

Office for Mental Health and Wellbeing
Spring Newsletter
It's Mental Health Month!



Message from the Coordinator-General OMHW - Dr Elizabeth Moore

Welcome to the Spring Edition of the Office for Mental Health and Wellbeing Newsletter. It's October so that means its Mental Health Month and we are highlighting this very important time of year in this edition.

Mental Health Day on 10 October is an annual event, celebrated in over 100 countries in an effort to raise community awareness and understanding of mental illness, reduce the stigma and discrimination associated with mental illness and promote positive mental health and wellbeing.

Here in the ACT [The Mental Health Community Coalition ACT](#) plays an important role in coordinating mental health focussed events each October. They are responsible for planning a diverse calendar of events which bring the community together in support of people living with mental illness and their carers. *The Mental Health Month theme for 2020 is 'Conversations and Connection'.*

Mental Health Month encourages all of us to focus on our mental health and wellbeing. It is a yearly reminder of the responsibility we all share to reach out and support people across our community. During this month I encourage you to take time out to reflect and to be kind to each other.

The Office is a part of the Mental Health Month Advisory Committee that supports the planning of this month. Following its success last year, the committee is asking ACT workplaces to take a break and make mental health a priority by hosting your own '**Wellbeing Priori-Tea!**' In true community spirit, my team and I will be hosting our own Priori-Tea Picnic in the Park and we will be focusing on **conversations and connections** to support mental health and wellbeing. To find out how you can host your own follow this [link](#).

This year has affected us all in different ways and pushed us to be more adaptable and agile in how we approach everyday situations, in our home life, with friends and in our workplaces. Now more than ever, feeling connected to each other and our communities gives us a sense of belonging and brings meaning to our lives.

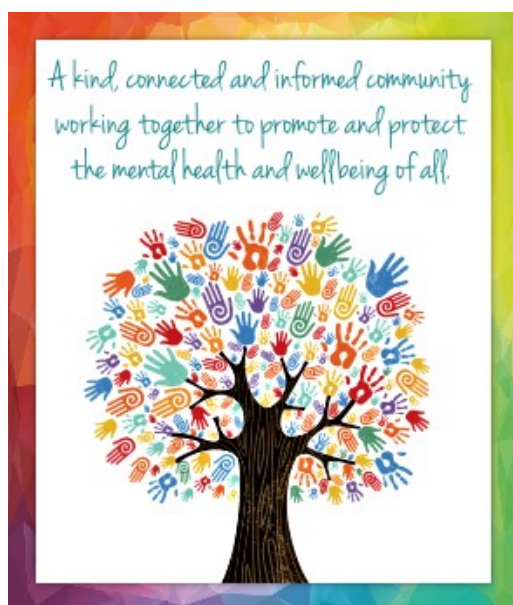
I encourage you during October to get active by joining the walks or sports events, challenge yourself to eat more healthily, stay connected by participating in some of the wide range of social events or hosting a prior-tea, adopt better sleeping patterns into your routine, cheer on the winners of mental health month awards and most of all be kind to yourself!

We hope that you can be a part of Mental Health Month in some way this year. In this edition we will be sharing some of the important events that are happening this month and we hope to see you online or in person.

I hope you find this Newsletter interesting and useful. As always, remember that we are all in this together!

Kind regards

Elizabeth



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MENTAL HEALTH MONTH ACT

CLICK ON THE LOGO TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT WHAT'S HAPPENING IN OCTOBER AND HOW YOU OR YOUR TEAM CAN GET INVOLVED. HAVE THAT CONVERSATION!

Some Special Mental Health Month Events

*** 10 October - Official Launch Event**

Mental Health Month ACT will be launched virtually in 2020 to support the mental wellbeing of the Canberra community and the impacts the events of this year have had on all of us, in a COVID safe way. This includes a special interview with **Dr Elizabeth Moore**, Coordinator General, OMHW.

*** 18 October – National Walk for Mental Health (Mental Health Foundation Australia)**

The MHFA looks to build the National Mental Health Month Awareness Campaign in bigger and better ways, and this year will be no different. They are changing their ways to reach out to as many Australians as possible to

raise mental health awareness. One of the most looked forward to events, is this National Walk for Mental Health in ACT.

