

Happiness on the horizon: mental health and wellbeing of healthcare professionals revealed

New research from Mental Health Australia has revealed how healthcare professionals have been faring on the frontline, and how support from family and friends remains crucial to their wellbeing.

According to the research results, **74%** of healthcare professionals said restrictions resulting from COVID-19 outbreaks have had a negative impact on their mental health and wellbeing. Of the respondents, **86%** said that working in healthcare during the COVID-19 pandemic has increased the amount of stress and pressure they experience in the workplace.

However, the majority (**58%**) said they were feeling more positive about the future and felt they were better able to cope now, compared to working under pandemic conditions last year.

The research also looked at the vaccine rollout and the effect it has had on the workload of healthcare professionals in 2021. A total of **59%** of survey respondents have been part of the vaccine rollout. When asked about their feelings towards this new aspect of their work life, **60%** said they were grateful to be a part of the action plan, felt empowered and like they have a purpose.

The research has been released to mark World Mental Health Day on Sunday 10th October.

Dr Leanne Beagley, CEO of Mental Health Australia, said,

“It has been a difficult time for everyone, especially those working on the healthcare frontline. Healthcare professionals are the most health-literate members of our society, and the gravity of a pandemic situation weighs heavy on their mental health.

The aim of World Mental Health Day this year is to encourage everyone to look out for each other, look up and look forward in the midst of this pandemic, and to hear that people are hopeful for the future and better prepared to cope, is a real positive, but that doesn't mean our job is done.

The mental health impacts of the pandemic will have a long tail, for months and years to come, as the peak national body for mental health in Australia our role is to ensure the system and service delivery reform that has been discussed and reported on, is delivered.”

The Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP) President Dr Karen Price said,

“The ongoing pandemic and vaccine rollout have caused considerable challenges for GPs and their practice teams and have certainly been a stress factor. However, while our workload has increased, this research shows GPs and other healthcare professionals do see the value in our work – the vaccine rollout is critical to protect Australia from COVID-19, and for us to see easing restrictions.



This World Mental Health Day is a timely reminder of the importance of self-care for everyone, we all need to take part in activities that foster good mental health including staying active, eating well, and keeping to a routine.”

Over half (**56%**) of healthcare professionals are fed up, exhausted, and disappointed with the latest lockdown and restrictions in their state, and **41%** said they have been to a psychologist, psychiatrist, or counsellor to discuss their mental health.

Mental Health Australia conducted similar research in September 2020 when Australia was just six months in to the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2020, support from family and friends was highlighted as an important factor for healthcare professionals when it came to their mental health and wellbeing.

That trend has continued into 2021, with **66%** of survey respondents saying their family and friends have been extremely supportive to them during the pandemic, a **12%** increase on last year’s figures. Just over a third (**34%**) of healthcare professionals said they have reached out to a trusted friend or family member for mental health support, an **8%** increase on last year’s figures.

Catching up on favourite TV shows (**55%**), exercising outdoors (**50%**), eating well (**44%**), reading for fun (**34%**) and connecting one-to-one with a family member or friend through shared walks or exercise outdoors (**26%**), are just some of the ways healthcare professionals have been managing their mental health and wellbeing in 2021.

Follow the Mental Health Australia campaign via social media using the hashtag **#LookAfterYourMentalHealthAustralia** or find out more at lookafteryourmentalhealthaustralia.org.au

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Talent available for interview:

- Dr Leanne Beagley, CEO of Mental Health Australia
- Dr Karen Price, President of The Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP)

About World Mental Health Day 2021

World Mental Health Day is an opportunity for global mental health education, awareness, and advocacy. The campaign theme for 2021 is to “Look after your mental health, Australia” by Looking Up! Looking Forward! & Looking Out for each other. The aim is to reduce stigma, foster connectivity and promote help-seeking behaviour.

Online and telephone resources

- Head to Health: headtohealth.gov.au
- Lifeline: 13 11 14 - 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Text 0477 13 11 14 – 6pm to midnight (AEDT), 7 nights a week
- Beyond Blue: 1300 22 4636 beyondblue.org.au
- Butterfly Foundation National Helpline: 1800 334 673
- Carer Support: 1800 242 636 or 1300 554 660
- SANE Australia Helpline: 1800 187 263
- Suicide Call Back Service: 1300 659 467
- Kids Helpline: 1800 55 1800 kidshelpline.com.au



- MensLine Australia: 1300 789 978
- QLife: 1800 184 527
- Open Arms – Veterans and Families Counselling: 1800 011 046
- Black Dog: blackdoginstitute.org.au
- Headspace: eheadspace.org.au
- R U OK?: ruok.org.au
- ReachOut: au.reachout.com
- World Mental Health Day: lookafteryourmentalhealthaustralia.org.au

About Mental Health Australia

Mental Health Australia is the peak, national non-government organisation representing and promoting the interests of the Australian mental health sector and committed to achieving better mental health for all Australians. Mental Health Australia aims to promote mentally healthy communities, educate Australians on mental health issues, influence mental health reform so that government policies address all contemporary mental health issues, conduct research on mental health issues, and carry out regular consultation to represent the best interests of our members, partners, and the community. <https://lookafteryourmentalhealthaustralia.org.au/>

Research: This research was conducted through Survey Monkey and included a sample of 444 Australians working in the healthcare industry during the COVID-19 pandemic.

