



# COMFORT IN CRISIS

**Equipping Australia With a  
Coronavirus Dedicated Mental  
Wellbeing Support Service**





# CHALLENGE

## The COVID-19 pandemic is profoundly impacting mental health in Australia.

Amidst the global health crisis, people are increasingly and more intensely struggling with depression, anxiety, and even suicidal ideation.

Grappling with fears of contracting coronavirus—compounded by worries about job security, the economy, social isolation and disrupted daily routines—many are experiencing psychological distress.

Beyond Blue, a leading Australian mental health organisation that provides diverse, digital and 24/7 contact counseling services, is fast responding to this massive surge in demand for support. Since the start of the pandemic, the organisation's around the clock counseling service has seen a significant increase in demand. In fact, Beyond Blue experienced a huge spike in contact during March 2020, with a large proportion of calls to its existing support service being related to COVID-19 concerns.

However, higher demand for essential services like these means higher costs, which is unsustainable for nonprofit organisations that rely on donations to support people in need. To better meet demand and supply in a COVID-world, a new service was required.





# WHAT ACCENTURE DID

Being a transformation partner for Beyond Blue for almost 12 months, Accenture had a deep understanding of Beyond Blue's capabilities and strategic intent. Given the unprecedented surge in demand for mental health support, Accenture partnered with Beyond Blue and Medibank to co-author a Federal Government proposal to fund a national solution for expanded and tailored digital mental health services in response to the pandemic.

In late March, the Commonwealth announced \$10 million in funding for Beyond Blue to rapidly deploy and deliver a dedicated Coronavirus Mental Wellbeing Support Service, as part of its initial national investment in telehealth, mental health and family support. Accenture mobilized and collaborated across diverse stakeholders and external partners to guide the co-design of the new service's strategy and capability model. Our design and innovation experts

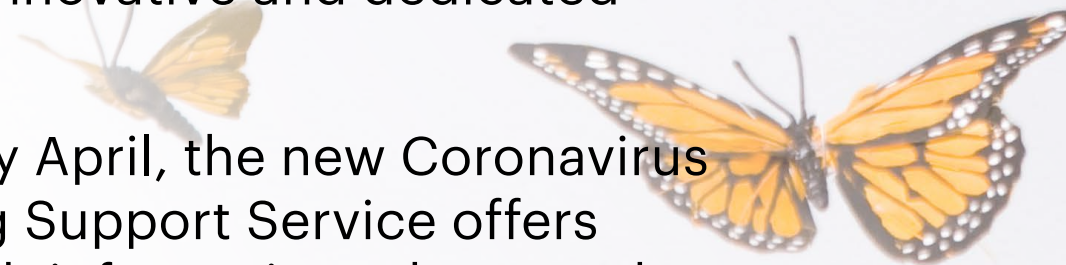
from Fjord structured a high level digital visual framework. Staying focused and nimble, the team then assisted Beyond Blue to establish the innovative and dedicated national service.

Launched in early April, the new Coronavirus Mental Wellbeing Support Service offers free mental health information, phone and web chat-based counseling (lower- and medium-intensity counseling for those who need extra assistance), and referrals to other organisations— 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The service, which is being continuously updated over the six-month funding period, connects people to a variety of digital self-help information, tools and wellbeing advice, based on their need.

As Beyond Blue's client-side delivery partner in this unique offering, Accenture was also responsible for the Service's initial service strategy and performance reporting to the Government and other stakeholders.

"These online interactions often provide people reassurance and the motivation to take the first steps to recovery, talk to their GP, let their family know what is actually going on. They may start exercising more, stop drinking so much and make positive lifestyle changes. Those are the kind of outcomes that I'm interested in achieving by harnessing technology."

**Georgie Harman, CEO - Beyond Blue**







# PEOPLE AND CULTURE

**The new service is timely and brings together capabilities from Beyond Blue, and other notable mental health providers—highlighting an impressive cross-sectional collaboration at a time when Australians are increasingly concerned about their mental wellbeing.**

To address some specific cases, Beyond Blue and its partners developed new mental wellness content—like How to Cope in Isolation—to help users make the most of the Coronavirus service. A significant proportion of content was created to enable self-help information and tools to particularly help people manage anxiety and depression. While the need for physical distancing remains crucial, this innovative service draws on a broad array of human-centered content and technologies to support Australians. The service equips people with handy insights, coping strategies and third-party referral

options that are reliable, relevant and easily accessible to them. Accenture streamlined the service to align it with Beyond Blue's reshaped transformation plan, ensuring a cohesive vision and program across teams and multiple workstreams. Accenture was also responsible for providing critical Agile delivery services for this new program. This was significant due to Beyond Blue's need to enhance and introduce this new "way of working," given the importance of Agile delivery methodologies for its broader transformation agenda over the next few years.





# VALUE DELIVERED

**Accenture, Beyond Blue and Medibank were able to secure crucial funding in just eight workdays.**

We defined the initial service strategy and shaped an agile delivery plan to identify, sequence and manage a delivery backlog that will continually update the dedicated service over a six-month funding period. The service enhancements include: latest digital functionality, fresh content, new KPI reporting, and connecting a range of mental health providers to the offering.

With this innovative solution in place, Beyond Blue can provide Australians in need of assistance with appropriate information, counseling and enable referrals to other providers—at no cost, anytime, anywhere. With timely and crucial delivery assistance, Beyond Blue is doing its part to reduce the impact of mental health issues during these unprecedented times of crisis.

And thereafter, rapidly design and launch the Coronavirus Mental Wellbeing Support Service, thereby expanding service capability and capacity. Since its launch, the digital site has been accessed close to 600,000 times.