* **29 October** – [ACT Mental Health Awards](#)

There are many exceptional people and initiatives working to promote understanding, awareness, and to improve the mental health and wellbeing of the Canberra community. The ACT Mental Health Month Awards aim to recognise the achievements of individuals, groups, organisations, businesses and initiatives in the area of Mental Health in the ACT. The Awards are a sector-wide initiative coordinated by the Mental Health Community Coalition ACT (MHCC ACT) and implemented by the ACT Mental Health Month Advisory Committee.

We also encourage you to get active by joining one of the [Walk and Talk](#) events, challenge yourself to eat more healthily by attending a [Cooking Workshop](#) with a former Master Chef contestant or attending a [Puri-tea](#). Stay connected by attending one of the many webinars, watch your inbox in the coming days for more details!

Webinars

There are a number of public webinars being planned throughout October as part of Mental Health Month activities feature such topics as:

- LifeSpan - an update on the program of work
- Indigenous Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Issues
- Mental Health Advisory Council - Mental Health and Alcohol and Other Drugs
- Older Persons Mental Health
- Child & Young People - Community of Practice

There will also be webinars targeting specific interest groups including a presentation and a discussion on Safewards and Connecting with People, two of the strategies that ACT Health are implementing to keep our people safe, both on the wards and in the community.

Details and registration information for the Mental Health Month webinar series will be provided under separate cover. Watch your inbox!

Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate generously granted the Mental Health Community Coalition (MHCC) two bus-back ads for a 12-month period to support Mental Health Month and other MHCC activities throughout the coming year.



Assisting with the unveiling and final inspection before the bus takes to the streets of Canberra are (left to right): Stephen Sedgwick – OMHW Social Work Student; Anthony O'Hara – Volunteer Educator and Board member MIEACT; Alison Hall - Communications and Events Officer Mental Health Community Coalition ACT; Brooke Dyason - ACT LifeSpan Education Suicide Prevention Officer; and Ciaran Bird - ACT LifeSpan Health Suicide Prevention Officer



R U OK? Day and World Suicide Prevention Day – 10 September 2020

The Office for Mental Health and Wellbeing has joined forces with **Standby – Support after Suicide** to implement the community strategies of the LifeSpan Integrated Suicide Prevention Framework which is currently underway in the ACT. The aim of the community strategies is to provide opportunities for the

ACT community to play a key role in increasing awareness about the importance of suicide prevention.

On Thursday 10 September, in partnership with the **PCYC** and **MIEACT**, **Standby** and the **ACT LifeSpan** team marked R U OK? Day and World Suicide Prevention Day with a **Community BBQ** at the PCYC, Grattan Court, Erindale. **Minister for Mental Health Shane Rattenbury** spoke about the importance of working together as a community to provide a safety net to prevent suicide, and Stephen from MIEACT spoke about help seeking and reaching out if you are feeling vulnerable and need support. Students from Erindale College were in attendance. The Standby Team provided information and support. R U OK? Day information and merchandise was featured. And the sausages were extra delicious also!

Read more about - Standby - Support after Suicide



LifeSpan Update - September 2020

LifeSpan, Australia's first integrated suicide prevention program, is being trialled by the Black Dog Institute in the Australian Capital Territory.



Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Suicide Prevention

Developing strong partnerships with community groups and community-controlled organisations to ensure tailored, culturally safe strategies to address Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander suicides

- An Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Working Group was established under ACT LifeSpan to lead suicide prevention work in the region
- A needs assessment has been conducted with community representatives and service providers, highlighting the need for a culturally appropriate suicide prevention service
- 10 senior community members to be trained as trainers in Wesley LifeForce Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Suicide Prevention in November to capacity build within the community
- Development of a dedicated Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander suicide strategy underway, with a community forum planned to ensure direct community input and buy-in



Increasing the Capacity of Our Health Services

Improving emergency and follow-up care, increasing the use of evidence-based treatment for suicidality, and equipping primary care to identify and support people in distress

- 4 workshops were delivered to 59 psychologists, allied health professionals and GPs for Advanced Training in Suicide Prevention courses
- StepCare has commenced rollout in general practices within the Capital Health Network (CHN), and more than 250 patients have been screened for depression, anxiety, and suicidal thinking

- Over 630 responses to our study examining experiences of emergency care, which will help shape improvements in partnership with ACT Health teams
- Planning is underway to train 600 ACT Health clinicians in Connecting with People and establish a train the trainer team for ongoing sustainability of this evidence-informed model of care
- Establishment of the Health Working Group, which is currently focused on implementing the Connecting with People training across ACT Health



