

Mindframe media alert

World Mental Health Day 2017: advice for media professionals

10 October 2017

please cascade to all media staff

Special update:

Yesterday, the Institute behind *Mindframe* has rebranded. The Hunter Institute of Mental Health will now be known as **Everymind**. We would like to acknowledge the 20 year partnership we have had with the Australian media and other stakeholders and look forward to continuing our work together as **Everymind**.

For more information, visit www.everymind.org.au/announcement

Today, Australian communities come together to educate, advocate and bring awareness to mental health and mental health issues for **World Mental Health Day**, which also coincides with **National Mental Health Week** (9-15 October) and **Mental Health Month** (NSW).

This week, the *Mindframe* team would like to remind media professionals of the resources available to assist with the accurate and responsible reporting of mental illness and mental health.

Inaccurate, unbalanced or sensationalist stories about mental illness can reinforce common myths and stereotypes and impact significantly on people living with a mental illness.




To ensure reporting of these issues is balanced, increases community understanding and reduces the stigma associated with mental illness; please refer to the following tips:

HELPFUL WAYS TO PRESENT INFORMATION

- ✓ Ensure references to a specific mental illness are accurate and in context
- ✓ Avoid negative language, diminishing language and using medical terminology out of context
- ✓ Consider the impact of disclosure for someone with a mental illness
- ✓ Be mindful of stereotypes such as those which link mental illness and violence or suggest people are unable to work, parent or lead fulfilling lives
- ✓ Seek advice from recommended mental health experts who can assist with providing context and accurate information (see *Mindframe* website for contacts)
- ✓ Include contact details for support services (e.g. GPs) and helpline numbers in your story to provide immediate support for people who are distressed or need information.

Consider the language you use

Certain language can stigmatise people living with a mental illness as well as present inaccuracies about mental illness or mental health care. Some suggestions are below.

Issue 	Problematic 	Preferred 
Certain language sensationalises mental illness and reinforces stigma	Terms such as 'mental patient', 'nutter', 'lunatic', 'psycho', 'schizo', 'deranged', 'mad'	A person is 'living with' or 'has a diagnosis of' a mental illness
Terminology that suggests a lack of quality of life for people with mental illness	Referring to someone with a mental illness as a 'victim', 'suffering from' or 'afflicted with' a mental illness	A person is 'being treated for' or 'someone with' a mental illness
Labelling a person by their mental illness	A person is 'a schizophrenic', 'an anorexic'	A person 'has a diagnosis of', or 'is being treated for' schizophrenia
Descriptions of behaviour that imply existence of mental illness or are inaccurate	Using words such as 'crazed', 'deranged', 'mad', 'psychotic'	The person's behaviour was unusual or erratic
Colloquialisms about treatment can undermine people's willingness to seek help	Using words such as 'happy pills', 'shrinks', 'mental institution'	Accurate terminology for treatments e.g. antidepressants, psychiatrists or psychologists, mental health hospital
Terminology used out of context adds to misunderstanding and trivialises mental illness	Terms like 'psychotic dog', using 'schizophrenic' to denote duality such as a 'schizophrenic economy'	Reword any sentence that uses psychiatric or medical terminology incorrectly or out of context

More detailed information, as well as facts and statistics, can be found on the **Mindframe website** [here](#).

Help-seeking information

To help ensure stories about mental illness do not impact negatively on people who are vulnerable in the community, we recommend adding help-seeking information offering immediate crisis support.

A range of organisations and contact details are below. You can also find more information on the **Mindframe website** [here](#).

National 24/7 Crisis Services

- **Lifeline:** 13 11 14 www.lifeline.org.au
- **Suicide Call Back Service:** 1300 659 467
www.suicidecallbackservice.org.au
- **MensLine Australia:** 1300 78 99 78
www.mensline.org.au
- **beyondblue:** 1300 22 4636
www.beyondblue.org.au

Youth Support Services



24/7 Crisis Support
www.kidshelpline.com.au
1800 55 1800



Direct Clinical Services
www.headspace.org.au
1800 650 890

Self-care for journalists

Reporting mental illness and suicide can also have an impact on the welfare of journalists. To support media professionals *Mindframe*, in consultation with the [DART Centre Asia Pacific](#), has developed self-care resources for media professionals reporting mental illness and suicide. These resources include self-care tips for journalists as well as advice for editors and line managers.

Resources can be found [here](#).

Mindframe can provide media comment or expert advice on media reporting of suicide and/or mental illness. Our spokespeople include:

- Jaelea Skehan, Director, **Everymind**
- Marc Bryant, Program Manager, *Mindframe*

For further information or advice, please visit the [Mindframe website](#) or contact:

- **The *Mindframe* project team**
Tel: 02 4924 6900 (0427 227 503)
Email: mindframe@hnehealth.nsw.gov.au
Twitter: @MindframeMedia
- **The SANE Media Centre**
Tel: 03 9682 5933 Mob: 0407 367 215
Email: media@sane.org
Twitter: @SANEAustralia

World Mental Health Day campaign is an initiative of Mental Health Australia. For more information, and to make your mental health promise, visit: <https://1010.org.au/>