




PROUD MEMBER



ANNUAL REPORT 2024 - 2025

MENTAL HEALTH FOUNDATION AUSTRALIA

Better Mental Health For All



Mental Health Foundation
Australia acknowledges the
Traditional Owners of the Land on
which our head office is based, the
Wurundjeri people of the Kulin
Nation. We pay our respects to
their Elders past and present, and
we extend our respect to all Elders
and Aboriginal and Torres Strait
Islander peoples across Australia.

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Looking Ahead



MENTAL HEALTH
Foundation Australia

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12 December 2025

The Hon Mark Butler MP
Minister for Health and Ageing Minister for Disability and the National
Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)
Parliament House, Canberra

Dear Minister,

On behalf of the Board of the Mental Health Foundation Australia (MHFA),
I am pleased to present the Annual Report 2024 - 2025.

As one of the oldest community-based mental health organisations in Australia, established in 1930, MHFA has a long-standing commitment to promoting mental health awareness and support across diverse communities. Since launching Victorian Mental Health Month in October 2018, our campaign has grown significantly, with 21 local governments participating in its inaugural year. These events addressed a broad spectrum of topics, including youth and seniors' mental health, and the connection between food and wellbeing.

As you are aware, while many mental health organisations support vulnerable Australians, there remains a significant gap in mental health awareness and education within multicultural communities. According to the 2021 Census, 31.5% of Australia's population was born overseas, and over half (51.5%) were either born overseas or have at least one parent born overseas. This demographic reality underscores the importance of culturally responsive mental health initiatives.

Recognising this need, MHFA has worked with over 90 multicultural communities nationwide. Our former and current Multicultural Ambassadors and Attaches have played a vital role in engaging community leaders and members, helping to deliver impactful awareness programs. We have also leveraged digital platforms—websites, social media, and online resources in over 110 languages—to broaden our reach and provide accessible mental health education.



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In March 2021, we established the Integrated Mental Health Hub in South Yarra, offering over 2,400 counselling sessions annually at an affordable rate of \$30 per 50-minute session, or free for those in financial hardship. Since July 2025, we have extended our services to schools and international colleges, providing on-site counselling for students and families. For instance, St Kilda Primary School now hosts two counsellors during school hours, with parents contributing \$30 per session. In international colleges, the administration co-funds sessions to support student wellbeing.

MHFA also operates 35 mental health support groups, which have been running for over 37 years, offering consistent, community-based support to mental health consumers.

Despite the scale, impact, and growing demand for these essential programs, MHFA receives just \$98,000 annually from the Victorian Government. This level of funding is no longer sustainable, particularly in light of the rising need across multicultural communities, educational institutions, ageing populations, and other vulnerable groups.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter. We look forward to your continued support and collaboration.

Warm regards,

Vasan Srinivasan
CEO, Mental Health Foundation Australia



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12 December 2025

The Hon. Jacinta Allan
Premier of Victoria

The Hon. Ingrid Stitt
Minister for Mental Health, Minister for Ageing, Minister for Multicultural
Affairs

Dear Premier and Minister,

On behalf of the Board of the Mental Health Foundation Australia (MHFA), I am pleased to present the report on our 7th National Multicultural Mental Health Month Awareness Campaign 2025, and to highlight the ongoing and pressing need for increased support to sustain and expand our vital work across Victoria.

As one of Australia's oldest community-based mental health organisations—established in 1930—the Mental Health Foundation Australia (MHFA) remains steadfast in its commitment to fostering mental health awareness, promoting early intervention, and delivering culturally responsive support across Victoria's diverse communities. Since the launch of Victorian Mental Health Month in October 2018, our reach has expanded dramatically: from 21 local government partners in our inaugural year to now engaging hundreds of community groups, culturally diverse organisations, schools, universities, and faith-based institutions across the state. Our past and present government partners have been pivotal to this success. Former Minister the Hon. Martin Foley championed our early efforts and attended the majority of campaign launches across Victoria, including the 2019 Mental Health Wellbeing Walk at Albert Park Lake, which drew more than 14,000 Victorians, including large numbers of mental health consumers and multicultural community leaders.

During the COVID-19 lockdowns, MHFA stepped in to address a critical and urgent need: access to culturally appropriate food for vulnerable residents. In coordination with 90 multicultural community leaders and partners such as the Salvation Army, My Centre Broadmeadows, and international student accommodation providers, MHFA organised and delivered 165,000 freshly cooked vegetarian meals over 200 days. This program ensured that isolated, vulnerable Victorians—including international students—received safe, appropriate support during a time of immense hardship.



Our strong multicultural networks—now spanning over 90 communities nationwide—continue to amplify our ability to deliver mental health education in culturally relevant ways. Through digital platforms, multilingual volunteers, and translated resources available in more than 110 languages, we reach communities that often remain underserved by mainstream mental health services.

In March 2021, the Mental Health Foundation Australia (MHFA) established the Integrated Mental Health Hub in South Yarra, which now delivers over 2,400 counselling sessions annually at a highly subsidised rate of \$30 per session—or free of charge for individuals experiencing financial hardship.

Building on this success, MHFA expanded its services in July 2025 to include Victorian schools and international colleges. For instance, St Kilda Primary School now hosts two on-site counsellors, providing accessible mental health support to children and families, while international colleges co-fund counselling services to promote student wellbeing.

In addition, the Mental Health Foundation Australia (MHFA) continues to operate 35 long-standing mental health support groups, which have run continuously for over 37 years. These groups remain a vital source of community-based support for individuals experiencing mental health challenges and their families.