Building Resilience in Schools

Youth Aware of Mental Health (YAM) is a schools-based program with the strongest evidence for improving suicidal behaviours, and the flexibility to be integrated into a broad range of school environments. YAM is being complemented by efforts to increase suicide prevention in schools amongst school counsellors, staff and parents

- Establishment of Schools Working Group that guided the implementation of YAM in ACT across public, independent and Catholic schools systems
- 51 YAM programs have been rolled out to 7 schools (including both public and Catholic), with more than 770 students completing the entire 3-week program and further schools already booked into 2021
- The ACT Education Directorate has rolled out Applied Suicide Intervention Skills (ASIS) to 34 key school staff, with 8 more training workshops scheduled across 2020/21
- More than 300 individuals who primarily work with young people have also completed QOR training

[Further information about YAM is available here](#)



Engaging the Community to be Part of the Change

Promoting uptake of Question, Persuade, Refer (QPR) training, evidence-based, online training to arm the community to identify and support those at risk and driving campaigns with clear calls to action to drive community involvement

- The CHN rollout of QPR training has been followed by the rollout of QPR by the ACT Education Directorate and WorkSafe ACT, targeting uptake amongst general community members, school staff as well as parents, and workplaces respectively
- 883 community gatekeepers (including GPs) have completed QPR training - 35% of whom primarily work with young people
- 66% of participants reported an increase in confidence to support a suicidal person
- 48% reported an increase in their ability to directly ask someone about suicide
- Over 1,050 responses to our Community Survey across the ACT and a control site - informing our understanding of levels of distress, exposure to suicide and help seeking behaviours

- The Lived Experience-themed Suicide Prevention Colaborative in February 2019 brought together local stakeholders (such as Roses in the Ocean and MIEACT) to work collaboratively
- BDI Facebook advertising for QPR training has significantly increased uptake of registrations and completions across the ACT community
- Strategies are now in place to promote QPR as part of R U OK? Day 2020 events, social media promotion and workplace engagement in partnership with Healthier Work



Data-Driven Decision Making

Improving safe and purposeful media reporting of suicide through Mindframe Plus training and engagement with local media outlets, improving the quality and timeliness of suicide data and exploring opportunities to improve the confidence and competency of frontline workers

- Mindframe Plus online workshop scheduled for September with further workshops and media engagement to follow
- Black Dog Institute suicide audits have been provided to local stakeholders every 12 months through the Improving Public Safety Working Group. These audits contain the most timely and detailed suicide data ever available in the ACT
- ACT LifeSpan has provided education and support to the AFP and ACTAS through data linking and training recommendations, discussing developments in data and the PACER program
- Efforts underway to collate available from the coroner, hospitals, policing and ambulance services to create the Mindframe Plus workshop took place in 2018 to key ACT Health staff
- Most comprehensive picture of suicide deaths and attempts in the ACT yet available



Science, Compassion and Action

The Black Dog Institute remains at the forefront of applying cutting edge suicide prevention research in real-world settings. We continue to leverage our considerable expertise in the development and implementation, evaluation, and data support to maximise suicide prevention outcomes across diverse communities.

We are also expanding our activities through:

- The creation of our Integrated Suicide Prevention Network and tailored support offerings
- Development and evaluation of a soon to be released online suicide prevention training program, Recognise and Respond, that leverages the latest online education tools to create an interaction, practical learning experience
- Training of accredited YAM instructors to expand the reach of this critical preventative program across Australia
- Development of a white paper detailing practical actions government and non-government policy makers can take to help address suicide

[Learn more about BDI and LifeSpan here](#)

Find out more at lifespan.org.au



QUESTION, PERSUADE, REFER (QPR) TRAINING IS A FREE ONLINE COURSE THAT WILL HELP YOU

- identify warning signs of a suicide crisis
- confidently talk to someone about their suicidal thoughts
- understand how to connect someone to professional care

SIGN UP FOR QPR TRAINING TODAY

www.chnact.org.au/mental-health-programs-hp

QPR for individuals living in the ACT region is free.



ONLY TAKES
60 MINUTES



healthier
work

QPR for Business

is available to all ACT based workplaces, with no limitations on how many employees can have access to it. Please [register your interest here](#).

October is also National Safe Work Month and this year the focus is on COVID-19

October is National Safe Work Month (NSWM), a time when WorkSafe ACT asks all employers and workers to reflect on their workplace safety culture and practices.

