



MEDIA RELEASE

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Putting “men” into mental health

TO CELEBRATE Men’s Health Week (June 9-15) the peak body for mental health in the state, the Western Australian Association for Mental Health is emphasising the importance of men’s mental health, seeking help, and workplace wellbeing, as Mental Health Week will focus strongly on these matters this year.

WAAMH executive director Rod Astbury said men were often discouraged from speaking up about mental health issues, and stigma in male-orientated workplaces often left built-up feelings unexpressed.

“A good way to get help if men are feeling depressed or anxious is to take the big step to talk about it,” Mr Astbury said. “Speaking up is not weak, it could save your life, and encourage others to speak up too.”

“To maintain good mental health, it’s important to find a work / life balance, stay physically active, connect with family and friends, get involved in the community, learn new skills; as well as take time out for yourself to unwind.

“Even something as simple as a leisurely walk in the fresh air can do wonders to clear your head.

“There are a number of fantastic men’s community-managed mental health services in WA, with groups such as the Mens Advisory Network and Mensline, which can help.”

In the workplace, training is essential for managers and supervisors to promote mentally healthy work practices, and to help identify, appropriately respond to and prevent mental issues from spiralling out of control and possibly leading to severe consequences. Recommended courses include Mental Health First Aid, Mindful Employer by SANE Australia and the Heads Up program by Beyond Blue.

WAAMH has consciously made men’s mental health and wellbeing in the workplace a strong focus for its monumental community event this year - Mental Health Week.

Mental Health Week is celebrated around World Mental Health Day, held annually on October 10. WAAMH is part of Australia’s promotion group which plan awareness campaigns around this day. The official dates for Mental Health Week 2014 in Western Australia are October 4-10 with the theme, ‘Make a move towards better mental health’.

‘Make a Move’ encourages people to take action, no matter how big or small, each day in order to be mentally healthy and gain an overall sense of wellbeing.

Mr Astbury recommended individuals discover what being mentally healthy meant to them, and make a move to take action.

“Making a move towards better mental health means reaching out to help others, looking after your physical health, resting your mind by finding time to relax, joining in a community event or activity, picking up tips for better mental health and being aware of your emotional, mental and physical state,” Mr Astbury said. “It’s also about moving more positive attitudes to mental health.”

About Mental Health Week (MHW)

MHW is an annual event, now in its 47th year, funded by the Mental Health Commission and coordinated by WAAMH. The week-long festivity promotes art, music, theatre, film, and fitness; and embraces schools, workplaces and the community to promote awareness about mental health and wellbeing for ourselves and those around us. Further information and resources can be found at <http://mhw.waamh.org.au/>

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