Queensland Mental Health Week
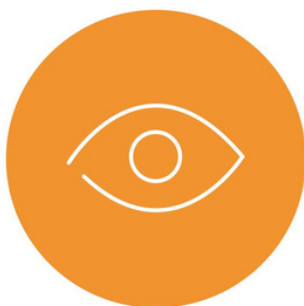
8–16 October 2022

Awareness

Belonging

Connection

2022 MEDIA KIT

Resource for journalists

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

ChecKUP and the Queensland Mental Health Commission pay respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders, past, present and future. We also acknowledge the important role played by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders as the First Peoples, their traditions, cultures and customs across Queensland.

Informing the visual identity for Queensland Mental Health Week (QMHW) in 2022 is the artwork 'Stronger connection creates strong health' by proud Mayi woman Leah Cummins. Elements of the artwork are used throughout this kit.

MEDIA ENQUIRIES

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

For any media enquiries, please contact CheckUP by emailing **info@qldmentalhealthweek.org.au** or calling **07 3105 8300**. Interview opportunities may be available with Queensland Mental Health Commissioner Ivan Frkovic.

ABOUT QUEENSLAND MENTAL HEALTH WEEK

QMHW is an annual awareness initiative that aims to promote individual and community mental health and wellbeing, boost awareness of mental illness, reduce stigma and discrimination, and celebrate the contribution of the mental health and community sectors.

QMHW takes place in the week of World Mental Health Day on 10 October. In 2022, the week will be celebrated from **Saturday 8 October** to **Sunday 16 October**.

The theme for 2022 if **'Awareness, Belonging, Connection'**, reflecting the important factors that help people maintain positive mental health and wellbeing. It is all about connecting with the people in our lives and creating space for conversations about mental health and wellbeing.

Awareness   Belonging   Connection

Throughout QMHW hundreds of local and regional events are held by non-government organisations, service providers, local councils, workplaces, schools and universities, sporting groups and clubs, community groups and individuals.

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**.

WHY RAISE AWARENESS?

Good mental health affects every aspect of our lives. It is widely accepted that there is no health without mental health. Good mental health not only enables individuals to enjoy meaningful and productive lives, it also benefits communities and the economy. The benefits are felt across generations.

In 2022 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 media outlets can do to help raise awareness this QMHW.

- 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 'Search 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 hosted by Open Minds and Multicap.

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.

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. Utlilise 'person-centred language.' when forming your story. 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 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.

MENTAL HEALTH INFORMATION AND STATISTICS

Mental illness is common and affects all Australians either directly or indirectly. According to the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2022), almost half (45%) of the population aged 16–85 will experience a mental illness at some time in their life.

Mental illness can vary in severity and be episodic or persistent in nature. One in 5 Australians experience mental illness in any given year, most of which will be mild (15% or an estimated 2.3 million Australians among the 15.3 million Australians) or moderate (7%, or an estimated 1.2 million people). It is estimated that around 5% or 800,000 people have a severe mental illness, of which 500,000 people have episodic mental illness and 300,000 have persistent mental illness (Productivity Commission, 2020).

- 2018-2023 Strategic Plan | Queensland Mental Health Commission (qmhc.qld.gov.au)
- Mental health resources | worksafe.qld.gov.au
- Statistics | Beyond Blue
- Data & Statistics | Lifeline Australia
- Mental health services in Australia | AIWH, 2022

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 support services..

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.

BUILDING BLOCKS OF WELLBEING

Research shows there are six actions we can take to improve our moods, build resilience, and boost our mental wellbeing. The below building blocks of wellbeing are from the Queensland Government's Dear Mind initiative and you can find examples of self care activities at https://mentalwellbeing.initiatives.qld.gov.au.

- **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.

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 hashtag #QMHW. There are also social media graphics available for download from our website.

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@QldMentalHealthWeek

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QMHW