



Your Mental Health Month

Almost 50% of Australians are likely to be diagnosed with a mental illness in their lifetime, leaving 50% of us knowing someone living with or having experienced a mental health issue.

However, mental health is something every person has, and can face challenges with – not just those living with mental illness. COVID-19 has shown we are living in challenging times and there is no doubt our collective mental health has been impacted.

Mental Health Month is an opportunity to have conversations with your friends, family and community about mental health. It's a time to learn about self-care, community wellbeing, and available support services – so the next time you or a friend needs help with their mental health, you feel better equipped to do something.

Mental Health Month falls in October, in alignment with World Mental Health Day on October 10th. South Australia's 2021 Mental Health Month theme "We All Have A Role To Play" speaks to us all collectively being a part of raising mental health awareness, supporting each other, addressing stigma, and promoting wellbeing.

**So – how will you and your workplace get involved?
Here's a couple of ideas from us:**

VIDEO LAUNCH

The MHCSA invites you to join our digital launch of Mental Health Month on Friday October 1, by sharing how you'll be looking after your mental health and the wellbeing of your community.

To view example videos from 2020, click [here](#).

EVENTS & ACTIVITIES

The MHCSA hosts and sponsors a range of exciting community events and activities throughout Mental Health Month. To learn more about what we're doing this October, **click here**.

We encourage you to host your own events or activities to spark and evolve mental health conversations in your community, and showcase the voices of lived experience.

A core element of Mental Health Month promotions in South Australia is the importance of valuing the knowledge, wisdom and skills of people who are living well with mental illness in our communities. For example, consider supporting and paying someone who lives with mental illness to share their own story this October. The MHCSA is also developing a public list of SA mental health speakers. Reach out to **danielle.tapley@mhcsa.org.au** for information on this.

FOR LIBRARIES, COMMUNITY & NEIGHBOURHOOD CENTRES

There are always new ways to present interesting opportunities for social connection and education. Add these activities to your toolkit this October:

- Display Young Adult novels exploring mental health themes in your library
- Showcase biographies or memoirs by people with lived experience of mental illness
- Adapt your usual programs and activities to include conversations around social and emotional wellbeing. For example, explore mental health and wellbeing themes in exercise classes or children's storytime
- Curate a small art exhibition by a local artist with lived experience of mental illness, or organise an artist panel or creative presentation with them
- Set up an "Active Listening Station" or "I Am Happy To Talk" bench on site, where a trained peer worker can sit with community members and hear their stories in a non-judgemental setting
- Put on a mindfulness workshop
- Host a pottery or crafting event where participants discuss this year's Mental Health Month themes and messaging
- Living Books: have community members interact directly and ask questions of someone living well with mental illness
- Host a zine event, where community members can make their own unique pamphlets or comic strips about personal mental health challenges*
- Host a film screening about a famous creative, academic or public figure with lived experience
- Host writing, painting, photography or music workshops facilitated by artists with lived experience

- Pay a local artist with lived experience to create a temporary mural or installation
- Print off the MHCSA’s “mindshare Awards” shortlist and display them throughout the month of October**
- Bring a group together to discuss the impacts of loneliness and ways to reach out to disconnected people
- Put on a themed spoken word poetry, storytelling or comedy event featuring performers with lived experience
- If you can, try to live stream or record events at your site. For those who may be isolating or socially anxious, this could be a great resource in lieu of physical attendance. It’s also a nice way for community members to feel familiar with a space before making the big step to walk through the door and into a social setting.

*Check out “**How To: Zines**” by **Ariel Bissett** on YouTube

Contact **anna.jeavons@mhcsa.org.au

IN THE WORKPLACE

- Bring the team together for a themed Mental Health Month shared lunch
- Make a music playlist with everyone in the workplace’s go-to “Feel Good” songs on it
- Get your workmates outside in the sun with a communal walk around the block
- Offer one-day-only in-house massages
- Set your team a Mental Health Month goal, such as one minute of mindfulness every morning or a whole month of switching off at exactly 5pm
- Get arty and create a collaborative painting or a series to display around your workplace
- Put a “Gratitude Board” up in your staff or lunch room for everyone to contribute positive thoughts to
- Schedule a themed outfit day—don’t be afraid to get competitive with an award for best dressed
- Host a fundraising afternoon tea, with all donations toward a mental health NGO (find a few suggestions here: **www.mhcsa.org.au/membership**)
- Organise Mental Health First Aid training for your staff or volunteers
- Jump online and share commitments to looking after personal or others’ mental health using the hashtags **#OurMHMonth** and **#MyMHMonth**

Please note: It is important that you conduct mental health activities and events in a trauma-informed way. You can read more about keeping your events safe and respectful for people with lived experience of mental health challenges **here**.

WHERE CAN I FIND INFORMATION ABOUT SUPPORT SERVICES?

We have a range of Mental Health Month assets available, both print and digital. You can download poster templates for activities you're putting on, a program for MHCSA events, email signatures, interesting digital images, and suggested copy for social media.

We have also developed a resource that explores our theme in more depth. This resource answers the questions, What is mental health?, What is community support? and Where is further help available?

To download or order any of the above, head **here**.

HELP US HELP YOU

If you are hosting any mental health events or activities in 2021, please send us through details so we can promote what you're up to via our South Australian Mental Health Events Calendar and social media channels.

Email **danielle.tapley@mhcsa.org.au** or visit **www.mhcsa.org.au** to register.

And don't forget to tag us in your own promotions using the hashtags #MHM2021 #MyMHMonth #OurMHMonth #WeAllHaveARoleToPlay

FEEDBACK

We'd love to hear how you went after Mental Health Month, and see any photos of your community engaging in events and activities. Email **anna.jeavons@mhcsa.org.au** to let us know what worked and what didn't, and how we can continue supporting you to promote mental health and reduce stigma in your community moving forward.