



MENTAL  
HEALTH  
MONTH  
OCTOBER

# Starter Kit

Mental Health Month Event

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# What is Mental Health Month?

October marks Mental Health Month, providing a valuable opportunity for collective focus on mental well-being, tackling stigma, and fostering supportive communities. It's a time to recognise the significance of maintaining good mental health in our daily lives and to promote a culture of seeking help when necessary. Mental Health Month is centered on World Mental Health Day – October 10th.

Every year, Wayahead collaborates with our reference group and the community to establish a theme. Check out our website for the latest theme for Mental Health Month.



# Get Involved

Every year, Wayahead awards over 30 small grants to community groups and organisations across NSW to kickstart your Mental Health Month project or event. This starter kit contains all the essential information to assist you in planning your event and completing your application.

This starter kit will give you all the information you need to plan your event and submit your application.

A Mental Health Month project or event serves as an excellent platform to promote awareness of mental health and enhance social and emotional wellbeing within your community. By reducing stigma and empowering individuals to seek help for themselves or others, such initiatives play a crucial role in promoting a supportive environment.

**30  
small grants  
up for grabs!**

A Mental Health Month event or project can provide individuals in your community with the awareness and courage to view mental health and social and emotional wellbeing as areas they can actively address and improve upon.

Mental Health Month events can be fun, thought-provoking, creative, engaging, sporty, and interesting.

# Mental Health Month Grants

Wayahead provides small grants to help get your Mental Health Month event off the ground!

We provide approximately 30 grants of either \$500 or \$1000 across the following categories:

**General**

**Youth**

**Linguistically  
Diverse  
(CALD)**

**Rainbow  
Community  
(LGBTQIA+)**

**Aboriginal and Torres  
Strait Islander**



# About the Grants

The Mental Health Month small grants are intentionally designed to be accessible to everyone, including individuals who have never applied for a grant before.

We believe it is important for you to understand our criteria so that you can submit the strongest possible application.

Firstly, let's clarify what we're not looking for. Perfect spelling, grammar, or elaborate language isn't necessary. We recognise that many applicants may face challenges with written English for various reasons. Rest assured; our judges are explicitly instructed not to mark down applications based on these factors. Instead, focus on showcasing the idea behind your event or project. Utilise the judging guidelines provided below to maximize your chances of success.

## General Grant Category:

The General Grant category encourages individuals, groups or organisations to propose projects or events that promote mental health awareness and dialogue. It supports initiatives aligned with the theme providing funding and partnering with Wayahead to enhance their impact within communities.

## Youth Grant category:

The Youth Grant category invites young people, individuals, youth-focused groups or organisations to propose projects or events promoting mental health awareness among peers during Mental Health Month. Recipients align with the theme and partner with Wayahead to amplify the impact of their initiatives within communities.

### **LGBTQIA+ Grant Category:**

The LGBTQIA+ Grant category welcomes individuals, groups or organisations focusing on LGBTQIA+ to propose projects or events promoting mental health awareness and support within the community. Recipients align their initiatives with the theme and partner with Wayahead to enhance the impact of their efforts.

### **CALD Grant Category:**

The Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) Grant category encourages individuals, groups or organisations addressing CALD communities to propose projects or events promoting mental health awareness and support. Recipients align their initiatives with the theme and partner with Wayahead to enhance the impact of their events.

### **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Grant category:**

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Grant category welcomes individuals, groups or organisations focusing on Indigenous communities to propose projects or events promoting mental health awareness and support. Recipients align their initiatives with the theme and partner with Wayahead to support the impact of their efforts within these communities.

## **What are we looking for?**

Each grant application undergoes evaluation by a minimum of two judges with relevant expertise. To assist you in addressing our evaluation criteria effectively, we offer guidance on how each application is scored. We have included this information here to ensure that you can address all the aspects we consider in your application.

