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RESEARCH TRACKS MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING ACTIVITY

Exclusive research commissioned by Mental Health Australia has asked Australians what they're doing to improve their mental health and wellbeing against ten key activities.

"Generally, Australians are doing better than expected regarding their participation in activities that assist with improving mental health and wellbeing," Mental Health Australia CEO Frank Quinlan said.

"We looked at things like sleep and exercise, diet and involvement in the community to ascertain if Australians were undertaking activity that can help them feel better mentally. We were certainly heartened by some of the results."

The research showed strong positive results for certain activities, with Australians claiming to do the following:

- **65% regularly keep consumption of alcohol, cigarettes and drugs as low as possible.**
- **58% regularly make an effort to eat healthily**
- **51% regularly make time to socialise with family and/or friends**
- **47% regularly get a good night's sleep.**

"However, we found when we looked at these and other activities in young adults between 18 and 29, the results were not as strong," Mr Quinlan said.

"In fact, the research found this same age group was surprisingly the least likely to socialise with friends and family and, perhaps not surprisingly, the least likely to take time out from their electronic devices.

"We also found people who are on lower incomes are less likely to be doing things that are helpful to their mental health and wellbeing. Parents too had little time for activities that could help improve their wellbeing.

"Meanwhile, people over 70 were more likely than any other age group to say they socialise, participate in the community, eat and sleep well, and limit their consumption of alcohol and other drugs.

"While the group scored high in all these areas, if they did become stressed or depressed, 49% said they rarely or would never seek help for themselves."

The researched asked respondents to rate themselves against how often they felt they did the following:

- Make an effort to eat healthily



- Make time to socialise with family or friends
- Get a good night's sleep
- Exercise for at least ten minutes at one time
- Keep the consumption of alcohol, cigarettes and other drugs as limited as possible
- Take the time to carefully plan and prioritise work and personal commitments
- Listen to music while working or studying
- Consciously ensure times without electronic devices
- Participate in a club, society or sporting activity
- Seek advice or support when feeling down or stressed

“Perhaps the most concerning result however, was the small percentage of people who regularly sought advice or support when they were stressed or down. With only 18% regularly seeking help, we have a long way to go to make it OK to do something about our mental health and wellbeing,” Mr Quinlan said.

This year Mental Health Australia is asking Australians to do more to look after their mental health and wellbeing.

“One small step people can do to help their mental health and wellbeing is to make a mental health promise to themselves as part of our World Mental Health Day campaign,” Mr Quinlan said.

“People can make a simple promise to do something to help improve their mental health and wellbeing and then share it, hopefully making it more acceptable to talk about mental health and seek help when they need it.”

To make a mental health promise, go to <https://1010.org.au/promise/add>

This research was undertaken as part of Mental Health Australia’s **‘Mental Health Begins With Me’** campaign.

Mental Health Australia’s vision is for mentally healthy people and mentally healthy communities.

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