



STARTER KIT 2017

Share the **Journey**

MENTAL HEALTH MONTH STARTER KIT 2017 - Share the Journey

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What is Mental Health Month?

The month of October celebrates Mental Health Month in NSW; a national mental health promotion campaign held annually throughout October. The timing of the campaign centres around World Mental Health Day, which is marked each year on October 10.

WHAT IS THE THEME THIS YEAR?

The theme for Mental Health Month this year is

Share the Journey

The main message is to encourage individuals and communities to connect with others and recognise how important this is for our mental health and wellbeing. Good social connections are important for our health and survival – they help us with our journey to better mental health and our ability to cope with life's struggles. They not only improve our overall wellbeing, they also build our resilience.

WHY SHOULD YOU BE INVOLVED?

Mental Health Month is a useful reminder for all of us to think about our mental health and that of those around us. It's a great opportunity to engage members of the community in activities that can enhance their mental health and wellbeing. It's also a good reason to get out there and have some fun!

KEY DATES AND DEADLINES FOR MENTAL HEALTH MONTH 2017

- Small grant applications due - 5pm 21 July
- Award nominations close - 5pm 28 July
- Free resource orders due - 5pm 4 August

More information and resources for local organisers will be added regularly on our website.

Go to

MENTALHEALTHMONTH.ORG.AU

Mental Health Month NSW centres around 2 key dates:

October 10 - World Mental Health Day

October 30 - Stress Less Day

Tips for Planning your Mental Health Month Event

If you are organising an event for Mental Health Month, there are a number of points you may like to consider to make the planning process easier:

BRAINSTORMING IDEAS FOR AN EVENT

Whether you have a great idea for an event in mind or brainstorming ideas, it is still worth taking a moment to think about what you want to achieve with your event. This involves considering questions like:

‘Why are you hosting the event?’

One of the first steps is to think about why you are holding an event for Mental Health Month and what goals you hope to achieve.

These might include:

- Promoting activities that enhance mental, physical, social and spiritual wellbeing in your community
- Providing more information about mental health and wellbeing and/or mental health services that are available in your local area
- Promoting the campaign message of why it is important to learn about mental health and wellbeing and making it a priority in our daily lives
- Making or improving connections with partners or the local community
- Encouraging help seeking and reducing stigma associated with mental illness

In NSW, Mental Health Month is celebrated all throughout the month of October. You might like to plan your Mental Health Month event on:

October 10 - World Mental Health Day

October 30 - Stress Less Day

‘Who is this event for?’

The event may be a public community event or it may be specific to a particular part of your community i.e. your workplace, organisation, school, youth group or other community group. It is also important to consider the audience of your event, whether it is aimed for a particular age group, gender or locality.

‘What is the main message of your event?’

What is the main thing that you would like people to take away from this event? It may be more information or increased awareness of mental health and wellbeing, a new habit, greater support or social connectedness.

How can you make it happen?

Once you have a clear idea of what your event is about, you can start thinking about how to make it a reality. Some of the questions you could ask yourself include:

- **‘What type of event best fits my goals?’** There are so many types of events and activities that you could host. Think about which one will best achieve your goals and appeal to your intended target audience. We have included a ‘Practical ideas for events’ on page 7 of this kit to help you get inspired by some of the events held in previous years
- **‘What do I need for this event?’** Budgeting is essential to the success of your event. Create a detailed checklist of the things you need to host your event and obtain quotes if you need to

- **'What will I need to do?'** You might find it helpful to write yourself a timeline of activities you need to do to prepare for your event and a run-sheet for the day. If you are working with a team, decide who will do what and when. Monitor your progress and don't underestimate the value of confirming all details close to your event

PROMOTING YOUR EVENT

Promotion can greatly increase the number and diversity of people who attend your event. You could consider the following avenues:

- **Register your event with us:** You can register your Mental Health Month event on our online calendar - mentalhealthmonth.wayahead.org.au/events/community/add
- **Use your local networks:** local schools, councils, community organisations and businesses may agree to promote your event in their newsletters or on their websites.
- **Posters and fliers:** The local library, cafes, shops and community noticeboards are great places to display posters and distribute fliers.
- **Local media*:** Contact local newspapers, radio, or community T.V networks to advertise your event.
- **Social media:** Get the word out about your event through social media means such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram or community e-newsletters. Hashtags to include:

#SharetheJourney #MHM2017 #WayAhead #SocialConnections #Resilience

The Mental Health Month logo is available for download from our website to help create your advertising material.

