



Resources for MHW event holders

Safe language for all of us during 2018 Mental Health Week

Safe, respectful and appropriate communication about mental health, wellbeing, mental illness, suicide and suicide prevention is really important. Many MHW events or activities in 2018 will focus on issues relating to mental health, wellbeing and stigma reduction, and people may ask questions or want to learn more about specific issues.

RESOURCES

Everymind has developed information and guidelines around mental health and suicide appropriate language. *Mindframe* provides a comprehensive overview on safely talking about mental health, mental illness, suicide and suicide prevention. Visit <http://www.mindframe-media.info> *Everymind* and *The Black Dog Institute* have also developed the Prevention Hub, Australia's first integrated research initiative into preventing anxiety and depression. The Hub will focus on translational research, implementation science, and capacity building to prevent the development and reduce the impact of anxiety and depression. Visit <https://prevenhub.org.au/>

SAFE LANGUAGE

Below are some ideas to support safe conversations with media or at an MHW event.

- Keep your language and message consistent and clear – complex psychological definitions may not resonate in community conversations, perhaps take a simple, clear and safe approach to ensure accessibility to all levels of mental health literacy.
- Support the reduction of stigma. Wherever possible, refrain from describing an individual by their condition or diagnosis – for example, bipolar, manic, psychotic or schizophrenic.
- Consider your words carefully, and what effect they may have on someone with a lived experience. Is it stigmatising? Will some people find the topic distressing or triggering? Is it de-humanising a situation?
- When addressing emotive and often confronting subject matter, it is really important to remove any barriers around talking about mental illness – and in a way that is safe, respectful and appropriate to the audience.
- If addressing the issue of suicide or suicide prevention:
 - Avoid talking about method, means or location
 - Avoid sensationalising suicide in any way
 - If referring to the act of suicide, avoid 'committed suicide', try instead to use, 'took their own life' or 'died by suicide.' Again, we suggest reviewing the Mindframe guidelines.

HELP-SEEKING

Public communications relating to Mental Health Week can address and encourage help-seeking behaviour and to include relevant helplines and websites to support people when they are seeking help. Here is the full list of helplines. We recommend including a minimum of two options at the end of a published article. We recommend including Lifeline: 13 11 14. You can visit MHCT's Getting Help page for further listings <https://www.mhct.org/getting-help/>