At Wayahead, we highly value lived experience involvement and expertise, as it forms the foundation of all our initiatives. Therefore, your project should actively involve, and ideally be led by, individuals with lived experiences of mental health challenges, illness, or distress, as well as individuals from marginalised communities, where applicable to your project.

# How the grants are scored:

**1. Promotion Strategy and Connection to MHM Theme:** We seek projects with a well-defined mental health promotion, education, or community-building strategy. Have you carefully considered how your project will accomplish its objectives? Consider aspects such as effective community engagement strategies and preferred communication methods. For instance, if your community has a strong interest in sports, explore ways to integrate sports into your project.

We also look at how your project links to the Mental Health Month theme.

**2. Planning and Budget:** We seek projects with clearly defined objectives and a carefully considered budget. Your application should outline the aims of your project, even if presented in bullet points, and describe how the project intends to achieve them. While the budget doesn't need to be overly detailed, it should demonstrate that you've considered anticipated costs. We understand that budgets may evolve over time, so you won't be held strictly to initial estimates.

**3. Creativity/Innovation of Proposed Project:** We are looking for projects that take a unique, new, or interesting approach to mental health. It's beneficial to provide insight into why you've chosen to execute your project in a particular way. For example, if your project involves gardening, you might highlight the proven mental health benefits of gardening and the lack of nature interaction opportunities for young people in your community. Generally, projects focused solely on delivering mental health first aid to a workforce may not score as well in this category unless accompanied by additional information explaining why this approach is particularly innovative for your community.

**4. Involvement of Target Audience:** This aspect is crucial! Ensuring active participation from your target audience throughout all stages of your project is essential for a successful application. If your project focuses on working with young people, ensure their involvement right from the start. Similarly, if you're applying for an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander grant, the project should be led by individuals from these communities. This principle applies to populations not specifically tied to a grant category as well. A helpful way to measure this is to ask yourself, "Who am I trying to reach with this project?" and then ensure there is representation from that group involved in your project.



# Planning your event

Remember to list your event or project with Wayahead on our **Events Calendar**

Planning an event or project can be a bit daunting. We have created a guide to help you through the process. Use as much or as little as you like.

## Investigate



1

Brainstorm and research to identify the issue - what do you want to address?

## Formulate



2

Plan and design - what's your message? How will your event run? What will you need?

## Communicate



3

Connect and promote - get your event in front of people in your network, community and on our events calendar!

## Evaluate



4

Check and measure - how successful was your event and did you achieve your goals?

# Investigate

- Brainstorm - Research -

Identify the issue – What do you want to address? General awareness? Reducing stigma? Increasing access to services?

Think about why this issue is important – To you, your organization, your community. Understanding the issue will help keep your event on-track, and help you determine the goals for your event.

Identify your target audience and research how best to reach them – Use your own expertise here as well as people from your target audience. What has worked in the past? Do people come together over food? Music? Combination?

Identify your goals – Think broadly, rather than specifically. What's the aim of the project or event? This should reflect the issue you've identified, as well as your target audience.

Identify your challenges – Think about what might hinder the success of your event or project and plan for possible challenges. This can be broad – stigma, discrimination – or specific – lack of appropriate venues or funding.

# Formulate

- Plan - Design -

After gathering information in the investigation step, it's time to transition to the creation phase.

Plan a message – Something cohesive and catchy that ties your event or project together. Think about the issue and the goals you have identified, and how you want to capture that.

Plan the event - Determine the format of your event or project based on your findings. Break down the planning process into manageable steps to ensure thorough preparation.

Plan what you need - Outline the resources necessary for hosting the event or project successfully. Consider materials, supplies, staffing, and time requirements. Developing a visual plan, including a timeline, can aid in organising these elements effectively and ensuring timely completion of tasks.

# Communicate

## - Connect - Promote -

Connect – Are there other services or organisations in your area that work with similar people or do similar things? Partnering with them for Mental Health Month can lead to resource sharing and uncovering new avenues for promoting your event or project.

