blue Speaker, your attendees may feel they want to make the next step to improving their mental health.

**There are many ways to keep the conversation going...**



## Share resources

We encourage you to utilise the many resources available on [our website](#), including a handy guide on [how to check in with someone](#).

## Share the online Anxiety and Depression (K10) test

The [K10 test](#) includes 10 questions about how you've been feeling over the past four weeks, it takes 5-10 minutes to complete.

The results of the K10 will not provide a diagnosis. The results will measure your level of distress and help find support that's right for you.

## Support Service information

If any of your attendees are unsure where to go next, the free 24/7 Beyond Blue Support Service is a great way to start. Our trained mental health professionals can provide brief counselling and point them in the right direction. The support service can be accessed over the phone, via email or webchat.



[beyondblue.org.au/get-support](https://beyondblue.org.au/get-support)



[1300 22 4636](tel:1300224636)

# Donations to the Support Service

More than 750 people will reach out to Beyond Blue's Support Service in the next 24 hours.

The support service is solely funded by donations.

**Every donation helps us ensure every call, webchat and email is answered.**



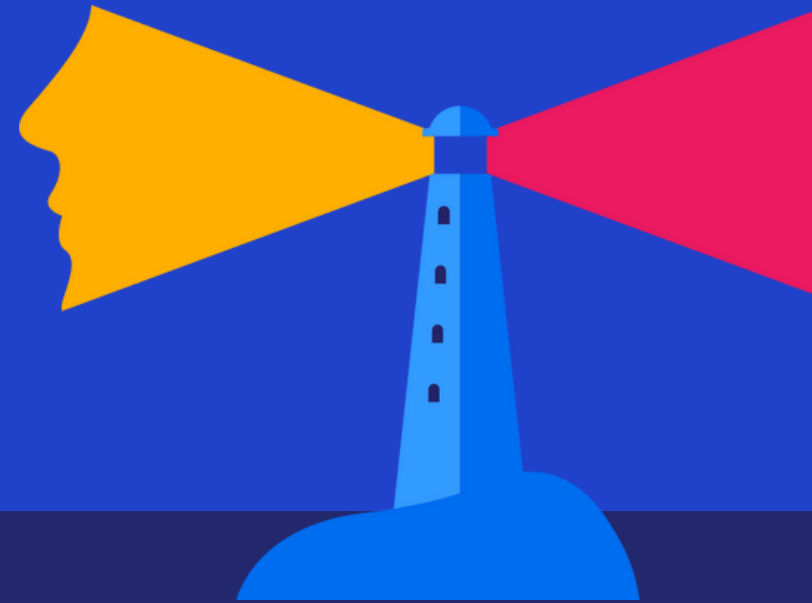
We are proud to offer the Speakers Program as a free service. If you would like to donate to [Beyond Blue's Support Service](#) as part of your event, you can do so on our website. Or through post to:

**GPO Box 1883  
Melbourne VIC 3001**

Please email [donations@beyondblue.org.au](mailto:donations@beyondblue.org.au) or call our fundraising team on [\(03\) 9810 6100](tel:(03)98106100) and they will happily answer any questions and/or process your donation over the phone.

**[Donate](#)**

# Thank you



Beyond Blue acknowledges the Land on which our head office is based has deep connections to peoples and cultures across the Eastern Kulin Nation. We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of this area, the Wurundjeri Peoples, and pay our respects to their Elders past and present. As an organisation with national reach, we extend our respect to all Elders and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples across Australia.



Beyond Blue acknowledges those who are living with and managing mental health conditions such as anxiety and depression, their families, friends and supporters, and those affected by suicide.