Despite the scale, impact, and growing demand for these essential programs, MHFA receives just \$98,000 annually from the Victorian Government. This level of funding is no longer sustainable, particularly in light of the rising need across multicultural communities, educational institutions, ageing populations, and other vulnerable groups.

Our Request

Each year, one in five Victorians will experience a mental health condition, and nearly half—45 per cent—will face one at some point in their lives. These figures underscore the urgent and ongoing need for accessible, culturally responsive mental health support across our state.



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To ensure MHFA can continue delivering high-impact services that meet this growing demand, we respectfully seek a significant increase in annual funding. An uplift to \$500,000 per year or an amount your government deems appropriate upon review—would enable us to:

- Sustain and expand the Integrated Mental Health Hub
- Broaden the reach of school and tertiary counselling programs
- Deepen engagement with multicultural communities
- Enhance volunteer coordination and translate multilingual resources
- Maintain our 35 active mental health support groups
- Continue statewide awareness campaigns that promote early help-seeking

With increased and sustained support, MHFA is well-positioned to remain a vital partner in advancing the Victorian Government's mental health agenda, reducing stigma, and ensuring equitable access to care for all communities.

We are grateful for your ongoing commitment to the mental health and well-being of all Victorians. We welcome the opportunity to discuss this proposal further and explore how, together, we can strengthen the mental health landscape for multicultural communities across the state.

Warm regards,

Vasan Srinivasan
Chief Executive Officer
Mental Health Foundation Australia

Message from the Chairperson



Professor Melissa Green



The Mental Health Foundation Australia (MHFA) stands out among many well-meaning organisations due to its strong community focus and decades-long history of supporting small, large, and multicultural communities. The MHFA works tirelessly through dedicated team of staff, interns, volunteers and members to engage with multicultural communities, breaking down the stigma associated with mental health concerns.

Mental health challenges can present in numerous ways sometimes through emotional or behavioural changes, and at other times through physical symptoms. These experiences are commonly observed across both clinical and community settings. Creating safe, welcoming spaces where people feel comfortable talking about their experiences is essential, and the MHFA plays a vital role in facilitating these open and supportive conversations.

Among our key achievements is our sustained engagement with multicultural communities, as well as the establishment of the Wellness Hub Psychology Clinic, which offers accessible and affordable psychological support for \$30 per session. Our support groups remain a vital source of community-based support for individuals experiencing mental health challenges to share their thoughts and feelings in a safe and non-judgemental space. This ability to connect, support, and advocate remains central to the MHFA's mission and long-standing impact. Despite limited funding, the organisation continues to work with agility and responsiveness, collaborating with partners to meet evolving community needs.

Looking ahead, our focus in 2026 is strengthening women's mental health across all six pillars of the services we provide an essential and timely priority given the experiences and challenges women may face throughout their lives.

Supporting the Mental Health Foundation Australia is critically important because of its unique, grassroots, community-based approach. We encourage community members, philanthropic organisations, and government bodies to invest in this work so that we can continue nurturing future mental health professionals and enhancing the wellbeing of individuals and families across Australia.

Together, we can foster resilience and promote better mental health for all.

Foreword



Jim Goodin

Founder of the MHFA Support Groups Program
Vice-Chairperson, Mental Health Foundation Australia



As we proudly mark 37 years since the establishment of MHFA Support Groups, I am deeply moved by the enduring commitment and compassion that continue to define our community. What began as a small initiative to provide peer support has now grown into a global movement — with 34 active support groups offering hope, understanding, and connection to vulnerable individuals across Australia and beyond.

Key Achievements



3,000+

Individuals supported annually through the program

35

active peer support groups

80%

Return rate, highlights participant satisfaction and trust in our peer-led approach.

20%

of participants joined from outside Australia, confirming MHFA's growing global reach.

17

Facilitators with lived mental health experience lead support groups, providing empathy-based guidance and genuine recovery perspectives.

The Support Groups Program remains steadfast in its founding vision to ensure that every consumer can attend our groups free of charge, regardless of circumstance.

Despite receiving no state or federal government funding, our work thrives through the generosity of individuals and the heartfelt financial support of the **Dawoodi Bohras** community in Victoria, to whom we extend our sincere gratitude.

Together, we continue to build a compassionate network where no one faces mental health challenges alone. Our journey is one of resilience, humanity, and hope — and I am incredibly proud of all we have achieved together.

**We thank
Dawoodi Bohras
for their support!**



Message from the CEO



Vasan Srinivasan



The year 2024–2025 has been an exceptional year of growth, innovation, and impact for the Mental Health Foundation Australia (MHFA). Our commitment to improving mental health and wellbeing for all Australians — especially those from vulnerable and multicultural communities — has been reflected in the outstanding outcomes achieved through our programs, training, and digital initiatives.



Key Achievements



Wellness Hub Psychology Clinic

2,000+

clinical sessions delivered across the year.

26

provisional psychologists and counselling students

70%

of sessions were delivered via Telehealth

30%

of clients from vulnerable groups, like refugees, international students, and low-income individuals, received free clinical services based on clinician recommendations.

5 to 75

Services catered to clients of all ages, reflecting MHFA's inclusive approach to wellbeing.

40+

multicultural backgrounds highlight MHFA's dedication to diversity and inclusion.



Mental Health Support Groups

3,000+

Individuals supported annually through the program

35

active peer support groups

80%

Return rate, highlights participant satisfaction and trust in our peer-led approach.

17

Facilitators with lived mental health experience lead support groups, providing empathy-based guidance and genuine recovery perspectives.

