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Western Australian Association
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State of Wellbeing

encouraging and creating better
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Mental health is everyone's business

As the peak body for mental health in the state, the Western Australian Association for Mental Health (WAAMH) recognises the increasing and important role workplaces and schools play in contributing to mentally healthy communities.

This liftout was produced in response to workplaces and schools requesting more tools and education to encourage better mental health. WAAMH continues its involvement in promoting mental health strategies to these environments, as well as to the broader community.

Workplaces and schools want more information on mental health and advice on how to best manage the mental health of their staff and students more effectively. With most people spending the majority of their week at either school or work, we must recognise how important these environments are for promoting resilience, acceptance, understanding and correct supports for people's mental health.

Schools and workplaces are key places that can either contribute to or detract from a person's wellbeing and positive development, and both have Occupational Health and Safety responsibilities to ensure a physically and mentally safe environment for people to operate within. Therefore interactions with peers, colleagues, superiors and teachers, in addition to well deployed mental health programs, are essential to making a difference to a person's day and life.

This feature provides a broad introduction to managing mental health in professional spaces, but there is a wealth of resources out there, so be encouraged to make a move towards better mental health. Mental health must be openly talked about and action must be taken to look after both your own mental health and the wellbeing of others, whether you're at work, school or home.

Alison Xamon
WAAMH President

ADVERTISING LIFTOUT

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Support for employees and their family members

Large organisations are recognising the health and wellness of an employee is not just about the practices put in place in the workplace but within their whole family and network.

One large organisation setting the right example in the workplace is The ORS Group, a national company with over 600 staff at 50 locations across Australia, spanning Western Australia, New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, Tasmania and the Australian Capital Territory.

It operates in the areas of employment services, workplace rehabilitation, injury prevention and wellness, training services, Employee Assistance Programs (EAP), HR consulting and outplacement.

The ORS Group National HR Consulting and EAP Services Manager Joseph Carrello (pictured below) said there was a raft of initiatives the company offered its employees such as providing massages, wintertime flu shots, fresh fruit and loyalty and anniversary days.

The company has a bonus health kick, where every year each employee is entitled to have a certain amount of their gym membership or sporting equipment paid back to support their fitness and wellness.

Mr Carrello said employees' family members were also supported in EAP services.

"In today's modern society there are pressures of work, family, study, paying off the mortgage and other financial considerations and all of these factors can impact on the pressure and the stress of the way people cope," he said.

"If something is going on in the home life or there's a situation with loved ones, it can impact the health and wellbeing of individuals in the workplace.

"EAP is not only supporting the employee in the workplace with a variety of different initiatives but it is supporting the key others around the individual and recognising the health and wellness of an individual is not just within themselves but holistically within their family and key network."

An important step organisations are taking today is providing professional counselling sessions to their employees and immediate family members.

"An individual can come with any sort of personal or workplace issue; it might be stress, depression or anxiety from work or a pre-existing condition outside the workplace and have access to professional counselling, support services and linkages with community services," Mr Carrello said.

"One of our large state government departments runs a Health and Wellness Awareness Week annually where it has suppliers of allied health services and

associated services onsite. Employees are able to speak with service providers like EAP, optometrists, podiatrists, physiotherapists, massage therapists, nutritionists and sports physiologists."

The ORS Group organises toolbox meetings, lunch and learn sessions, special presentations and workshops as well as a mental health first aid course.

"For managers and supervisors, we are educating them on the more common mental illnesses like depression, anxiety and substance abuse and the signs and symptoms," Mr Carrello said.

"We can train them on how to actually talk to and approach an employee under their supervision in a workplace situation that they might be worried about.

"For HR, managers or supervisors, the danger is that they operate outside their realm of professionalism, so they are trying to support, help and counsel an individual but they are not trained to do that.

"The [mental health first aid course] gives people those linkages and understandings so then the people who need the help are getting it in an appropriate and timely fashion."

Mr Carrello said the number of organisations that had asked for and were interested in EAP services had increased.

"I've noticed a trend personally that it's not just the large corporate organisations with significant numbers of employees but the more mid-sized organisations that have about 100 people that are seeking to have an arrangement of EAP support available for their employees," he said.



HANDS UP if you support wellbeing for all young people



Young people have a lot going on already. But those who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or intersex are more likely to experience mental health issues, particularly in rural areas.

