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Multicultural Australians encouraged to vote with mental health in mind

Australia is a multicultural country, and as our cultural, linguistic and religious diversity continues to grow, we must acknowledge just how difficult the last two years have been for many in our ethnic communities.

From closed state and international borders to community lockdowns and racist sentiments, the impact of the pandemic, and more on multicultural Australians has impacted the mental health of many.

At Mental Health Australia the Embrace Multicultural Mental Health Project works tirelessly to help ensure mental health service providers are culturally aware when it comes to supporting and providing care for all Australians.

This Saturday, as the nation prepares to vote in the 2022 Federal Election, Mental Health Australia CEO Dr Leanne Beagley says the organisation is encouraging all Australians to vote with mental health in mind.

“Over the last few weeks many promises have been made, and policies discussed, and many of those have been focussed in areas of our country heavily populated by multicultural Australians,” said Dr Beagley.

“At this election we’re encouraging everyone to vote with mental health in mind, and for those multicultural Australians that means ensuring essential mental health services reflect and respond well to the emerging and unique needs of their communities, especially if they are to deliver safe, quality and equitable care for everyone.”

“We know that cultural beliefs about what constitutes mental illness and how to respond to it affect how people from migrant and refugee backgrounds, and subsequent generations, display distress, explain symptoms and seek help - including whether they choose to access health services.”

“And we also know that health professionals who try to understand and work with differing cultural views about mental illness will more successfully engage with those living with distress, their families and communities to achieve better mental health outcomes for the individuals concerned and the broader communities in which they live.”

According to Dr Beagley, access to world class public health care is what makes Australia a great country in which to live and feel part of a community, and that access and understanding needs to extend to mental health care as well.

“Through the Embrace Project we work with service providers to improve the cultural competency of their staff and organisations because we know there are already barriers to accessing services, especially in relation to stigma,” said Dr Beagley.

“In addition to greater stigma about mental illness in some communities other barriers to accessing help include language barriers, cultural misunderstandings, and limited knowledge of the wide range of mental health services available.”

“One of the most powerful ways to gain greater insight towards the experiences of mental illness in multicultural communities, and improve access, is to listen to people with a lived experience and sharing their stories.”

“Our Embrace [Multicultural Mental Health Project](#) continues to do this regularly and is a great resource for people to consider when wanting to vote with mental health in mind this Saturday.”

What does it mean to vote with mental health in mind? It means to vote knowing that every issue, every announcement, every debate, every election promise made, has the potential to impact our mental health, and our mental health system.

To find out more go to: <https://mhaustralia.org/2022-election-vote-mental-health-mind>

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