20%

of participants joined from outside Australia, confirming MHFA's growing global reach.



Digital and Research Advancements

169,000+

websites visitors engaged globally, reflecting increasing digital engagement.

#1

rank in the google searches for "support groups in Australia"

500+

people downloaded the Supportive Mind



Education and Training

500+

Individuals have successfully completed Mental Health First Aid training.

40+

accredited Mental Health First Aid sessions by Michelle Kleinert OAM



Helpline

2,000+

individuals supported through our helpline service across Australia

Year in review



452,125

Social Media
Page & Profile Impressions



327,760

Social Media
Page & Profile Reach



169,000

Websites
Visits and Views

Mental Health Awareness



Mental Health Support

2,000+

calls helpline calls
seeking mental health
support & information.



2,000+

clients supported
through the Wellness
Hub counselling service



3,000+

individuals supported
annually through
support groups program



500+

individuals participated
Lunch & Learn Webinars
led by Scientific Advisory
Committee



500+

individuals trained
through the Mental Health
Workplace Training
sessions



10+

Mind Awareness
Blogposts published
promoting mental health
education

Mental Health Education

Mental Health Advocacy



6,000+

placement hours
contributed



Over 40 interns

hosted from various disciplines



48 sessions

delivered both online & face-to-face as
part of Mental Health First Aid training



30+ workplaces

registered with us to empower their employees to
equip with skills from the Workplace Training

Who we are



The Mental Health Foundation Australia (MHFA) is the oldest community-based non-government mental health organisation in Australia, serving the community since 1930. The MHFA has played a significant role in establishing the current network of services and support for mental health consumers. Many of the organisations now prominent in the mental health sector had their beginnings as a part of the Foundation or developed out of MHFA initiatives.

OUR VISION

Our vision is to achieve better mental health for all. We aim to create a society where mental health is valued, supported, and understood, and where everyone has access to the resources and support that they need to thrive.

OUR MISSION

The Mental Health Foundation Australia (MHFA) promotes the mental health and well-being of all Australians through a multicultural approach. They focus on advocacy, education, support, and research to reduce stigma, empower individuals, and build inclusive communities using compassion and evidence-based practices.

OUR OBJECTIVES

- To promote mental health and positive attitudes to mental health;
- To establish collaboration with governments, individuals, and health related agencies, groups and organisations;
- To make informed recommendations regarding mental health policy, implementation and services;
- Encourage and initiate mental health research;
- Encourage the highest standards in training and practice for the mental health professions;
- To establish and support organisations which provide services, support and advice to the community;
- To stimulate the development of informed public debate and opinion on mental health issues;
- To work to remove stigma within the wider community associated with mental ill health.
- To build bridges between those with mental illness and those without, to link our community together.

Six Pillars



Advocacy

Mental Health Advocacy Programs

Through community engagement, we connect with diverse cultural backgrounds, ensuring all voices are valued. We advocate for inclusive policies and equitable access to care, enhancing mental health outcomes in multicultural communities across Australia.



Awareness

Mental Health Awareness Programs

We champion open conversations about mental health. Through national campaigns, community events, and partnerships, we raise awareness, challenge stigma, and encourage Australians to seek help without fear or judgment.



Education

Mental Health Education Programs

We empower individuals and organisations with knowledge. Our Mental Health First Aid training programs, and webinars equip workplaces, schools, and community groups to recognise, respond to, and support mental health needs effectively.



Support

Mental Health Support Programs

We provide safe spaces for healing and connection. From low-cost counselling to free peer support groups, we offer practical assistance that bridges gaps in care and ensures everyone has access to help when they need it most.



Research

Mental Health Research Programs

We build understanding through evidence. Our research initiatives focus on diverse communities and emerging mental health challenges, ensuring our programs remain informed, responsive, and grounded in real-world data.



Resilience

Mental Health Resilience Programs

Through wellbeing initiatives and community programs, we help individuals develop coping strategies, build emotional strength, and foster lifelong resilience.