How do the people you work with tend to connect best? Whether it's social media, newspapers, support groups, or other platforms, adapting your promotion strategy to meet people where they are can enhance engagement.

Promote - Make use of local media and think creatively about how best to reach as many people as possible. Professional-looking posters can make a significant difference, and free online design tools like Canva can assist in creating eye-catching posters even without design expertise. Refer to the media guide provided in this starter kit for additional promotion ideas.

And don't forget to list your event or project with Wayahead on our **Events Calendar**

# Evaluate

## - Check - Measure -

Establishing a framework for evaluating your project is essential to ensure its success in achieving the identified goals. What do you want to measure? How best to measure it?

It can be good to think about how you will evaluate the project/event from the beginning, to make sure the evaluation framework fits the project. Evaluation can be integrated into the event itself, such as by encouraging participants to share selfies with a specific hashtag or provide feedback on a communal board, which can be quantified and used for evaluation purposes.

Types of evaluation:

Outcome evaluation – Has the desired effect been achieved? Are people seeking help more? Making contact? Simply think of one simple thing that can be easily tracked – like number of people who have signed up to your mailing list, or people who have liked, shared, retweeted, or commented on your social media posts.

Implementation evaluation – Did you stick to your plan? Did your project get through unexpected challenges?

Goals evaluation – Have you achieved the goals you decided on?

# Take care

A significant aspect of Mental Health Month is raising public awareness about mental health and wellbeing. However, increased awareness can sometimes trigger difficult thoughts or emotions for individuals. During your event or project, people may approach you with varying levels of concern or distress. It's crucial to know how to provide support while respecting the boundaries of the event, the individual, and yourself.

Below are some helpful tips to consider if someone seeks help at your event:

## 1 Be prepared

If you work for a mental health organisation or are a mental health professional, you likely have experience in responding to inquiries about mental illness. However, if you don't have the answers to some questions, it's beneficial to have prepared information that you can provide to individuals seeking help.

Having readily available information from local organizations can assist people in determining their next steps. You can find information on where to get help on our website at [wayahead.org.au](http://wayahead.org.au).

## 2 Practise respectful communication

listen actively to what people are saying to you. Repeating what they have said as a question can help ensure you've understood them correctly. Consider sharing your own experiences, if comfortable, as it can reassure them that their story is heard and valued.

If someone is talking with you about their mental health, it's important to demonstrate understanding and non-judgment. Avoid making assumptions or judgments about their behaviour, which may seem unusual to you. Refrain from giving advice about choices as this can come across as judgmental and may not be helpful to the individual. Respect that people are entitled to determine their own course of action. It is up to them what they do with the information available to them.

### 3 Know your boundaries

Before the event, take some time to reflect on your boundaries. Consider what topics you feel confident discussing and where you might need more information or support. Determine instances where it may be appropriate to refer someone to another source of assistance.

Be honest about your limitations and communicate them clearly to others. It's perfectly okay not to have all the answers yourself. If someone asks for information or assistance beyond your expertise, let them know you may not have immediate answers but can help direct them to the appropriate resources.

Identify individuals who can support you if you encounter something difficult or upsetting during the event. Communicate with them beforehand, letting them know they may need to provide support for you on the day.

### 4 Look after yourself and your team

Remember that looking after yourself and your team is just as important as looking after others. Consider getting together before the event to have a chat about your plan and after the event to talk about how you think things went and to celebrate. Keep an eye out for each other on the day.



# Show off

Promoting your event or project is crucial, and some of the most effective channels are likely already familiar to you – such as social media, posters and flyers, and email invitations. However, engaging with local newspapers and other media outlets can also help increase awareness of your event.

Even if your event is private (not open to the public), consider informing the media beforehand. This way, a journalist may attend part of the event and write a story about it for the local paper afterward. Alternatively, you can write your own media release and distribute it to local print, radio, and TV journalists.