This year, the theme of NSWM is 'Work Health and Safety through COVID-19', which recognises the impacts of COVID-19 on our local businesses, employers and workers. As we face the challenges of COVID-19, good work health and safety practices and risk management are more important than ever. During NSWM, take the opportunity to assess the work health and safety methods in your workplaces and make improvements to make sure they are still effective.

As part of NSWM, WorkSafe ACT has launched its new look and feel [website](#), along with Territory specific webinars and links to resources to support employers and workers. WorkSafe's Healthier Work program has also introduced a Healthier Work Day [photo](#) competition, encouraging local workplaces to submit a photo or video showing their healthy work initiatives.

More information about NSWM is on the WorkSafe ACT [website](#) and Healthier Work [website](#).

WORKSAFE

ACT SAFE + HEALTHY WORKPLACES



Jodie Griffiths-Cook, the ACT Public Advocate and Children and Young People Commissioner (PACYPC), asked that we relay the following message to our readers:

"Part of my job in the ACT Human Rights Commission is to make things better for children and young people in the ACT. I'm really interested in hearing directly from children and young people, and not just from the adults who work with them. The [Young Thinker Forum](#) is an opportunity for any child or young person under the age of 25 years old to get involved and tell me what they think about any community or social issue that they feel strongly about. Given recent events, I am particularly interested in knowing how COVID-19 is impacting the children and young people of the ACT. But children and young people can tell me about anything, even if it's not related to COVID-19."

Read More

**CANBERRA
STRONG
TOGETHER**

For updates, visit
covid19.act.gov.au



Connect in Canberra is an information hub to help you stay in the loop, keep connected, be part of your community and get assistance and support if you need it. We've pulled together information from across Government and the community in a range of areas, from finding the right support, to getting involved in your community, to keeping occupied and active.

MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES

For the latest information about COVID-19 in the ACT, please visit the [ACT Health Directorate website](#).

Black Dog Institute have been preparing a range of resources targeted at supporting mental wellbeing during Covid-19. This includes resources and referral pathways for individuals, schools and workplaces, guidance for health professionals and finally policy recommendations. New materials which are currently under development <https://blackdoginstitute.org.au/coronavirus-anxiety-resources>

Websites with information regarding **mental health and COVID-19** that you also might find useful:

- [Australian Government Department of Health](#) - COVID-19 health alert including information and support
- [Australian Psychological Society](#) - COVID-19 information for Australians
- [Beyond Blue](#) - Looking after your mental health during the coronavirus outbreak
- [Beyond Blue](#) - Online forum - Coping during the Coronavirus outbreak
- [Emerging Minds](#) - Talking to children about natural disasters, traumatic events, or worries about the future
- [headspace](#) - Support for young people - How to cope with stress related to COVID-19
- [Lifeline](#) - Mental health and wellbeing during the COVID-19 outbreak
- [MindSpot](#) - COVID-19, Staying mentally and physically well
- [Phoenix Australia](#) - COVID-19 tips for self-care and families
- [ReachOut](#) - 10 ways to take care of yourself during coronavirus
- [Ahead for Business](#) - Support for small businesses affected by adverse events
- [Centres for Disease Control and Prevention](#) - Managing anxiety and stress
- [World Health Organization \(WHO\)](#) - Mental health and psychosocial considerations during COVID-19 outbreak

If you are having very strong feelings of worry, unease or fear and you are struggling to cope it is important to seek support

Lifeline Australia 13 11 14
[Lifeline crisis support chat](#)

Beyond Blue: 1300 224 636
[Beyond Blue online chat](#)

Suicide Call Back Service: 1 300 659 467
[Online chat and video chat counselling](#)

Kids Helpline: 1800 551 800
[Kids Helpline WebChat counselling](#)

MensLine Australia: 1300 789 978
[Online counselling](#)

ACT Government COVID-19 Translated Resources

For Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) community members, accessing advisory information on COVID-19 and government restrictions can be challenging if English is not your first language. [The ACT Government](#) have developed a range of resources that have been translated into 14 key languages to ensure these advisory messages are reaching all members of our community. Translated materials such as safety plans and recovery initiatives are available on the [ACT COVID-19 website](#), and the [ACT Community Services Directorate](#) have important COVID-19 information on their website in plain English and Easy English. Additionally, the ACT Community Services Directorate have launched a new [Connect in Canberra website](#), linking to services and programs for all Canberrans to access financial and legal support, food relief, and assistance accessing local programs and resources during COVID-19.