True Colours directly supports young LGBTI people in the South West, and also works with schools and the broader community to raise awareness and break down the barriers to safe and inclusive communities.

To support True Colours or to help us expand the reach of our work, email truecolours@unitingcarewest.org.au or call 1300 663 298.

True Colours receives no government funding.




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1983 SINCE




Fusion Australia is working across the country to build a strong and healthy community through a range of school and community initiatives that encourage participation, discussion and community connection.

Together There's Life

To get involved contact us on
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State of Wellbeing

Take charge of your health

Employees can take charge of their mental health and wellbeing at work through physical activity and healthy lifestyle choices.

Healthier Workplace WA Senior Manager Richard Crane shares some tips to help staff create their own mental health resilience:

1. Sit less, stand more, stretch regularly.
2. Incorporate walking or cycling into your commute to work.
3. Include physical activity into your day, even if it is just a lunchtime walk.
4. Eat more fruit and vegetables and less processed foods.
5. Increase water intake and avoid caffeinated beverages.



Preventing and managing bullying in the workplace

If workplace bullying is left unresolved, it can have serious effects on people's mental health and wellbeing.

WorkSafe WA defines workplace bullying as "repeated, unreasonable or inappropriate behaviour directed towards a worker or a group of workers, which creates a risk to health and safety".

A workplace situation can be identified as bullying if a worker or (workers) is harmed, intimidated, threatened, victimised, undermined, offended, degraded or humiliated whether alone or in front of co-workers, visitors or customers.

While some workplace bullying may involve verbal abuse and physical violence, bullying can also be subtle intimidation with inappropriate comments about personal appearance, constant criticisms, isolation of workers from others and unrealistic, embarrassing or degrading work demands.

WorkSafe WA Health Hazards Branch Senior Inspector and Scientific Officer Kath Jones said workplace bullying could have considerable direct and indirect costs for organisations.

"There may be a high turnover or low morale in areas where bullying occurs," she said.

"In addition to the direct cost of recruiting and training new staff or remediation to resolve the problem, there can be lost productivity that occurs when people are absent from work or not working to full capacity and costs associated with counselling, mediation, compensation claims and possible legal action."

Reactions of individual workers may vary but it is possible they could experience stress, anxiety or sleep disturbance; panic attacks or impaired ability to make decisions; incapacity to work, concentration problems, loss of self-confidence and self-esteem or reduced output and performance; depression or a sense of isolation; hypersensitivity; post traumatic stress syndrome; or in extreme cases, risk of suicide.

Every situation is different, however bullying can be stopped.

How people handle bullying depends on their particular work environment and the nature of the bullying.

Ms Jones said sometimes people were not aware of how their behaviours towards others could be perceived.

"The person may not realise their behaviour offends you, so it is important to let them know how you feel," she said.

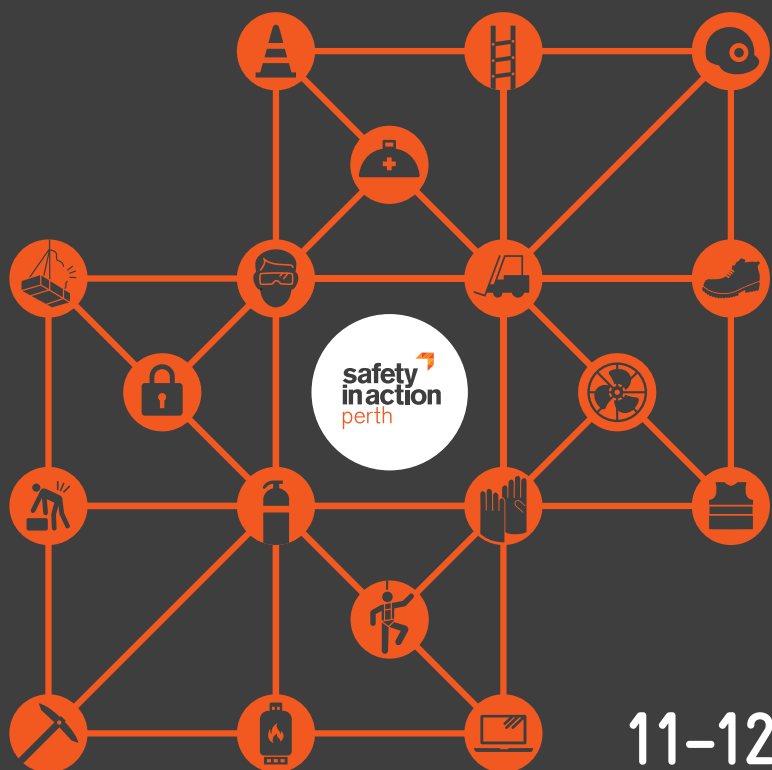
"If you don't think approaching them yourself is the best way to let them know, then you could ask someone else, like the grievance or human resources officer, to approach the person on your behalf or to mediate or facilitate a face-to-face discussion and find a solution that is acceptable for anyone involved."