Below, we've provided a template media release to guide you. This sentence is to be placed lower on the page and closer to the guide.

## Why?

Mental Health Month events offer an excellent opportunity for the media to shine a spotlight on mental health, and your event serves as a compelling reason for them to do so. Collaborating with the media is another avenue through which we can promote positive mental health and diminish the stigma associated with mental illness.

If you are holding a public event, then using the media is a great way to get more participants.

# How to get in the media:

## **Contact a journalist:**

Ensure your media release is ready and tailored specifically to your target media outlets. Address them by name and take a moment to introduce yourself in a sentence. If you're unsure which journalist would be the best fit for your article, consider calling a general office number and asking. Be prepared to answer any questions they might have or send the press release promptly if they express interest.

## **Selling your story:**

Remember, your event could be highly interesting to local news outlets, so don't hesitate to reach out! Consider what makes your event unique and newsworthy and highlight these aspects. Perhaps you're hosting the only community fair in your town for the month, you've secured a local celebrity to speak, or you're repeating a successful event from the previous year. These details can capture the attention of local media and increase the likelihood of coverage.

The person you speak to may not have reported many mental health stories before, so be prepared to explain terms or direct them to other resources for more information. MINDFRAME provides valuable resources in this regard. Additionally, Wayahead is more than happy to provide a quote about your event that you can include in your media release.

## **Contact:**

Your local media outlets are tasked with covering interesting news, not providing free advertising. Therefore, don't assume that they will automatically cover your story. It's acceptable to follow up to inquire whether the story is being considered, but always be polite and avoid pressuring them for an immediate answer.

Maintain communication with your media contacts even after the event concludes. Even if they haven't covered the story yet, providing them with good photos and details about the event's success may make it more newsworthy. Regardless of the outcome, remember to express gratitude for their time and consideration.



To

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Subject

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[Insert date]

[Insert headline – keep it short and simple, you want it to be attention grabbing and ideally less than 7 words]

[Write a short paragraph summarising your event. Remember to cover ‘who, what, when, where, and why’ your event is on or about, as this is often the most important information for a journalist.]

Mental health issues will affect 1 in 5 Australians every year.

Anxiety disorders are often the most

common mental health challenge, followed by depression.

[Include a relevant quote from a local, noteworthy person here.]

Mental Health Month is co-ordinated every October by Wayahead. This year the theme is ‘Lets talk about it’. People across NSW & Australia come together during the month to hold events and promote good mental health and wellbeing in their local communities.

These events are a useful reminder for all of us to think about the mental health of ourselves and those around us. It’s also a good excuse to get out there and have some fun!

[Include final quote(s) and any final information relevant to your event such as when it’s on and how people can RSVP or attend]

Contact details

Name: Your name

Phone: Your telephone or mobile

Email: Your email

---

SEND





## Tips:

- Ensure accuracy in spelling and grammar by having a couple of people proofread your media release before distribution.
- Keep the release short and engaging. Journalists are often busy and receive numerous releases, so make it easy for them to grasp why your event is newsworthy.
- Use simple language and avoid exaggeration. Your event doesn't need to be the next big thing to capture local interest, so be enthusiastic without overhyping.
- Inform them about the availability of photos or the opportunity to take photos at the event. Compelling visuals can enhance the chances of publication.

Include quotes from interesting spokespeople, such as representatives from local businesses, organizations (including Wayahead), attendees, or prominent community members involved in the event. Ask them why they believe your event is significant for the community to demonstrate its newsworthiness.



# Example events

Each year we see some incredible, creative, exciting events happening during Mental Health Month, and we've featured a few of them here to inspire you!