Leadership & Governance

PATRONS



EMERITUS PROF.
BRUCE TONGE AO
PATRON



CAROLE CREAN
PATRON

BOARD



PROF.
MELISSA GREEN
CHAIRPERSON



JIM GOODIN
VICE-CHAIRPERSON



ADAM WILLIAMS
SECRETARY



PROF.
PETER BARLIS
DIRECTOR



LUUL IBRAHIM
DIRECTOR



DARYL WILLIAMS
DIRECTOR



A/PROF. SCOTT
CLARK
DIRECTOR

SCIENTIFIC & MEDICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE



EMERITUS PROF.
BRUCE TONGE AO



PROF.
PETER BARLIS



PROF.
SARAH WILSON



PROF.
GREG MURRAY



PROF. JAYASHRI
KULKARNI



PROF. MALCOLM
HOPWOOD



A/PROF.
HARRY MINAS



PROF. LOUISE
NEWMAN AM



PROF.
RICHARD NEWTON



PROF.
KIM FELMINGHAM



DR ROS
LETHBRIDGE



DR
CHRISTOPHER
MOGAN



EMERITUS PROF.
AMANDA RICHDALE



PROF.
MITCHELL BYRNE



A/PROF. CHRIS
PEPPING



NEIL MORRIS



A/PROF.
LAURA JOBSON



PROF. TRICHUR
VIDYASAGAR



DR SHANKAR
SRINIVAS



PROF.
KIMBERLEY
NORRIS



PROF.
BERNARD BAUNE



A/PROF.
SCOTT CLARK



A/PROF.
CHRISTINA BRYANT



A/PROF.
ERIC MORRIS



A/PROF.
ANGELA DWYER



DR
ALBERTO VELOSO



DR
EDWIN JOSEPH



DAWN D'AMICO



DR SUDIPTO
CHATTERJEE



MRS
LESLEY ALWAY



DR BRUCE WONG



DR.
S AMUTHA KUMAR



DR
PETER GOODIN



ER. A.C.S.
ARUNKUMAR



ASHOK MYSORE



JANE
MONICA-JONES



STEVEN FARRUGIA



DR. RAJ
KHILLAN



DR PREETI
KHILLAN



RICHARD
LIM OAM



ABI SRINIVASAN

SARA TATLOW



DR CHIDAMBARAM
PRAKASH



DR ANJALI
NAMBIAR



DR SACHIN
DAHIYA

MANAGEMENT



VASAN SRINIVASAN
CHIEF EXECUTIVE
OFFICER



AISHA USMAN
MANAGER

STAFF



JOTPREET KAUR
COMMUNITY
DEVELOPMENT
OFFICER



AMANDA COPS
SUPPORT GROUPS
ADMINISTRATOR
FOR MHFA & BIPOLAR LIFE
VICTORIA, PRESIDENT
BIPOLAR LIFE



NITHYA
VISWANATHAN
IT SYSTEMS ANALYST



VY NGUYEN
SOCIAL MEDIA
COORDINATOR

Mental Health Advocacy



Advocacy is a cornerstone of the Mental Health Foundation Australia's mission. It encompasses strategic actions aimed at influencing policy, raising public awareness, and driving systemic change to promote equitable treatment and social justice for individuals experiencing mental health challenges, as well as their families, carers, and support networks.

On World Refugee Day, the Mental Health Foundation Australia had the privilege of hosting a Citizenship Ceremony in partnership with the Department of Home Affairs. This exceptional and meaningful occasion marked a profound new chapter for many individuals and families as they officially began their journeys as Australian citizens.

For over 95 years, the Foundation has remained committed to advancing mental health advocacy across Australia. Our efforts are led by a multidisciplinary team comprising the Scientific Advisory Committee, Medical Advisory Committee, Ambassadors, Youth Leaders, and placement students. This collective expertise enables us to engage with stakeholders, inform policy development, and foster inclusive communities.

Scientific Advisory Committee

The MHFA Scientific Advisory Committee of the Mental Health Foundation Australia plays a crucial role in guiding the Foundation's strategy and operations. Their expert advice shapes evidence-based policies and programs in mental health care. Additionally, committee members enhance public engagement through educational webinars and events, raising awareness and enriching programming. MHFA values their expertise and leadership, which is vital for advancing its mission and the Mental Health First Aid program's impact nationwide.

Attachés and Ambassadors

The Mental Health Foundation Australia's advocacy is greatly enhanced by the dedication of Multicultural Ambassadors and Attachés from diverse communities. Their involvement in community engagement fosters connections with Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) groups, helping to create culturally responsive awareness campaigns and services. Through their storytelling and leadership, they reduce mental health stigma and promote help-seeking behaviors, significantly impacting inclusivity and the effectiveness of MHFA's initiatives across the nation.

Medical Advisory Committee

The MHFA Medical Advisory Committee provided essential advice to the Board and staff of Mental Health Foundation Australia, shaping organizational policies and operations for comprehensive and effective projects. Their contributions to the MHFA Wellness Hub Psychology Clinic are highly valued, as their expertise and dedication are key to enhancing initiatives and fostering meaningful change.

MHFA Australian Youth Leaders

The Mental Health Foundation Australia (MHFA) unified its Youth Leaders Program to empower young Australians (ages 18-21) in shaping the national mental health agenda. The initiative actively involved students from universities, TAFEs, and secondary schools, fostering a diverse group of youth leaders dedicated to mental health advocacy. MHFA appreciates the creativity and leadership of these advocates, whose efforts amplify youth voices and promote positive change in mental health awareness and support.

Internships

At a Glance



41 interns hosted from various disciplines



6,000+ placement hours contributed

→ About the program

The MHFA Internship Program is a structured learning initiative designed to provide supervised field experiences for students and emerging professionals in psychology, social work, counselling, community service, media and marketing, public health, and related disciplines. Through tailored placements guided by experienced MHFA staff, the program fosters academic growth, professional development, and personal learning goals.

It also enhances community wellbeing by cultivating awareness, education, advocacy, and engagement in mental health and social services while aligning with MHFA's mission to promote "better mental health for all."

Top Courses

- Master's in Counselling, Rehabilitation and Mental Health
- Master of Social Work
- Master's in Communication Design
- Master of Design & Innovation Technology
- Masters in Marketing Communications
- Bachelor of Community Service
- Bachelor of Psychological Science (Family and Child Psychology)
- Bachelor of Community Mental Health, Alcohol and Other Drugs
- Certificate IV Mental Health
- Diploma in Community Services
- Bachelor of Media & Communications
- Bachelor of Arts (Marketing, Media Comms)
- Bachelor of Marketing
- Bachelor of International Business

Universities



I'm truly grateful for the incredible support I've received and feel so fortunate for this amazing opportunity to grow as a clinician.

Karin Smith,
Provisional Counsellor



This experience showed me how purpose-driven communication can build trust and community. More than the work, I'll remember feeling truly seen and supported when it mattered most.

Er Ling Chan,
Social Media Intern



In ten weeks, we were fortunate to gain valuable insights into the mental health field, thanks to the incredible support from the organisation and team!