**See 'Share the Journey 2017 in the Media' page 10 for more help with promoting your event through the media.*

GETTING SPONSORSHIP

You might require sponsorship of some type, either in the form of cash, services or goods. A good idea is to approach existing local groups or businesses within your community.

- When approaching potential sponsors, ensure that they are compatible with your goals. Clearly state your aim of holding the particular event, what you would like from them and what they can gain from helping you organise the event.
- Partnering with other groups, even those that don't have a traditional focus on mental health, is a great way to spread costs and increase impact. Partnerships are also great ways to engage with parts of your community that you might otherwise not have much contact with.
- Think about which services or businesses are most popular in your local community. This may include a particular supermarket, bank service, café or even local sports groups that might want to help spread awareness and help promote the event.
- Ask local members of government to help support the event or see if they would like to participate by attending the event.
- Alternatively, you may like to apply for a small grant, which provides financial assistance to those organising mental health promotion activities during Mental Health Month. Please visit the Mental Health Month website for more information on [Mental Health Month Small Grants](#). Local councils often have grants available for community activities as well.

Looking After Yourself and Others at Your Event

Mental Health Month is a time when people are prompted to find out more about mental health problems and seek help. This can be a difficult and confusing time for the person seeking help and can also be a confronting experience for those around them, including the person they reach out to.

The following includes some tips that you might find useful if someone approaches you for help at your event:

Be prepared

- If you work for a mental health organisation or are a mental health professional, you will have experience in responding to enquiries about mental illness. Otherwise, it can be useful to have some information prepared that you can pass on to people who have questions you don't have answers to.
- You can find information on where to get help on the last page of the [Mental Health Month factsheet](#) and on our [website](#).
- You might also like to gather some information on local organisations.

Practice respectful communication

- Listen actively to what people are saying to you. While it can be helpful to share the experiences of yourself or of others you know, try to avoid making comparisons.
- Avoid making judgements about behaviour that may seem unusual to you. If someone is talking with you about their mental health, they trust you to be understanding and non-judgemental.
- Respect that people are entitled to determine their own course of action. It is up to them what they do with the information available to them.

Know your boundaries

- Before the event, have a think about what your boundaries are. What do you feel confident talking about? What might you need more information or support with? When might you need to refer someone to another source of assistance?
- Be honest about your limitations and communicate them clearly. Remember, it's ok not to know everything yourself. Let the person you are talking to know if they are asking you for information or assistance that you can't immediately provide.

Look after yourself and your team

- Remember that looking after yourself and your team is just as important as looking after attendees.
- Consider getting together before the event to have a chat about your plan and after the event to talk about how you think things went and to celebrate.
- Keep an eye out for each other on the day.

Don't forget to also have fun!

Share the Journey

Practical Ideas from Mental Health Month 2016

Last year's Mental Health Month saw some really creative and fun local events being held throughout NSW. Many events focused on a variety of aspects to promote positive wellbeing. Some events focused on reaching the general public whilst others targeted a specific audience such as the Aboriginal communities, Culturally & Linguistically Diverse (CALD) communities and the LGBTI communities, other organisations focused on certain community settings like workplaces, schools, religious communities and so forth. These events also explored ways of incorporating the 2016 Mental Health Month Theme – 'Learn and Grow' into their events.

The following are some inspirational ideas from 2016 to help you plan your event. These event ideas have been broken down into categories of the target audience reached.

ACTIVITIES ACROSS DIFFERENT SETTINGS AND COMMUNITY GROUPS:

Workplace: Employee Wellbeing Month

A peak school body held physical, mental and spiritual activities for all their 200 employees. Exciting events included bushwalking, Zumba, resilience workshops, employee wellbeing information sessions, board games, spiritual reflection, high tea and men's barbecue classes. Such activities helped employees build rapport, seek relevant help, reflect, and practice good mental health and wellbeing in their workplace.

School: Connecting through Song

A National Youth Mental Health Foundation held a one-day song writing workshop for young and energetic Aboriginal students. The creative song-writing process aimed to promote positive relationships, increase confidence, help students gain a greater awareness of mental health strategies and also introduce them to Aboriginal role models within their communities.

