
MEDIA RELEASE

15 December 2021

NEW MULTICULTURAL COMMUNITY WELLBEING CAMPAIGN ENCOURAGES YOUNG PEOPLE, THEIR FAMILIES AND FRIENDS TO STAY CONNECTED

A new [Multicultural Community Wellbeing Campaign](#) urges all young people, their families and friends in NSW to “stay connected” and, if needed, seek mental health support from the new Australian Government funded mental health service, **Head to Health**.

NSW Multicultural Health Communications Service (MHCS) and NSW Primary Health Networks (PHNs) collaborated with Settlement Services International (SSI) and Special Broadcasting Service (SBS) to put the campaign together.

Assistant Minister to the Prime Minister for Mental Health and Suicide Prevention, David Coleman MP, said all Australians should feel supported and able to access mental health services when and where they need them. This includes making services and resources available in their own language.

“It can be hard to reach out and ask for help, and even harder to name what you need when there is a language or a cultural barrier, or you don’t feel safe,” Assistant Minister Coleman said.

“That’s why this campaign is so important. It uses the experiences of young Australians from multicultural backgrounds to encourage others to reach out for support. There is plenty of support available, we just have to make sure those that need it, know about it and feel safe to reach out.”

NSW Minister for Mental Health Bronnie Taylor said the initiative will spark important conversations among our young people.

“The past two years has been incredibly tough on everyone especially for our young people so it is wonderful to launch a campaign that will strengthen mental health strategies and supports across the board.”

NSW Health Chief Psychiatrist Dr Murray Wright said while our collective mental health has deteriorated during the pandemic – there is still cause for hope.

“The pandemic has caused a lot of stress and hardship, but it has also brought forward many meaningful and positive conversations about mental health and wellbeing.

“As we continue to adapt our lives to living with the virus, make mental health an ongoing topic of conversation. Talk about it around the family dinner table, at community gatherings and with your friends. Importantly, if anyone you know is struggling with stress, depression or anxiety, reassure them that these are all treatable – especially if you get help early on.”

A joint initiative by the NSW Multicultural Health Communication Service and the NSW Primary Health Networks

The [Multicultural Community Wellbeing Campaign](#) includes:

- A partnership with SBS to produce a suite of videos in [English](#) and [Mandarin](#) on ways to “Stay Connected”.
- Radio advertising on SBS language programs and community radio in Arabic, Assyrian, Bangla, Cantonese, Greek, Hindi, Italian, Korean, Mandarin, Nepali or Vietnamese – complemented by interviews with health professionals about mental health on community radio, in community languages.
- A partnership with SSI and youth mental health advocates with lived experience to produce meaningful campaign resources in a range of languages.

The [ANU COVID-19 Impact Monitoring Survey](#) showed that anxiety and worry levels were highest during lockdowns amongst young people 18 to 24 years, Indigenous Australians and those who speak a language other than English.

Unfortunately, ongoing social isolation prompted by loss of employment, restrictions on recreation and reduced social connection continue to be a problem even as COVID-19 restrictions are lifting, and mental health conditions like anxiety continue to be a major concern post-lockdown.

MHCS Director Lisa Woodland said that it is vital for young people and their families to know that there are in-language mental health support services available for them.

“Our aim is to promote key messages to the community through trusted media channels to help increase meaningful conversations between young people, their peers and family members around mental health.”

This initiative urges anyone with mental health concerns who may not be able to access psychological support, to reach out to a new free mental health service, Head to Health, by calling **1800 595 212**. Eleven Head to Health services are now open and taking calls across NSW and ACT and work closely with existing providers including GPs and hospitals, referring people to more intensive mental health care or social supports if needed.

Head to Health services are available in many community languages and the Head to Health website is also available in [Mandarin, Cantonese, Korean, Italian, Arabic, Vietnamese and Greek](#).

The campaign is an example of collaboration between organisations funded by the Australian and NSW governments to address community mental health concerns.

“The collaboration between NSW PHNs and NSW MHCS is an example of our shared commitment to working across federal and state programs to address health challenges together,” said Dr Michael Moore, CEO of Central and Eastern Sydney PHN on behalf of NSW PHNs.

NSW PHNs involved in this initiative are Central and Eastern Sydney, Nepean Blue Mountains, Northern Sydney, South Eastern NSW, South Western Sydney and Western Sydney PHNs.

Media Contact: Sam Shen, MHCS Media and Communication Manager M. 0423 372 629