

TUNING IN MEANS BEING PRESENT

IT MEANS BEING AWARE OF WHAT IS HAPPENING WITHIN YOU, AND IN THE WORLD AROUND YOU.

BEING PRESENT BY TUNING IN HAS BEEN SHOWN TO HELP BUILD SELF-AWARENESS, HELP MAKE EFFECTIVE CHOICES, REDUCE THE IMPACT OF WORRY, AND BUILD POSITIVE CONNECTIONS.



Ground yourself by connecting to the earth



Elder and adult conversing. The linework represents the vast knowledge that elders can provide when seeking guidance.

THE BIGGER PICTURE

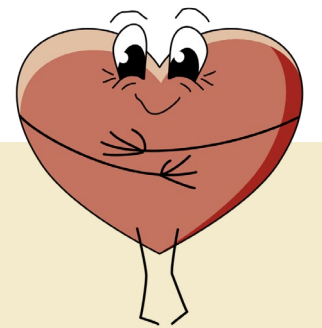
Often, we only talk about mental health as an individual responsibility, but lots of things outside our control contribute to mental health.

Things like discrimination, inequality, intergenerational trauma, access to services, and government policies can negatively impact people's and communities' mental health.

During Mental Health Month we all have a chance to Tune In to things we can do as individuals for our own, and others' mental health, but without organisations and groups doing work on the bigger picture, outside factors will continue to impact individual's mental health and wellbeing.

At WayAhead we work to change the Bigger Picture through research, advocacy, policy, submissions, and community support. Our work is evidence-based and co-designed with people with lived experience. We work with other organisations that share our values to support and promote their work.

Creating a world where people can create their own best possible mental health means creating a world where all systems, structures, policies, and services support this vision. We aren't there yet, but we'll keep working until we get there.



Practice self compassion

YOU CAN TUNE IN TO MANY THINGS:

Tune in to yourself – What can you sense right now? What can you feel?

Tune in to others – What might people around you be feeling? How can we connect?

Tune in to your communities – What is happening that you can be part of, or that you can help others be part of?

Tune in to stigma – How do attitudes and understandings of mental health and wellbeing impact on people's ability to live the lives they want? How can we help?

UNDERSTANDING DIFFERENT CONCEPTS

Here are some definitions of the language we use to speak about mental health and wellbeing. It helps us work together from a space of shared understanding and meaning.

Mental health

Mental health is the general state of a person's mental wellbeing. Similar to physical health, we all have a current state of mental health, which can change over time, and in response to the world. It's also sometimes called "mental wellbeing". Just like there are things we can do to improve our overall physical health, there are things we can do to improve our overall mental health in a way that works for us as individuals.

Social and Emotional Wellbeing

This term originated with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and is often preferred to "mental health". It describes the social, emotional, cultural, and spiritual wellbeing of a person, and acknowledges the ways these can interact to impact a person's wellbeing. The term also recognises the importance of connection to Country, and that policies (past and present), past and current events, social attitudes (such as racism), and intergenerational trauma can all impact an individual's social and emotional wellbeing.

Mental distress

A term used to describe a negative experience a person may be having, rather than a diagnostic term. It can present at any point of the "wellness" to "illness" spectrum. Everyone will experience mental distress, not just people who have been given a mental health related diagnosis.

Mental ill-health

A state where our mental health negatively impacts on our ability to think, feel and respond to others. This may occur in response to life events and stressors and may resolve over time or when stress is reduced. However, if it is ongoing or worsening, it's important to seek help in a way that is safe for you.

Mental illness

This term is generally best to avoid. Many people with lived experiences of mental ill-health don't apply this term to themselves, it's important to check with people what terms they prefer.

The term "mental illness" can add to social stigma surrounding mental health, so it's important to understand what it refers to, and to avoid using it where possible.

Mental illness refers specifically to a clinical diagnosis. These diagnoses usually describe various mental health symptoms which can interfere with an individual's cognitive, emotional or social abilities. The "illness" diagnosis-based medical model of mental health is only one way of understanding mental health.

Individuals who receive a diagnosis may strongly identify with their diagnosis as a way to understand themselves and find support, or they might not, as the diagnosis might not appropriately describe their experience.

Many people who have received diagnoses prefer not to use the term "mental illness" as it reduces complex experiences to a medical diagnosis.

Mental illnesses are diverse, and each can occur with a varying degree of severity.

The preferred term is "person/people with a lived experience of mental illness/ mental ill-health" though if referring to an individual, check how they would like to be referred to.

It's important to use person-first language, that is "person with a lived experience of mental ill health" rather than "mentally ill person".

MENTALHEALTHMONTH.ORG.AU

WayAhead acknowledge the Gadigal people of the Eora Nation as the traditional custodians of this land and pay respects to Elders both past and present.

The Aboriginal art that is included in this years Mental Health Month campaign has been contributed by Tylah Lomas, proud Kamilaroi woman. The goanna is the totem of her tribe.

WayAhead acknowledges and actively supports the culturally diverse community we work in. This includes recognising and working with the Indigenous community, the LGBTI community, multicultural Australia and people living with a mental health condition.

WayAhead
Mental Health Association NSW

WayAhead is an ACNC registered Australian Charity, QIP accredited and funded by the NSW Government.