## Rainbow Run - Orange

The Rainbow Run provided an opportunity for families and people of all ages to come together and celebrate Mental Health Month and the LGBTIQ+ community. Participants were invited to complete a fun run through a local park while getting covered in rainbow colour powder. Participants were also given the opportunity to utilise rainbow accessories to brighten the event. Following completion of the Rainbow Run participants were invited to enjoy a barbeque and visit a range of information and activity stalls. The Rainbow Run aimed at providing community members with the opportunity to engage in an interactive outdoor activity and to access mental health information in a relaxed and comfortable environment.



## Peace Garden

The Beach school utilised the grant to build a peace garden for the students. This was built with the students and staff. The garden is primarily full of native grasses and is placed where the students can sit, take time out and reflect. They have two ceramics teachers at the school who assisted the students to make ceramic people and animals that were dispersed throughout the garden. This garden further added to the ambiance and peace of the school, essential for helping the students to work with their self-regulation.



## Art 4 Connection

Art 4 Connection Workshop & Creative Presentation is an event incorporating a 'hands on' workshop that will explore how art facilitates wellbeing, insight and healing through expression. The workshop will be facilitated by four specialist Art Therapists who work with individuals and local community groups with a diverse range of needs. It will also include presentations by all four art therapists which will provide the overarching framework and themes for the day. Morning tea and lunch will also be provided.

## Misery Loves Company – Sharing the Darkness to Lighten the Load

The event was held for CALD community workers working in the Canterbury Bankstown Local Government Area. It featured a Vicarious Trauma, Burnout, and Self-Care training session, followed by lunch and a soft pastel drawing workshop with a theme of 'We All Have a Role to Play'. The aim of the event was to support the workers in learning how to take care of their own mental health and well-being so that they can provide the best care for their CALD clients and serve as good examples. During the soft pastel drawing workshop, participants learned how to create artwork that will serve as a reminder of their role and the importance of self-care before looking after others.



## Mental Health Festival

To raise awareness for mental health during MHM, UOW hosted a 'Mental Health Festival' with a goal of promoting mental health on a community level, in an enriching, entertaining and educational way. The festival will incorporate events and activities that promote mental health maintenance and awareness, for both the individual and the community. A core goal of this event was creating an environment where students felt comfortable conversing with friends and mental health providers, to enrich their understanding of mental health and increase their wellbeing.



## Celebrate Your Inner Hero

As part of the "Claymore Fusion" network of stakeholders, the claymore neighbourhood action association inc are involved in organising the annual Claymore Mental Health month event. This takes the form of an expo bringing together a variety of Health and Wellbeing services as well as activities such as mindfulness colouring, massage, and a free, healthy lunch. Through funding they were able to incorporate a Laughter Yoga Workshop. The Laughter Workshop provided a free open session to all attendees promoting stress relief and emotional healing. Specifically, it combines fun group interaction, deep breathing, pressure point clapping, childlike playfulness, and finishes with a guided relaxation meditation. Given the anxiety around cost-of-living pressures, covid re-emergence and specifically Claymore tenancy relocation process, this type of mental health support is highly needed.

## Batiba Guwiyal Healing and Cultural Renewal Workshop

Batiba Guwiyal Healing and Cultural Renewal Workshop's includes three morning workshops held across three days based on healing and psychological empowerment that addresses the impacts of trans-generational trauma and domestic and sexual violence, through Yarning Circles, Aboriginal arts and cultural practices, expressive arts therapy, capacity building activities and trauma education. Workshops will also be open to all Aboriginal women in the community.

## Pride Day

All ages LGBTIQ+ and straight allies event – Pride March and Fun Day in the Park. The purpose of the Pride March is to highlight and celebrate the diversity of the Central West community. It will hold floats of various organisations and businesses, such as Australian Post, banks, headspace Dubbo, Uniting and Community Members. The Fun Day in the park will involve various mental health stakeholders setting up stalls to provide information of relevant services, as well as activities for all ages including Zumba lessons, taekwondo sessions, face painting, jumping castle, speeches from members of the LGBTIQ+ community and live music.





# Mental Health Month Starter Kit

**Wayahead<sup>®</sup>**



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