Manuel Felipe & Yiwen Cao
Mental Health Project Intern



I've grown my marketing skills from copywriting to digital strategy thanks to an incredible organisation and a supportive mentor!

Jamie Speight
Marketing Intern



This internship deepened my understanding of mental health advocacy, support groups and gave me the chance to support real projects while learning alongside inspiring peers.

Carrie Guillermo
Mental Health Project Intern

Thank you for providing a space where I can support people during their most challenging moments. I can't think of a more meaningful mission.

Kirk Fisher
Provisional Counsellor



The internship enhanced our understanding of support groups and gave the opportunity to contribute to meaningful projects while learning alongside motivated peers.

Fengtong & Tian
Mental Health Project Intern



Each client challenged me to research and apply theory in practice, making this a rewarding and enriching learning experience.

Ife Awonusi
Provisional Counsellor



During my time here, I had the incredible opportunity to design for social media and a variety of events, sharpening my graphic design skills in real-world settings. A huge shout out to my amazing mentor for all the guidance and support along the way.

Qian Dai
Multimedia Design Intern



The internship improved my understanding of support groups and the consumer landscape, while allowing me to engage in meaningful projects alongside motivated peers. I truly appreciated the guidance of my mentor, and the team was incredibly supportive.

Pete
Mental Health Project Intern



Mental Health Awareness



Awareness is a critical component of the Mental Health Foundation Australia's (MHFA) mission to promote psychological well-being across diverse communities. It involves fostering open dialogue, challenging stigma, enhancing understanding of mental health, and affirming its essential role within the broader healthcare system.

The MHFA is committed to raising mental health awareness for all Australians through targeted campaigns and community engagement. Central to these efforts is the Annual National Multicultural Mental Health Month Awareness Campaign, which serves as a nationwide platform to spotlight mental health issues within Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) communities.

Impact Snapshot





National Multicultural Mental Health Month 2024

The National Multicultural Mental Health Month is an annual initiative by MHFA aimed at promoting mental health literacy, reducing stigma, and encouraging help-seeking behaviours within Australia's multicultural communities. The campaign includes community forums, workshops, cultural performances, and media outreach to foster meaningful discussions about mental health.

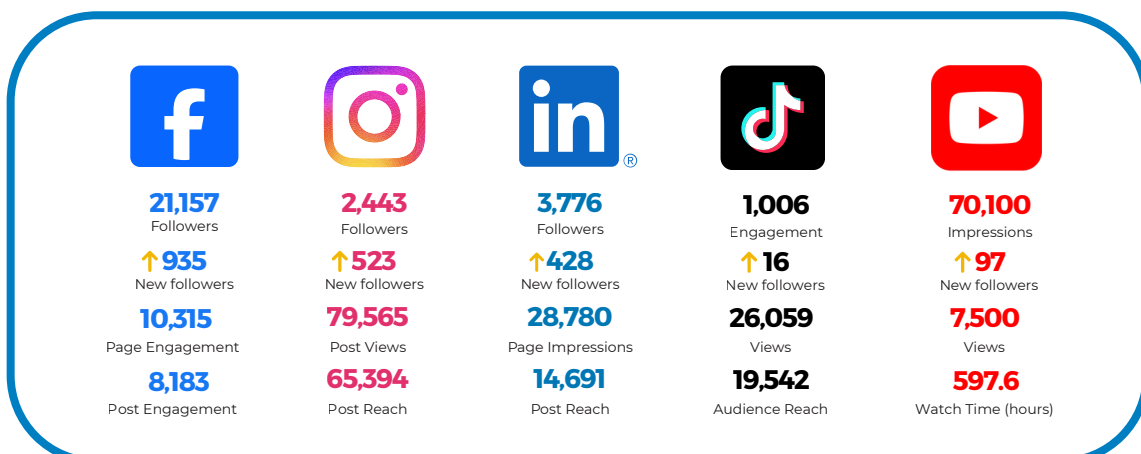
By partnering with community leaders and mental health professionals, MHFA ensures the campaign is inclusive and culturally responsive, enhancing its impact and reinforcing its commitment to a mentally healthy and socially connected Australia.

Social Media Snapshot

Over the past financial year, MHFA has strengthened its social media presence to bring our community closer through informed resources and real lived experiences. By posting daily across Facebook, Instagram, TikTok and LinkedIn, we aimed to educate, reduce stigma and create a safe space where people feel seen, supported and never alone. Our content strategy continues to bridge the gap between awareness and connection, ensuring mental health conversations are normalised and accessible to all.



Platforms Breakdown

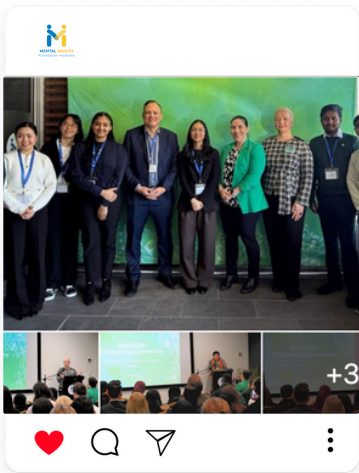


Content Performance

Top-Performing Posts



WORLD MENTAL HEALTH DAY 2024



WORLD REFUGEE DAY 2025 - CITIZENSHIP CEREMONY



THE MHFA DOCUMENTARY: STAND WITH US

Next Steps



Increase followers count by

2%

Boost Engagement by

2%

Enhance Content Development by

5-6 POSTS PER WEEK

Mental Health Education



500+

individuals participated
Lunch & Learn Webinars
led by Scientific Advisory
Committee



500+

individuals trained
through the Mental Health
Workplace Training
sessions



10+

Mind Awareness
Blogposts published
promoting mental health
education

Education empowers individuals and is central to the Mental Health Foundation Australia's mission to promote early intervention and mental health literacy. MHFA equips people with knowledge and tools to enhance resilience, reduce stigma, and improve mental health awareness.

