COUNCIL OF DEANS OF NURSING AND MIDWIFERY (Australia & New Zealand) | Creating The Future

Press Release

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CDNM Celebrates World Mental Health First Aid Day 2026

The Council of Deans of Nursing and Midwifery (Australia and New Zealand) “CDNM” celebrates World Mental Health First Aid Day on Wednesday 18th November 2026. This year's theme 'Ready When It Matters', emphasises the importance of recognising when someone is experiencing mental health difficulties and having the skills to respond appropriately.

As part of its commitment to advancing the mental health capabilities of the future nursing and midwifery workforce, CDNM has been supporting the administration of the national Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) program to its members since 2023, providing nursing and midwifery students with access to MHFA eLearning. The program is funded through the Commonwealth Department of Health, Disability and Ageing.

The MHFA program helps students build their confidence, mental health literacy and practical skills to recognise signs of mental health concerns, initiate supportive conversations and encourage people to seek appropriate professional assistance.

These skills are particularly important for nurses and midwives, who are often among the first health professionals to recognise when patients, mothers, fathers, partners or families may be struggling emotionally or psychologically. They are especially valuable during pregnancy, childbirth and the postnatal period, as well as in supporting fellow students and colleagues.

CDNM’s CEO, Rachel Yates, said: “For nurses and midwives – from students to registered professionals, irrespective of their specialist area of practice – being ready when it matters means having the awareness, confidence and practical skills to recognise when someone is struggling with their mental health, being enabled to respond with empathy, and helping them access appropriate support. We are grateful to the Department for their support of this program.”

More than 10 million people across more than 50 countries have been trained in Mental Health First Aid, reflecting the growing global recognition of the importance of mental health literacy and early intervention.

CDNM recognises the importance of World Mental Health First Aid Day and is committed to championing a nursing and midwifery workforce that is ready when it matters.

For more information on MHFA Day and to get involved, visit their website:
https://worldmhfaday.com/

About CDNM
The Council of Deans of Nursing and Midwifery (Australia & New Zealand) (CDNM) is the peak organisation representing universities and other higher education institutions that offer undergraduate and postgraduate programs in nursing and midwifery throughout Australia and New Zealand.

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