World Mental Health Day 2020
"Look after your mental health, Australia"

lookafteryourmentalhealthaustralia.org.au

10 OCT

Today is World Mental Health Day

Today - Saturday 10 October - is World Mental Health Day where everyone is encouraged to make a promise to **"Look after your mental health, Australia."**

It is a call to action for the one in five Australians affected by mental illness annually, and for the many more impacted by the current COVID-19 pandemic, and the increased uncertainty and anxiety that has ensued over the last six months.

Mental Health Australia CEO Dr Leanne Beagley says that never before has there been such a spotlight on mental health, mental illness and our general wellbeing. Today - World Mental Health Day – is the perfect day to celebrate how far we have come, and focus on what more we need to do to improve the mental health of our communities.

"Having worked in mental health for more than 30 years, I've never experienced what is happening right now, and not just in Melbourne," said Dr Beagley.

"At first I thought it was only with my family and circle of friends, but people are sharing the fact that it's happening more and more. That's right, thousands of people are talking about their mental health and wellbeing, almost like you'd talk about the weather."

"People asking someone how they are, how they are coping with COVID-19, with lockdown, with the uncertainty. This has become a pleasing norm for 2020. And if we are to take anything good out of the pandemic, then perhaps the return of community engagement and the human spirit to care for each other might just be that good thing."

"Maybe it's the shared challenge of the pandemic, coupled with years of campaigns to reduce stigma and get people talking, and seeking help, but whatever it is, it's improving just how we talk about mental health."

"Has the pandemic been the catalyst for this clear change in our community narrative about our mental health? Perhaps it has. But if the pandemic has made mental health top of mind, then we have to acknowledge the outstanding work of the many organisations, campaigns, and government initiatives over the last decade or more that have made talking about mental health and suicide prevention front of mind."

"And we must also acknowledge the persistent and courageous voices of people living with mental ill health and their carers, and families who have reminded us over, and over, of their right to belong, their right to be safe, and their right to receive the care they need and deserve."

Comedian and World Mental Health Day ambassador Dilruk Jayasinha echoed the thoughts of Dr Beagley in celebrating World Mental Health Day, while also reminding people to Look Up! and look out for messages in the sky this weekend reminding people to "Look after your mental health, Australia."

"As someone who wasted a decade by keeping some of my personal struggles to myself, and having since experienced only positives from talking openly about my mental health, being asked to be an ambassador for World Mental Health Day feels awesome," said Jayasinha.

"My mum recently asked me if she had 'failed me' because I check in with a psychologist from time-to-time, and of course she hasn't and I explained to her that while she taught me how to brush my teeth, that doesn't mean I still don't need to go to the dentist for a check-up every now and then."

"For me making gratitude lists has worked well, especially during lockdown on my own in Melbourne, and for this World Mental Health Day my #MentalHealthPromise is to answer the question "How are you mate?" as truthfully as possible, even if the truth might feel uncomfortable."

To find out more about the campaign, or to make a mental health promise this World Mental Health Day, or throughout the month of October, go to **www.lookafteryourmentalhealthaustralia.org.au.**

And remember:

"Look After Your Mental Health, Australia."

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