It is the duty of the employer to ensure adequate systems, including grievance procedures and bullying prevention policies, are in place to prevent or stop bullying behaviour.

As part of Safe Work month in October, WorkSafe WA will be organising several three-hour workshops for managers on preventing and managing bullying.



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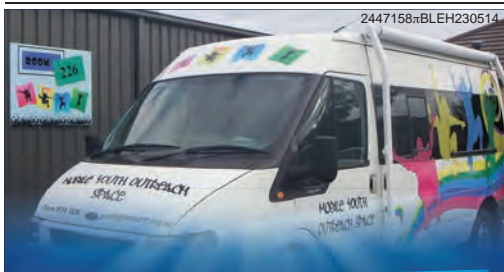
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Stress buster tips

Mindful Employer is an eLearning and face-to-face workplace mental health training program for businesses Australia-wide. It is an initiative of SANE Australia, which collaborates with the mental health sector and the Mental Health Commission to ensure all information and training is the most up-to-date to support Australian businesses.

Mindful Employer Manager Eliza Oakley shares her five top tips for managing stress in the workplace.

1. Find the challenge in a situation.

If a situation is viewed as difficult it is perceived as a threat and our bodies respond in a way that increases our stress. If we view the same situation as a challenge it increases our sense of control in the situation, which in turn decreases our stress.

2. Brainstorm a stressful issue for three minutes, if possible with a colleague.

Write down every possibility as a way to solve the issue. Include any ideas but don't edit what you write down, you may end up with the original solution or outcome. By practicing this we increase our ability to move out of habitual thinking patterns and assists in reducing stress.

3. Focus on your breath for two minutes.

Stop what you are doing. Sit or stand still. Focus on your breath at the point it enters your nostrils. Take a slow, deep breath and release the breath slowly. Do this five times and return to the task you were doing.

4. Move away from using negative language.

When we are stressed we often see the world from a more negative point of view. Changing our language to use less harsh words can help any situation seem less daunting. Replace "I can't do this" with "How can I do this?" and replace "I hate doing this" with "I don't enjoy doing this".

5. A manager's open door needs to be a revolving door.

Managers need to take a proactive approach and talk to Staff regularly. This will assist managers to identify and deal with stress amongst employees early. Encourage team members to take a break at lunchtime and move out of the workspace. By being proactive managers make it easier for staff to come to them if they need to discuss any issues they are stressed about.

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The Third Space – the key to balance and happiness

Dr Adam Fraser, a human performance researcher and consultant, has discovered a simple way to find balance and happiness by adopting easy strategies to manage the state of mind between work and home.

This concept has been put to paper in Dr Fraser's new book *The Third Space*, which looks at that moment of transition between two different activities.

Dr Fraser (pictured below) said the concept originated from many different things such as seeing soldiers return from Afghanistan and examining how they used conscious thoughts to transition to life at home, to looking at how the best tennis players transitioned between points, and then talking to everyday people in high-pressure jobs and how they transitioned from work life to home life.

"We started to see this trend of the importance of using that gap – the third space – and those people who were quite successful, happy and composed and not stressed seemed to have this common theme of how they went from one thing to another," he said.

Dr Fraser was working with a big company executive and noticed how relaxed, calm, present and engaged he was at home and realised it all came down to successfully transitioning from a work mindset to a home mindset.

"He actually built a new entrance into his home (which is not exactly practical for the average person) and he would go into his room, have a shower and get dressed in casual clothes, so that he was mentally leaving the day behind and shifting into dad-mode," he said.



"He did it everyday and that was the most important thing he did."

Dr Fraser used this information and conducted a research study with Deakin University where he took 250 small business owners and measured their mood and behaviour in the home.

The business owners were asked to perform three simple behaviours in the third space between work and home.

The first phase was to 'reflect' on and analyse the day, focusing on what they had achieved and had done well.

