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## QUEENSLAND MENTAL HEALTH WEEK MEDIA KIT

Resource for journalists



9 – 17  
October  
2021



## GUIDE OBJECTIVE

This short guide aims to assist media outlets with information on Queensland Mental Health Week (QMHW) and a few tips for safe media reporting.

## ABOUT QMHW

QMHW is an annual awareness week that aims to shine a spotlight on individual and community mental health and wellbeing across the state.

In 2021, QMHW will be from **Saturday 9 October to Sunday 17 October**, with the theme, 'Take time for mental health'.

Funded by the Queensland Mental Health Commission, QMHW is coordinated by CheckUP and delivered by a strong cross-sector collaboration.

More information about QMHW is available at [www.qldmentalhealthweek.org.au](http://www.qldmentalhealthweek.org.au).

## WHY RAISE AWARENESS?

In 2021, we hope media outlets across the state will support our efforts to boost mental wellbeing in Queensland communities by promoting mental health discussion, raising awareness of mental health issues, reducing stigma, and encouraging people to seek support.

The media is a key source of information about mental illness for the public, and research shows media coverage can influence public attitudes and perceptions of mental ill-health. Although the general perception of mental illness has improved over the past decades, studies show that stigma against mental illness is still powerful, largely due to media stereotypes and lack of education.

Below are a few powerful things you can do to help.

- Share information to help the public learn about about mental health and mental illness, and avenues for support.
- Highlight the perspectives and experiences of those with lived experience of mental illness, including stories of recovery and resilience.
- Promote QMHW events. To find out what is happening in your local area and the contact details for event organisers, visit the [QMHW website events page](#).
- Shine a spotlight on mental health providers and professionals in your local area. You could also profile those involved in the [QMHW Achievement Awards](#).

## MEDIA ENQUIRIES

For any media enquiries, please contact CheckUP by emailing [info@qldmentalhealthweek.org.au](mailto:info@qldmentalhealthweek.org.au) or calling us on **07 3105 8300**. Interview opportunities are available with Queensland Mental Health Commissioner Ivan Frkovic.

\*Art utilised on the front cover and throughout this guide is from the QMHW artwork for 2021, 'Take time - for mental health' by Jesse James.





## KNOW THE DIFFERENCE

Before you start pulling your story together, it's important that you understand the difference between mental health and mental illness.

'Mental health' is often used as a substitute for mental health conditions – such as depression, anxiety conditions, schizophrenia, and others. But, everyone with a brain has mental health, just as everyone with a body has physical health.

According to the World Health Organization, mental health is a state of well-being in which every individual realises their own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to their community.

It's important to know that everyone's mental health varies during their life and can move back and forth along their own personal range between positive and healthy at one end through to severe symptoms or conditions that impact on everyday life at the other, in response to different stressors and experiences. Instead of 'battles with mental health' it is therefore much more helpful to say 'issues with mental ill health' so that the public can understand the distinction.

## SAFE MEDIA REPORTING

Visit the [Mindframe](#) website for advice on how to support safe media reporting, portrayal and communication about suicide, mental ill-health, and problematic alcohol and other drug use.

### Consider the language you use

Certain language can stigmatise people living with mental ill-health as well as present inaccuracies about mental ill-health or mental health care. Utilise 'person-centred language' when forming your story. Any language that reinforces the stigma surrounding mental illness is harmful and might keep someone from getting help.

It is important to understand that a person is distinct from their illness. To label someone an 'anorexic' for example, suggests that they are defined by their eating disorder. This is not only unhelpful in terms of the way they are perceived by others but it might also hinder their recovery process. Better alternative: 'people experiencing anorexia'.

### Seek expert advice

A news article or communications piece may be improved by obtaining the views of health experts who can provide an accurate interpretation of statistics or appropriate context. You can approach a local mental health organisation for quotes. Alternatively, there a number of mental health organisations who are committed to supporting QMHW that may be willing to provide a health expert for interview. You can learn about these organisations on our [partnerships page](#).

### Be mindful of reinforcing common stereotypes

Balanced and accurate discussion has the potential to increase understanding of mental ill-health. However, stereotypes can lead to negative community attitudes and stigma.