Religious community: Caring for Mind & Soul

A CALD mental health initiative held over 16 educational, social and spiritual activities for the Maronite Catholic community. Talks by mental health professionals, movie nights, prayer evenings and masses around the theme of 'Learn and Grow through Mind & Soul', was one of the first open conversations about mental health within this large community.

Consumers: Celebrating Mental Health Together

Aimed for those directly affected by mental illness, their families, carers and community support services, an acute mental health facility celebrated World Mental Health Day by organising local consumer speakers, Pilates, live music, massages and a healthy lunch. The day overall created a positive experience for all, promoting a fun and healthy atmosphere.

Elderly: Yoga Done Different

For the mental health and wellbeing of grandparents raising children, a Community Support Service program organized an exciting arm chair yoga led by a trained instructor. The event offered individuals a time to rest, learn new skills, reduce stress, access counselling support services and connect with other grandparents who've made similar sacrifices.

LGBTIQ: Getting Up & Out in Nature

A premier LGBTIQ community association held a fun-filled planting and picnic day for the Northern Rivers LGBTIQ community of all ages and abilities. The day was a perfect balance of learning, sharing, working and eating with information stalls, team tree planting activities and a healthy and nourishing social lunch.

Youth: Youth Mini Olympics

With a vibrant and energetic atmosphere, a Mental Health Mini Olympics was held by a Youth Homelessness Service for disadvantaged and disengaged young people from the Mid North Coast. The Games included fun group sports and activities linked to mental health, local Mental Health services which supported competing teams, a free BBQ and good entertainment all day round.



Tips for Evaluating Your Event

Evaluating your Mental Health Month event can help you measure your success and plan future events. It is important to consider evaluation during the event planning process.

BEFORE THE EVENT

- Nominate a person to be in charge of the evaluation process
- Make sure you know before the event what you need to find out in order to evaluate your event and how you are going to find out this information. Think about the following questions: "How will we know that our event is successful?" and "How can we measure these outcomes?"

Depending on the type of event, some things you may be able to measure include:

Outputs/Processes

- What you produced/distributed
- Number of Attendees
- Promotion
- Media coverage
- How well you followed your event plan and budget
- Partnerships formed
- Participant satisfaction

Outcomes

- Changes in knowledge/awareness
- Changes in attitudes/beliefs
- Changes in intended behaviour
- Sign-ups/enquiries to the promoted activity/service
- Changes in organisational policy/practice

Help us evaluate Mental Health Month

We would love your help in measuring the impact of Mental Health Month events in communities. To do this we want to hear from your event participants. You can send us an email with your event feedback –

promoadmin@wayahead.org.au

GATHERING FEEDBACK FROM THE ORGANISATIONAL TEAM

You may also obtain useful feedback on your event by surveying those who have helped you organise and stage the event. It is a good idea to get together at the end of or after the event to talk about how the event went.

- This would also be a good time to congratulate the team and thank them for their efforts. You could also consider a small thank you party
- An organisers' survey could be distributed and completed by all helpers so that you can evaluate the event from their point of view
- You may also like to hold an informal round table, asking team members to name one thing they enjoyed most and one thing that could be improved on in future

If you require any further assistance with your evaluation process, please email us at

promoadmin@wayahead.org.au

Share the Journey 2017: In the Media

You can raise awareness of your Mental Health Month event by promoting it to your local media 2-4 weeks in advance of your event taking place.

Even if you are holding a private event (not open to the public), you may still wish to tell the media about it beforehand so that a journalist can attend part of the event and write a story about it to go into the local paper afterwards.

Alternatively, you can write your own media release and send it to local print, radio and TV journalists. We have provided a sample media release on the next page as a guide.

WHY DO MEDIA?

Mental Health Month events are a great opportunity for media to bring attention to mental health/ mental illness – and your event provides a good reason for them to do this. Working with the media is one more way that we can promote positive mental health and reduce the stigma surrounding mental illness.

If you are holding a public event then using the media is a great way to get more participants.

How to get in the media?