In the second phase, participants were asked to 'rest' where they took time to relax and unwind, which allowed them to recover from the stressful day.

The third phase was to 'reset', where they became clear about their intention for the home space and thought about how they wanted to show up when they walked through the door.

After a month of applying these strategies in the third space there was a 41 per cent improvement in mood and state of emotion in the home.

Dr Fraser said there were additional physical strategies to successfully transition from work to home.

"When people exercised between work and home, whether it was a walk or strenuous exercise, that improved their mood the most," he said.

"We also found shopping really helped people, probably more skewed towards women than men, and the last thing was if they socialised or connected with friends in between that gap, which really worked.

"But if you're a single mum with three kids and you work, you're not doing yoga or hanging out with the girls on the way home - but you're rushing home.

"So that's why we wanted to find out what we can do mentally, like the three r's – reflect, rest, reset – that we can do anywhere, anytime that could improve our behaviour."

Dr Fraser said achieving a healthy work-life balance all came down to behaviour.

"We found with our research, particularly with families, it was less about how much time you spent at home and more about what's your behaviour like when you are in the home," he said.

"So my tip would be to focus less on the traditional things like 'where do I spend most of my time?' and focus much more on 'what's my behaviour like?'"

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State of Wellbeing



Finding meaningful employment to suit every job seeker

It is widely understood there are valuable benefits of meaningful employment aside from monetary gain, including skill development, experience and long-term fulfillment.

Western Australian Association for Mental Health (WAAMH) Individual Placement Support State Project Lead Philleen Dickson said it was important to remember employment was often an intrinsic part of a person's identity and sense of self-worth and employment was a right (as outlined in the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights).

"When we work we feel good about ourselves, our contribution to society and our capacity to engage in social and recreational activities increases," she said.

Ms Dickson said there were particular benefits for someone experiencing mental illness.

"Employment gives us focus, purpose, routine and exposure to social connectivity – these are important elements of a person's journey to recovery from an episode of mental illness," she said.

"We know that people with experience of mental illness want the opportunity to be engaged in fulfilling employment, however access to support services that directly focus on a person's strengths, preferences and direct mental health support needs are limited."

Recognising this limitation, WAAMH has developed an Individual Placement and Support (IPS) program to help people with mental illness find employment.

"IPS is an innovative approach; it requires a mental health service and a disability

employment service to enter into a formal partnership to deliver a collaborative service to people with mental health diagnosis to find and retain open employment," Ms Dickson said.

The program sees clinical staff and an IPS employment specialist work together in order to enable individuals to find employment that reflects their choice and strengths.

"Job seekers (the individuals referred from mental health services) are able to choose the job type, pace and direction of employment support they receive, with the assistance of mental health care coordinators supporting their wellbeing and employment specialists facilitating a positive job search and job attainment experience," Ms Dickson said.

By exploring the job seeker's interests, previous work experience and personal strengths the employment specialists are able to help them develop a CV, make job applications, job search and after a job is found, negotiate ongoing support needs.



Educating for Wellbeing

Principals Australia Institute is involved with two initiatives that focus on building student mental health and wellbeing in Australian schools: KidsMatter Primary and MindMatters.

To find out how your school can make a difference to student mental health and wellbeing please visit www.pai.edu.au



Principals Australia Institute
Learning. Leading.

KidsMatter Primary is funded by the Australian Government Department of Health and backed by the expertise of beyondblue, the Australian Psychological Society and Principals Australia Institute. MindMatters is a wellbeing initiative for Australian secondary schools managed by beyondblue, implemented by Principals Australia Institute and funded by the Australian Government Department of Health.

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ADVERTISING LIFTOUT

Helping young people flourish in school and beyond

Research has shown teenagers these days are doing it tougher than previous generations, with a startling rise in the prevalence of mental health issues in young people.

It is an area author, academic and social psychologist Dr Helen Street has devoted many years to researching, in particular focusing on how social influence impacts a young person's wellbeing and engagement.

"Adolescents (now) are 10 times more likely to be suffering from mental health issues as their grandparents were," Dr Street said.

"And that's not just about better ways of identifying mental health issues, that's the reality of what's going on with these young people. So we really need to pay attention to what's going on and look at ways that we can positivity support and nurture wellbeing."

The need for positive changes forms part of the premise behind *Better Than Ok*, a new book which aims to

help "young people flourish in school and beyond".