## ENCOURAGE HELP-SEEKING

Evidence shows that people are more likely to seek help when appropriate services are included in stories referencing mental illness or suicide, so we urge all media outlets to discuss the importance of reaching out for support when reporting on QMHW.

**It is vital to include 24/7 support services**, so the audience can reach out for support in a way that suits their individual needs. Please see the below contact details or visit the '[Find help](#)' tab on our website for a more comprehensive list of organisations that offer phone and webchat support. .

## FOR 24/7 COUNSELLING AND SUPPORT

- Lifeline – 13 11 14
- Suicide Call Back Service – 1300 659 467
- Kids Help Line – 1800 55 1800
- Alcohol & Drug Info Services (ADIS) – 1800 177 833
- Queensland Health – 13 HEALTH (13 43 25 84)

These numbers are either free or the cost of a local call

## SHARE IDEAS ON HOW PEOPLE CAN TAKE TIME

Research shows there are six simple actions we can take to improve our moods, build resilience, and boost our mental wellbeing. You can use this year's QMHW theme for a news angle and encourage the public to take time to:

- **Get healthy**— being active and eating well is good for your mind and body
- **Keep learning** — learning new things can be fun and boost confidence
- **Show kindness** — practising small acts of kindness, volunteering time, or simply helping a friend in need can help you feel more satisfied with life
- **Connect** — spending time with other people is important to everyone's mental wellbeing and can be done while carefully observing social distancing
- **Take notice** — paying more attention to the present and the world around you can help you relieve stress and enjoy the moment
- **Embrace nature** — connecting with the outdoors and taking care of the planet is the best recipe for world wellbeing.

\*These actions are from the Queensland Government's Dear Mind initiative.

## AMPLIFY YOUR STORIES ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Posting on social media is a great way to encourage awareness of mental health, and social and emotional wellbeing in your community. By joining the conversation online during QMHW you can help decrease stigma and empower people to seek help, for themselves or others.

We encourage you to follow our social media accounts, tag us in your posts and use the hashtags #QMHW and #QMHWTakeTime. There will also be social media graphics available for your use to download from our [website](#).



# MENTAL HEALTH STATISTICS

Everyone experiences feelings of sadness, anger, or hopelessness at times. But if these feelings won't go away or get so strong they make it difficult for a person to function normally, this could be a sign of a mental illness.

Mental illness is common. Around one in five Queenslanders experience a mental illness in any one year and one in two will experience a mental illness at some point in their lives.

- One in seven Australians will experience depression in their lifetime and one quarter of Australians will experience an anxiety condition in their lifetime. [More details.](#)
- Suicide is the leading cause of death among people aged 15–24 (37%). [More details.](#)

## In our workplaces

- Ninety-one per cent of employees believe mental health in the workplace is important. However, only 52 percent of employees believe their workplace is mentally healthy.
- Businesses receive an average return on investment of \$2.30 for every \$1 they invest in effective workplace mental health strategies, making investing in mental health a win-win situation for employers and employees.

## LOOKING FOR MORE INFORMATION

We hope this guide has helped you understand more about QMHW and how you can help promote the week in a responsible manner.

To stay informed on QMHW, you can subscribe to our eNews list [here](#). We will also be sharing media releases on the QMHW website as they are released.

Below are a few additional links with more information on mental health and mental illness.

[Dear Mind | Your Mental Wellbeing \(initiatives.qld.gov.au\)](https://www.initiatives.qld.gov.au/dear-mind-your-mental-wellbeing)

[2018-2023 Strategic Plan | Queensland Mental Health Commission \(qmhc.qld.gov.au\)](https://www.qmhc.qld.gov.au/2018-2023-strategic-plan)

[Profile: work-related mental disorders - Queensland \(worksafe.qld.gov.au\)](https://www.worksafe.qld.gov.au/profile/work-related-mental-disorders)

[State of Workplace Mental Health in Australia \(headsup.org.au\)](https://www.headsup.org.au/state-of-workplace-mental-health-in-australia)

[Statistics - Beyond Blue](#)

[Data & Statistics - Lifeline Australia](#)