Here are some really important hints to remember when you're working with the media:

- Have your media release prepared before you contact a journalist. Make sure you can answer any questions they might have or send along the press release straight away if they're interested.
- Your local media are employed to cover interesting news, not provide free advertising. Don't expect that they will automatically cover your story. It's okay to follow up and find out whether the story is being published, but always be polite and don't hound them for an answer.
- Target your media release carefully. Don't send a release about a book launch to the sports writer, and don't send one email to multiple journalists. Address them by name and take a sentence to introduce yourself, and if you're not sure who to talk to call a general office number first and ask.
- Remember, your event could be really interesting local news so don't be shy! Think about what is interesting or newsworthy about your event and mention it – maybe you're holding the only community fair in your town for the month, perhaps you've found a local celebrity to speak, or you might be repeating an event that was really successful the year before.
- The person you speak to may not report many mental health stories, so be prepared to explain terms or direct them to other resources for more information. One really great resource is www.mindframe-media.info.

Keep in touch with your media contacts after the event is over. Even if they haven't run a story yet, if you can provide good photos and details on how successful the event was it may become more newsworthy. Whatever the outcome, make sure to say thank you for their time.

SAMPLE MEDIA RELEASE

[Insert date]

[Insert headline – (keep it short and simple, you want it to be attention grabbing and ideally less than 7 words)]

[Write a short paragraph summarising your event. Remember to cover 'who, what, when, where, and why' your event is on or about, as this is often the most important information for a journalist.]

Mental health issues will affect 1 in 5 Australians every year. Anxiety disorders are often the most common mental health challenge, followed by depression.

[Include a relevant quote from a local, noteworthy person here.]

Mental Health Month is co-ordinated every October by the Mental Health Association of NSW. This year the theme is 'Share the Journey' People across Australia come together during the month to hold events and promote good mental health and wellbeing in their local communities.

These events are a useful reminder for all of us to think about the mental health of ourselves and those around us. It's also a good excuse to get out there and have some fun!

[Include final quote(s) and any final information relevant to your event such as when it's on and how people can RSVP or attend]

Contact details

Name: Your name

Phone: Your telephone or mobile

Email: Your email

WRITING YOUR MEDIA TIPS

Be careful with your spelling and grammar. Small mistakes can mean the difference between your release ending up on the front page or in the bin.

Keep it short and snappy. Journalists are often really busy and see loads of media releases, so you want to make it as easy as possible for them to understand why your event is newsworthy.

Try to keep your language simple and avoid over-hyping your story. An art exhibition doesn't have to feature the next Van Gogh to be newsworthy and interesting to local readers, so be enthusiastic but don't exaggerate.

Let them know if there are photos available or they can take photos on the day. A great photograph can often help get a story published.

Use quotes from interesting spokespeople – this can include people from local businesses and organisations who are supporting you, local people planning to attend, or any prominent people from the local community involved in the event itself. Remember to ask them why they think your event is going to be great for your community – it's an easy way to show your newsworthiness!

Share the Journey

More Information

EVENT CALENDAR REGISTRATION

Would you like us to help promote your event?

We offer all Mental Health Month events the option to be registered and/or promoted by getting listed on our online events calendar at

www.mentalhealthmonth.org.au

It is completely up to you whether you would like your event posted on our Mental Health Month calendar.

Even if you would prefer your event to remain private, registering means that we are able to get in touch with local community events and helps us demonstrate to our funders the size and scope of Mental Health Month in NSW.

WayAhead and news about its programs including Mental Health Month is promoted through our social media platforms.

DONATIONS

WayAhead (The Mental Health Association NSW) is a charity that has been working for over 80 years to increase mental health awareness and reduce the stigma associated with mental illness. We do this by providing a range of diverse mental health initiatives for the NSW population such as Mental Health promotion campaigns, the WayAhead Workplaces, mental health information and referral services, free anxiety support and self-help groups and much more.

For over 30 years, we have successfully coordinated the Mental Health Month campaign to increase mental health awareness across all populations in NSW. We provide a diverse range of positive mental health resources including our popular 'Ten Tips to Stress Less' and small grants to encourage community engagement and discussion around mental health.

We would be grateful if you or your organisation would consider donating to our organisation during the month of October to help us continue the great work we are doing in NSW. To make a donation, simply visit www.wayahead.org.au and click on the



MAKE A DONATION

If you have any further enquiries- please email

promoadmin@wayahead.org.au

mentalhealthmonth.org.au

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Notes