The book was co-edited by Dr Street and Neil Porter, who has a background in technology, psychology and law.

"It's a collection of chapters from leading experts in positive education, which is incorporating wellbeing into learning," Dr Street said.

"The book is very much about flourishing, which means we're not saying it's ok to survive or be just ok, but rather we want to support kids so they feel they're really engaged with life, they have a passion for what they do and they are living their life to the fullest."

The book will be officially launched at the upcoming Positive Schools 2014 conferences held in various locations around Australia over the next few months.

"Positive Schools is an opportunity to find out what's going on in the

most up-to-date way and the most solutions-focused way in terms of helping kids to engage with their learning," Dr Street said.

"It's based on the premise that we shouldn't think of education as a way to get through school but rather as a way to set people up so that they can lead a successful life."

As Chair of Positive Schools, Dr Street has overseen much of the content for this year's conferences. She will present her own talk – within a series – called 'The Brilliance of Boredom'.

"It's slightly tongue in cheek but what it's really saying is that we need to give kids more unstructured free time – more time that's not adult led in any way whether that be at school or at home, so they have the opportunity to nurture and develop their own creativity and become self-directed in terms of their social and emotional learning," Dr Street said.



Better Than Ok co-editors Dr Helen Street and Neil Porter.

Take control of your technology

With smart phones, tablets and the realm of social media making us contactable 24/7 it can be hard to switch off and learn to healthily handle the technology in your life. Here are some tips on how to manage social media and smartphone time effectively:

Keep it in perspective: your news feed is no doubt packed with the highlights reel of your friends' lives – but when it seems 'everyone' is holidaying in Europe, getting married, looking amazing in their ball photos or acing exams, try to remember that people often post the best parts of their lives and keep the less exciting things private. Try not to compare your lives to others and remember all the positive things in your life that you have to be thankful for.

Constant interruptions: if you are studying or trying to get something done to deadline – switch off your email alerts and

put your phone on silent. Try to set aside 'phone and email checking time' and allow yourself to check and respond to texts and emails only when you have got some solid work in.

Out of sight, out of mind: if you have your phone in your pocket or on your desk where you can see it, you are bound to be tempted to check it more often than if it is safely tucked in your bag or drawer.

Power down: actually turn your phone, tablet and computer off each night when you go to bed – or better yet, an hour beforehand. This will ensure you don't get any texts, tweets or email alerts pinging all night long and interrupting your sleep. Giving yourself a technology-free hour before you rest your head will likely help your body relax and get into a more sleepy state of mind.

Be free: Try to have a technology-free day once a month, or every



second month – yes, really! Go for a walk, take a relaxing bath, read a book, catch up for a face-to-face chat with a friend, start something creative, such as learning an instrument or drawing, painting or writing. There are so many enjoyable technology-free things to occupy your day, which can do wonders for your mental health.

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Access to Allied Psychological Services (ATAPS) Perth North Metro Medicare Local

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Tel: 08 9201 0044 Fax: 08 9201 0033

Email: ataps@pnml.com.au

www.pnml.com.au/mentalhealth

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Presented by The West Australian

State of Wellbeing



Mental health awareness starts at school

Having taught in primary schools across Western Australia for more than 30 years, Jenni Harrold has seen first hand the mental health issues prevalent within schools.

Ms Harrold's insights are perhaps more pronounced as she has experienced her own mental health journey after being diagnosed with bipolar disorder in 2004.

She has published more than 50 books for primary school children covering literacy, mathematics and homework assignments, travelled extensively and taught overseas, and said her career path showed people with a mental health issue could live a rewarding and peaceful life.

From her experience Ms Harrold said anxiety and depression were the most common issues found in the school environment.

"Generalised anxiety disorder symptoms can include feeling restless and on edge, having difficulty concentrating, experiencing muscle tension and becoming tired easily because of sleep problems," she said.

Ms Harrold said children most commonly developed depression as a reaction to stressful life events such as a family breakdown, violence, bullying or a death.

"There may also be a chemical imbalance where moods are affected," she said.

"Depression can also be inherited."

Ms Harrold encouraged parents who were concerned about their child's wellbeing to go to beyondblue.com.au where there were many valuable resources specifically for parents.

She recommended teachers seeking information draw on some of the many resources available from various groups including KidsMatter, Youthbeyondblue, MindMatters and Orygen Youth Health.

Ms Harrold suggested positive self-esteem activities be included in as many areas of learning as possible, with students encouraged to believe that they could seek help and advice from an adult if something did not feel right.