- [To access translated COVID-19 advice and information materials, click here.](#)
- [To access plain English and Easy English COVID-19 information, click here.](#)
- [To access the Connect in Canberra website for extra support resources, click here.](#)

NEW FACES!

Welcome Ciaran Bird and Pauline Gallacher to the OMWH team.



Ciaran Bird, Health Suicide Prevention Officer

Ciaran joins the Office as the Health Suicide Prevention Officer. His previous role was with Adult Community Mental Health Services where he was the Model of Care implementation officer. Ciaran is an experienced mental health practitioner with clinical and managerial backgrounds in Custodial and Community Mental Health.

Ciaran completed his Bachelor of Nursing at the University of Canberra in 2009, followed by a Graduate Certificate in Mental Health Nursing through University of Canberra, and a Graduate Certificate in Clinical Management from the Australian College of Nursing. He is currently completing his Master of Business Administration in Change Management through Australian Graduate School of Management at New South Wales Business School.

Pauline Gallacher, Project Officer

I'm originally from the West Coast of Scotland and very proud of my Scottish roots! I have been in Australia for eight years and I became an Australian Citizen in May this year. My husband and I did a lot of travelling across Australia in a camper van back in 2014 and we also lived in WA for a few years before returning back here to settle in the ACT in 2018.

In June this year I commenced as Project Officer for the Office for Mental Health and Wellbeing and I have enjoyed working in a very supportive and welcoming team. My role is incredibly varied and I am enjoying the challenge and contributing to enhancing the mental health and wellbeing of our community here in Canberra. My background is twenty years' experience working in the Government and Community Sector in Scotland and Australia. I have worked in some interesting project coordination roles and I have experience working directly with different client groups as a Case Manager and Residential Child Care Worker. The sectors I have worked in previously are Specialist Education, Disability Services & NDIS, Dementia Medical Research, Kinship Care, Early Years, Residential Child Care and Youth Services. I believe that having direct experience in these different areas has given me a good understanding of how they are all intricately linked and connected.

When I am not working I enjoy bush walking, trips to the beautiful NSW coast (especially Jervis Bay), looking after all my houseplants, I love anything to do with interior design and have recently taken up art classes to explore my creative side.

Comfort food can be healthy too!

Spring is fully here and it's time to lighten things up a bit as we prepare for the active summer time. Try this 'pasta' replacement as a transition! Low carb and delicious.



Zucchini Rollatini

You can keep this cheesy dish vegetarian or add ground meat if you like!

- 2 Large zucchini
- ½ teaspoon salt
- Fresh black pepper to taste
- 1 cup marinara sauce (your favourite brand in a jar for a quick recipe)
- 1 large egg
- 2/3 cup ricotta cheese
- ½ cup Pecorino Romano cheese (plus extra for serving)
- ¼ cup chopped fresh basil
- 1 garlic clove, minced

- ¾ cup shredded mozzarella cheese

Preheat oven to 200C

1. Cut zucchini lengthwise into approximately .6cm slices (use a mandolin for uniform slices)
2. Season both sides of the zucchini with ½ tsp salt and pepper and grill on a grill pan over high heat until pliable and grill marks form, but not fully cooked (about 2 minutes on each side) This will help reduce excess moisture in the final dish.
3. In a medium bowl, beat the egg then mix together with ricotta, Pecorino Romano, basil, garlic 1/8 tsp salt and 1/8 tsp pepper.
4. Spread ricotta mixtures (about 1 ½ tablespoons) evenly onto each zucchini slice, spreading to cover.
5. Roll up slices and arrange seam side down in a prepared dish. Top each with 1 tbsp marinara sauce and 1 tbsp mozzarella cheese and tightly cover with foil.
6. Bake 20 minutes or until the cheese is hot and melted.

Other Newsletters you may want to check out:

Emerging Minds Newsletter ([view it here](#))

ACT Multicultural Community eNews Bulletin ([view it here](#))



We acknowledge the traditional custodians of the ACT, the Ngunnawal people. We acknowledge and respect their continuing culture and the contribution they make to the life of this city and region.

Thank you for taking the time to read this Newsletter. Please feel free to forward this email on to your network. *Feedback and comments are very welcome.*

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[OMHW Website](#)

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