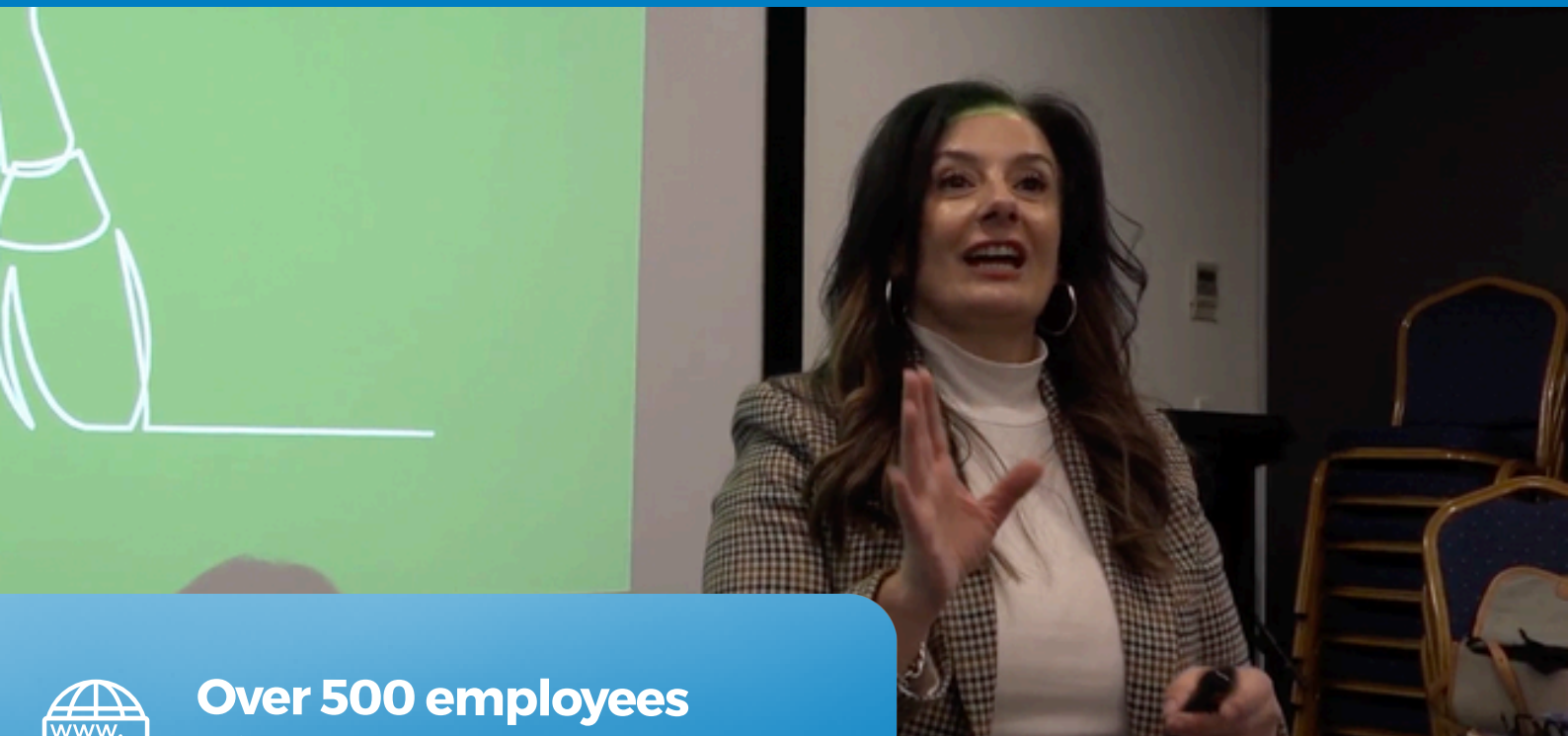
We offer accessible, evidence-based training and workshops across various settings, fostering community capacity to understand and support mental health while reducing barriers to care.



The MHFA rebranded its educational webinar series under the title “Lunch & Learn”, reflecting a renewed commitment to accessible and flexible learning. This initiative enables individuals to participate in mental health and psychology-focused webinars during their lunch breaks, minimizing disruption to their workday. It has proven particularly valuable for remote teams and individuals working from home, offering a virtual space to connect, engage, and learn together.

Throughout 2024–2025, the “Lunch & Learn” program has continued to grow, delivering informative sessions that support mental health education in both professional and personal contexts. MHFA remains dedicated to expanding this initiative, ensuring that mental health literacy becomes a shared priority across all sectors of society.

Mental Health First Aid Workplace Training



Over 500 employees

trained through the
Mental Health First Aid program



48 sessions

delivered both online & face-to-face



30+ workplaces

registered to the workplace training

1 in 5 Australian adults experience a mental health condition in any given year (AIHW, 2025).

Common contributors of reported mental health issues in workplaces include workplace environment, stress, burnout, bullying, fatigue, harassment, and other personal issues such as financial or job insecurity.

Mental Health is a priority in every workplace and community.