"One of the easiest and most effective exercises I have done or suggested to other teachers and adults is a simple set of circles, titled 'Who can I rely on?'" she said.

"In the smaller inner circle, students are asked to write the name of at least one person they can rely on and talk with about any problems (the hope here is that an adult's name will appear).

"Websites or any other social media can also be added (hopefully in the larger, less effective circles)."

Ms Harrold said she believed the way forward for schools was to continue reducing the stigma of mental illness by ensuring information was factual and easily available.

"Parents, schools and the community at large need to provide a forum in which children and teens can speak freely and learn about different mental illnesses, their symptoms and treatments," she said.

"In the school environment, teachers need access to up-to-date information so they can incorporate the concept of mental illness into the classroom."

Positive education

Primary and secondary school teachers have many resources available such as conferences, online information and special programs to help their students flourish in the classroom as well as improve mental health and wellbeing at school, home and in the community.

The Positive Schools mental health and wellbeing conferences provide an opportunity for teachers to gain up-to-date knowledge, ideas and strategies for use in the classroom.

positiveschools.com.au

The *Positive Times* online newspaper offers teachers an array of articles, strategies and information about wellbeing and positive education in Australian schools and colleges.

positivetimes.com.au

KidsMatter Primary and *MindMatters* offer free support and services to help build on schools' programs and initiatives to promote wellbeing in the school community.

kidsmatter.edu.au and mindmatters.edu.au

Training Courses

Mental Health Responses

A one-day introduction to understanding mental health concerns, suited to anyone dealing with the general public or working closely with people. Introducing a range of mental health disorders, it provides practical strategies for dealing with common symptoms and behaviours, which anyone could encounter within the community. Includes take-home references and tools.

Suits any industry - especially customer service or people-oriented role.
 Members: \$195
 Non-members: \$245
 Custom course: \$1800

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State of Wellbeing

Calm the busy mind with this unique smartphone app

Smiling Mind co-founders Jane Martino and James Tutton developed the Smiling Mind smartphone app, which provides meditation exercises for children, youth and adults, harnessing technology as a way of bringing a meditation tool to the masses.

Ms Martino said figures showed young children were increasingly being identified as suffering from anxiety and depression, and as she and James are both parents of young children, the pair were determined to do something to address this burgeoning issue.

"We are extremely passionate about meditation and its benefits for all, but

especially for young people who we have the potential to provide with healthy, proactive mental health and wellbeing habits from a young age," Ms Martino said.

Eighteen months on and Smiling Mind has had more than 3300 downloads of its education program across Australia and there are almost 250,000 regular users of the program across the four age groups.

"It is a joy to be at the stage where you meet people and they either know about Smiling Mind or have the app on the phone and or use it regularly," Ms Martino said.

The app has been used for individuals, in schools and at Headspace clinics and the not-for-profit organisation has also partnered with Inspire Foundation, Cricket Australia and Red Cross to collaborate on special projects.

Smiling Mind is free to download, which Ms Martino said made it accessible to everyone who wanted to utilise it.

It caters for four distinct age groups; 7-11 years, 12-15 years, 16-22 years and adults.

"Each age category has its own series of guided meditations tailored to that particular age group's needs," Ms Martino said.

"Fundamentally the content (and of course the outcomes) is similar, but the younger age groups' programs usually contain more visualisation."

A buzzword of late, Ms Martino described mindfulness as being 'in the moment', and using your senses and current environment to help you 'just be'.

"It is a process of simply accepting where you are at in life, letting thoughts, feelings and emotions pass by and let your bodily sensations ground you."

She said while many people recognised the benefits of stress relief and relaxation, there were many more advantages of meditation.

"Meditation and mindfulness is a form of attention training - not removing thoughts but training the mind to focus better and more easily on one thought at a time and be more 'in the moment,'" Ms Martino said.

"It also assists to increase empathy and self awareness and reduce emotional reactivity, allowing us all to place more space between feelings we have and our physical reactions."

For people looking to try meditation, Ms Martino said it was important not to force yourself or others and to not be too hard on yourself.

"People ask me all the time - do you meditate every day?" she said.

"Of course not I am a human being.

"Just like exercise that we know is good for our body, we fall off the wagon sometimes - and that is okay - the last thing I would ever want is for people to feel stressed out by their meditation schedule, it defeats the purpose."



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