Mental Health Month is an initiative of WayAhead - Mental Health Association NSW

Facebook: @mentalhealthNSW | Twitter: @mentalhealthNSW | Instagram: @wayaheadmentalhealth | Website: wayahead.org.au



Tune In
this
MENTAL HEALTH MONTH

MENTAL HEALTH MONTH
OCTOBER

TUNE IN TO YOURSELF

Tuning In to yourself can start with checking in with yourself and asking a simple question: “what can I sense right now?” See, touch, taste, smell, and listen to the world around you and experience the way it makes you feel. You can also ask the question “how do I feel right now?” Identifying what you feel can improve awareness of your surroundings, help focus your mind and understand what is going on inside you.

Tuning in to yourself can also mean identifying things that help or harm your own mental health.

For example, exercise may help improve your mental health and engaging in conflict might negatively impact your mental health.

How can I tune in to myself?

- Meditating
- Learning about and practicing Deep Listening (Winhangadhurinya in the Wiradjuri language; Dadirri in the Ngan’gikurunggurr and Ngen’giwumirri languages)
- Finding silence
- Connecting to Country and Ancestors
- Going for a walk
- Being in nature
- Journaling
- Practicing self-care
- Doing something creative – drawing, painting, knitting
- Creating a morning ritual



TUNE IN TO COMMUNITIES

You can tune in to communities by considering groups and networks you are part of and the activities that take place within them. How can you make communities and activities more welcoming, open or easier to access for those experiencing difficulty with their mental health and wellbeing?

This might mean something specific, like hiring a bus to pick people up to go to community events, or more general, like thinking about community feelings after a natural disaster.

How can I tune in to communities?

- Joining a local hobby group
- Taking part in community rituals, ceremonies, and events
- Reviewing accessibility options for groups you are part of
- Reaching out to community members who might be isolated
- Starting wellbeing activities at work
- Attending free community events – libraries or councils often run them
- Creating a range of different options for people looking to connect
- Making sure your community/workplace/group takes part in Mental Health Month



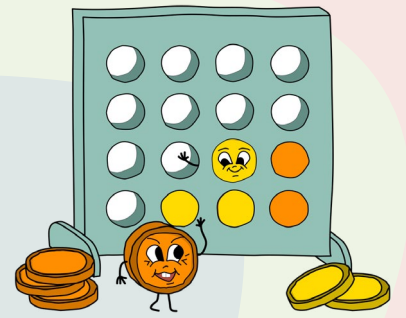
Goanna mother and young, representing the importance of family in healing.

MENTAL HEALTH MONTH.ORG.AU

Each October, Mental Health Month gives us the opportunity to raise awareness of mental health and wellbeing. All across Australia, events and campaigns are run, and in NSW Mental Health Month is coordinated by WayAhead.

Mental Health Month is a chance to promote activities and ideas that can have a positive impact on our daily lives and the lives of others. These events and messages are tied together with a specific theme, and this year’s is “Tune In”.

Connect with friends



TUNE IN TO OTHERS

Tuning into others can build positive connections. Can you imagine what other people might be feeling and why? Does someone you love seem a bit down? Maybe you can head over and help them out with a chore or task, or just sit and have a casual chat.

Alternatively, if you’re having difficulty connecting with others, it can help to let them know that. Sharing with others that things are a bit tough right now could help them understand how you’re feeling.

How can I tune in to others?

- Asking others how they are feeling
- Sharing a hobby
- Teaching them about something you love
- Helping with chores
- Playing games
- Staying in together
- Chatting on the phone
- Sharing a cuppa

TUNE IN TO STIGMA

You can tune in to stigma by considering the misconceptions, prejudice or barriers that you or others face regarding mental health and wellbeing. You can help increase understanding by making sure mental health and wellbeing are not taboo topics in your community, and letting others know if they are engaging in stigma-promoting behaviour.

How can I tune in to stigma?

- Challenging negative ideas around mental health
- Normalise talking about mental health and wellbeing
- Avoiding terms which can stigmatise mental health
- Engaging people with lived experience of mental ill-health as consultants
- Speak out about stigma when you notice it

You can find more information about stigma and how to be an ally through the *WayAhead Ally Pack*.

DO YOU NEED SOME MORE SUPPORT?

mentalhealthmonth.org.au - access all our Mental Health Month resources

wayahead.org.au - find out more about WayAhead’s programs and resources

wayaheaddirectory.org.au - an online directory of mental health and community services, searchable by location and support type.

1300 794 991 - WayAhead’s Mental Health Information Service (9am – 5pm, Monday – Friday) for advice and support.

(02) 9912 3851 - If you are from a culturally or linguistically diverse background, you can also contact the Transcultural Mental Health Centre Information and Clinical Consultation Line.

1300 554 660 - Carer Connection Helpline in NSW, supported by Mental Health Carers NSW assists mental health carers in navigating the NSW mental health system.

Finally, if you don’t find the right help the first time, it’s important to keep trying. It’s okay to ask again or to talk to another mental health professional until you find the support and help that is right for you.

24 HOUR SUPPORT LINES

For all emergencies call 000

13 11 14 – Lifeline, available 24/7

1300 659 467 – Suicide Call Back Service

1300 789 978 – MensLine Australia

1800 55 1800 – Kids Help Line

1800 656 463 – Domestic Violence line

1800 737 732 (1800Respect) – National Sexual Assault, Domestic & Family Violence counselling service

1800 250 015 – Alcohol & Drug Info Services (ADIS)