The Occupational Health and Safety (Psychological Health) Regulations 2025, effective December 1, 2025, mandate employers to manage psychological health proactively. This includes training programs like Mental Health First Aid (MHFA), which equip individuals to support those experiencing mental health issues and crises. Implementing MHFA training enhances mental health literacy, fostering a supportive and inclusive workplace culture. This not only ensures regulatory compliance but also leads to improved employee well-being, reduced absenteeism, increased engagement, and a stronger, healthier organisation.

Key outcomes

- Most participants reported gaining experience through training that has been valuable both personally and professionally.
- Increased confidence in approaching and responding to mental health conversations in the workplace with utmost professionalism.
- Engagement has grown across a wide range of industries—including healthcare, education, construction, and corporate sectors, indicating the program's relevance and adaptability to different workplace environments.
- Organisations are increasingly recognising MHFA as a core component of their well-being and psychosocial risk management strategies.
- Open dialogues and create a safe and non-judgmental space by fostering understanding and empathy around mental health issues.



"The MHFA Course was an amazing experience, and I truly enjoyed both the two-day training and the time I spent completing the pre-course modules. It's such a valuable course and I highly recommend it to everyone."



"Completing the Mental Health First Aid Course gave me the tools to recognise and respond to mental health challenges with confidence and compassion. Michelle Kleinert was incredible at delivering informative, practical and empowering training. It's a valuable experience I would recommend!"



"I found the Mental Health First Aid training incredibly valuable. The skills I gained have supported me in both my professional and personal life. The course gave me confidence and understanding to approach conversations about mental health, provide support, and guide people towards helpful resources. Michelle, our MHFA trainer, was extremely knowledgeable and responded to every question and discussion with the utmost professionalism. I strongly recommend these training sessions to anyone who works with people. Both I and others in our organisation have found the course to be an invaluable experience."

Partnered workplaces

- Casey Towers
- Grafton Shoppingworld Centre Management
- Australian College Of Fitness and Bodywork
- MM Electrical
- Psychsafe
- Fulton Hogan Construction Pty Ltd
- Berwick Ford
- Minto Disability Services
- Blooms
- Berwick Toyota
- HAWK LOGISTICS
- Australia Post
- RDO Equipment
- Family Emergency Accommodation Townsville
- Gracemere Shoppingworld Centre Management
- Right at Home (QLD Grant)
- ATSB
- More than support
- Haymans Electrical (QLD Grant)
- Lions Shop (QLD GRANT)
- One doorway
- Alatai
- MSS Security
- GPC Asia Pacific
- Wehi
- Kellogg Brown & Root Pty Ltd
- Mossfiel Primary School
- Lifestyle Solutions (QLD Grant)
- Job Find
- Beaucare Community Centre
- Co Health

Scaling Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) training across small businesses and frontline sectors is crucial to ensuring accessibility and relevance for high-risk industries. By equipping managers and HR professionals with the necessary tools, they can lead with empathy and prioritize mental well-being. Additionally, integrating a Mental Health Training Program into onboarding and professional development will make mental health literacy a core competency for all employees. A youth-focused approach is also essential, as training educators and youth mentors to recognize early signs of distress at schools, TAFEs, and youth employment services can have a significant impact.

Mental Health Support



3,000+

individuals supported annually through support groups program



2,000+

clients supported through the Wellness Hub counselling service



2,000+

calls helpline calls seeking mental health support & information.



Mental Health Helpline

The Mental Health Helpline offers vital support and guidance for individuals across Australia connecting them with timely referrals and professional care when needed.

Top reasons for calling

- Mental health inquiries from Victoria and other states.
- Referral services to appropriate clinical and community supports.
- MHFA Wellness Hub Psychology Clinic access and information.
- MHFA Support Group Program participation and details.
- Education, awareness, and advocacy for themselves or loved ones.
- NDIS-related inquiries.
- Initial intervention and emergency service referrals

Target Demographics for the helplines include individuals aged 18 to 75:

- Parents, siblings, friends, and carers
- Older adults and isolated individuals
- Callers representing someone else

Purpose of the service

- * The Mental Health Helpline, run by Mental Health Foundation Australia, is essential for individuals needing immediate mental health support. Its key roles include:

Offering timely emotional and psychological assistance.

Connecting callers to appropriate services like GPs and psychologists.

Promoting early clinical intervention by assessing needs and providing tailored recommendations.

Empowering individuals with information and guidance during vulnerable times.

Wellness Hub Psychology Clinic



2,013
clients supported



1,680
appointments delivered



400+
new client inquiries

\$30 counselling service in Victoria & Telehealth

The MHFA Integrated Wellness Hub Psychology Clinic offers affordable, multidisciplinary mental health services for individuals and families, including both in-clinic and telehealth counselling sessions of \$30 per 50-minute session.

The Wellness Hub addresses a wide range of mental health challenges and provides professional training, support groups, a helpline, and referrals to community services.

Guided by the Wellness Wheel concept and aligned with Victoria's Royal Commission recommendations, the Hub aims to foster better mental health through early intervention and education. To ensure timely support, the clinic adapts its staffing based on client demand, reducing waitlists and maintaining continuity of care.

**We thank Perpetual Trustees for
their continued support:**

Perpetual

1 in 5 Australians aged 16–85 (22%, or 4.3 million) experienced a mental disorder in recent years, AIHW 2025. Whereas, 1 in 7 children and adolescents, aged 4–17 years experienced a mental illness such as attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, Anxiety disorders, Major depressive disorder and Conduct disorder.

I didn't know how much I needed this until I started. The sessions at the Wellness Hub have helped me feel heard, understood, and supported in ways I never expected. Thank you for creating such a safe space.

The environment is calming, and the staff genuinely cares. I've made progress in understanding myself and improving my relationships.

