

Mental Health Council Supports World Health Day theme ‘Depression: Let’s Talk’

Friday 7 April is World Health Day as supported by the World Health Organisation (WHO). This year the focus for the day across the world is Depression: Let’s Talk. The Mental Health Council of Tasmania (MHCT) would like to congratulate WHO for acknowledging the need to tackle depression on a global scale.

Despite the overwhelming number of awareness campaigns and programs around depression, it is still an illness that is highly prevalent and debilitating for those who experience it. According to beyondblue, in any given year 1 million Australians experience depression. In Tasmania, it is estimated that around 60 000 adults experience mental ill-health each year.

CEO of MHCT, Connie Digolis, sees the need to emphasise that we now need to move beyond awareness and break down the barriers of stigma around depression and all mental illness in the community.

“In Australia, the work of organisations such as Beyond Blue, SANE and the Black Dog institute has meant that we are beginning to talk more openly about depression and people experiencing episodes of mental ill-health. We are starting to break down those barriers, however, that doesn’t mean the rate of depression is decreasing,” said Ms Digolis.

“Depression is still the second most prevalent illness after anxiety disorders within our community. It can often have a big impact on the individual and their loved ones. Depression for some people can impact their ability to work, engage with friends or family and it is a major risk factor for suicide. This not only has an emotional cost on the population, but it has economic implications and stresses on our workplaces, schools and especially on health services.”

“Depression is the leading cause of disability and ill-health worldwide. This World Health Day we want people to not only think about the impact of depression in our community but what steps we can take to prevent ill-health and support those experiencing depression.”

Some of the practical steps we can take is looking at ways to make our workplaces, schools and communities mentally healthy. It’s about adopting practices that reduce the cost and overall impact that depression and other mental illnesses have on the individual, on loved ones and our community

“We have a commitment from government at all levels to improve mental health outcomes in the Australian population. What’s needed now is considerable investment into initiatives that are about providing that cultural shift from awareness to action that will lead to better outcomes within the community,” said Ms Digolis.

Advice on how to report sensitively and accurately on mental health and suicide can be found at:

<http://www.mindframe-media.info/for-media>

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