

Mindframe media alert

**Mental Health Week 2015
Advice for media professionals**

30 September 2015
please cascade to all media staff

During October, Australian communities will mark **Mental Health Week** (4-10 October), **World Mental Health Day** (10 October) and **Mental Health Month** (NSW only). In the lead up to these significant events, media professionals are reminded of the *Mindframe* resources available to assist with the 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 experiencing mental illness.

To ensure reporting on 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.

Promote help-seeking

Add general support information to stories:

- ‘Talk to a GP or health professional’
- **SANE Australia Helpline 1800 18 SANE (7263)**
www.sane.org
- **beyondblue support service line 1300 22 46 36**
- **Lifeline 13 11 14** www.lifeline.org.au

Young people

- **headspace 1800 650 890** www.headspace.org.au
- **ReachOut.com** www.reachout.com
- ✓ Add one crisis service to any story about mental illness.
- ✓ Match service information (e.g. age, gender, illness).
- ✓ Provide direct links to services in online content.

Self-care for journalists: If reporting on mental illness causes you distress seek advice from senior staff or a support service. For more information visit the *Mindframe* website.

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

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](#), developed journalism 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](#).

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

- Jaelea Skehan, Director Hunter Institute of Mental Health
- Marc Bryant, Program Manager *Mindframe* National Media Initiative

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

- **The *Mindframe* project team**
Tel: 02 4924 6904 (0427 227 503)
Email: mindframe@hnehealth.nsw.gov.au
Twitter: @MindframeMedia
- **The SANE Media Centre**
Tel: 03 9682 5933 Mob: 0414 427 291
Email: media@sane.org