

3 October 2024

## Mental Health Month – Let’s Talk About It

October is Mental Health Awareness Month, and this year’s theme ‘Let’s Talk About It’ encourages self-reflection and open conversations about our mental health and overall wellbeing. It highlights the importance of talking about mental health to reduce and break down stigma, prioritising mental wellness in our everyday lives and taking a proactive approach to seeking help when needed.

According to the National Study of Mental Health and Wellbeing, between 2020 and 2022, just over 1 in 5 Australians aged 16 to 85 reported experiencing a mental health disorder in the past year. In the Nepean Blue Mountains region alone, over 57,000 people received a mental health diagnosis in the 2022/2023 financial year.

Wentworth Healthcare CEO, Lizz Reay, said that mental health issues, just like physical health issues, can affect anyone at any time and there’s no shame in talking about it or reaching out for some help if you need it.

“It’s common for people to talk about and look after their physical health, but they often don’t talk about or look after their mental health the same way. Just like it’s important to maintain our physical wellbeing, it’s also important to maintain our mental wellbeing. We all have ups and downs, and sometimes life’s challenges can become overwhelming,” she said.

“If you’re feeling sad, hopeless, stressed, anxious, or losing interest in activities you usually enjoy, seeking additional support could be helpful to get you back to feeling like yourself. It’s essential to recognise that you can experience negative mental health impacts even if you don’t have a diagnosed mental disorder,” she stated.

If you are unsure about what support you may need, Ms Reay suggests that talking to your GP could be good first step.

“GPs can refer patients to services in the area and can also look at other health factors that may be impacting your, or your family’s, overall wellbeing. They can also provide personalised support, referrals to specialists or mental health professionals, and ensure you receive the right care for your specific needs,” she said.

Another option is to call the Head to Health phonenumber on 1800 595 212, which helps you to find free or low-cost local mental health support in the Blue Mountains, Hawkesbury, Lithgow and Penrith areas. The service is available Monday to Friday from 8:30am - 5:00pm, excluding public holidays.

“When you call the phonenumber, you will be asked to enter your postcode so you can be transferred to a local mental health professional. These clinicians work in our region and will take the time to listen to your concerns and connect you with the most appropriate local service in your area,” Ms Reay said.

Ms Reay added that it is also important to ensure young people are supported with appropriate services.

“In Australia, over 75% of mental health issues occur before the age of 25, while suicide continues to cause the largest loss of life for young people in Australia. Providing free and accessible mental health services is essential in helping our young people work through life’s challenges, develop healthy coping mechanisms and foster resilience for the future.”



Wentworth Healthcare fund four headspace centres across the region in the Blue Mountains, Hawkesbury, Lithgow and Penrith local government areas. headspace provides free early intervention support to young people aged 12-25 years across mental health, physical health, work and study, and alcohol and other drug needs. More information, including how to access these services and opening hours, are available via [www.nbmphn.com.au/headspace](http://www.nbmphn.com.au/headspace)

For those who prefer to look for their own support online, help is just a click away. Wentworth Healthcare has developed the [MentalHealthHelp.com.au](http://MentalHealthHelp.com.au) website which is an online directory that makes it easier to find local mental health and wellbeing services.

Ms Reay added there are also a range of informal services or programs available that can help with overall wellbeing, such as their expressive therapy programs. More information on expressive therapies can be found at [www.nbmphn.com.au/expressivetherapies](http://www.nbmphn.com.au/expressivetherapies)

“Our Expressive Therapy programs use creative processes such as art, music, drama, dance and movement as a therapeutic way to improve an individual's overall wellbeing, including their mental health. Expressive therapies not only enhance the emotional and physical wellbeing of individuals, but they can also improve self-esteem and provide a range of other benefits.”

For more information on other mental health services funded by Wentworth Healthcare, visit [www.nbmphn.com.au/MentalHealth](http://www.nbmphn.com.au/MentalHealth)

*If you or someone you know is in crisis, call Lifeline on 13 11 14. If your life or the life of someone you know is in danger, call emergency services on 000. For those seeking urgent mental health care, they can call the NSW Mental Health Line on 1800 011 511, which is available 24/7 including public holidays.*

**For interviews or further information contact:**

Bess Bosman

**Communications Manager - Media & Marketing**

T 0438 261 015

E [Bess.Bosman@nbmphn.com.au](mailto:Bess.Bosman@nbmphn.com.au)

Krystle Goulding

**Communications & Media Officer**

T 4708 8199

E [Krystle.Goulding@nbmphn.com.au](mailto:Krystle.Goulding@nbmphn.com.au)