I'd like to extend my sincere thanks to the counsellor for a thoughtful and professional session. I truly appreciated the opportunity and her approach.

I've really enjoyed my sessions. I feel like I've learned a bit more about myself and have some tools I can carry with me.

I sincerely appreciate the support and guidance provided during my counselling sessions. Thank you again for the understanding and for the care you've shown and extended.

Thank you for your efforts in taking my needs into consideration. I highly recommend you to anyone seeking emotional support.

I've loved all my sessions at the clinic – you guys offer a wonderful service.

The counsellor is wise beyond her years, with a heart full of empathy and care. Her gentle nature and calm voice comfort immediately and establish trust.

Thank you so much for your time and help. I most certainly would not be here today if it weren't for your team – you certainly saved a life! Thank you for all you do.

Mental health support should never be out of reach.
With your help, it won't be.

A \$30 donation supports one counselling session for
someone in financial distress.



20,000+

page clicks to book an appointment or find information about the service.



2,732.50
clinical hours



19

provisional clinicians

Who We Support?

- * Individuals experiencing anxiety, depression, stress, or burnout
- * Individuals coping with grief, loss, or major life transitions
- * Families navigating conflict, separation, or parenting challenges
- * People with NDIS-related mental health needs
- * People managing anger, mood changes, or emotional regulation, including those with ASD or ADHD
- * Victims of bullying or harassment in school or workplace settings
- * LGBTQIA+ community members seeking inclusive and affirming support
- * Individuals facing academic, relational, social, or trauma-related challenges, including PTSD

Outcomes

The services catered to clients aged 5 to 85 from various cultural, racial, and ethnic backgrounds throughout Australia, providing inclusive and culturally responsive care.

Conducted 200+ initial psychological assessments for early intervention and risk management, facilitating timely identification of client needs and preventing escalation in high-risk cases.

Professional Development & Training includes ongoing training for provisional clinicians through Peer Support Sessions and Lunch & Learn webinars, enhancing professional growth, clinical confidence, and adherence to best practices in mental health care.

Looking ahead

- Launch programs for rural communities, expand university partnerships, and establish five wellness hubs in Victoria and other states, offering physical and virtual services.
- Boost community engagement through educational workshops and interactive webinars on mental health, wellness, and inclusion.
- Aim to serve over 2,000 clients annually by enhancing referral pathways and community networks.
- Create targeted mental health programs for youth, culturally diverse communities, and LGBTQIA+ clients.

Mental Health Support Groups

Impact Snapshot

300+

peer support group sessions were facilitated offering attendees a sense of belonging and a safe environment.

3,153

attendees participated in support group sessions throughout the year, highlighting the program's broad reach and consistent community engagement.

59,000+

Website visits to access support group services include information, registration, and joining online group sessions.

At a Glance



2,507
new registrations

 **10%**
increase from
the last period



80%
participant return rate



30+
active groups each month
& 17 dedicated facilitators

Who it helps?



The program meets the needs of over 6,000 community members, who access the program through group attendance, phone and email inquiries, assistance and registration.



Provides peer-based mental health support for individuals who are isolated, vulnerable, or seeking understanding of their diagnosis.

Purpose

The MHFA Support Group program's mission is to provide a safe and welcoming space for people with a mental health diagnosis in a group setting, to share their mental health journey and receive support, education and coping strategies for their diagnosis, while the group is being guided by a facilitator, often with lived experience.

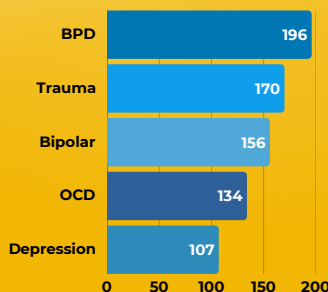


The MHFA program provides a valuable service to the community with qualified facilitators to promote connection, understanding and education in a safe environment. This ensures that even the most socioeconomically disadvantaged and vulnerable members of our community can participate without barriers.

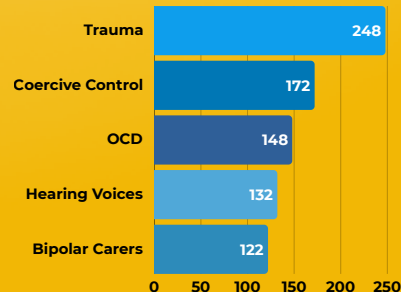
Key insights

- The acute mental health space covers areas like Trauma, BPD, Coercive Control, and Hearing Voices.
- Increased attendances result from reduced services and funding from major providers.
- There is a growing demand from NDIS, psychiatry, psychology, general practitioners, and community service providers.

2024-2025
In-person monthly averages



2024-2025
Online monthly averages



- * Addresses broader community challenges linked to mental ill-health, including family stress, absenteeism, and lost productivity.
- * Offers free, easily accessible sessions, no mandatory registration and minimal tech requirements.
- * Supports participants in developing coping strategies, building motivation, and exploring solutions for recovery.

- * Strong growth and interest from interstate and international participants, particularly in the acute mental health space (Trauma, BPD, Coercive Control, Hearing Voices).
- * Growth driven by service gaps from funding cuts and increased referrals from NDIS, mental health professionals, and community providers.

I am so grateful for this group, it has given me sound advice from others who have been through it before me.
(Coercive Control)

Our family marks our calendar to go to the group; it's the one time each month we can talk about this condition without feeling judged and can be open.
(OCD)

Wouldn't miss a session!
(Trauma and PTSD)

I am always pleased I came to the group afterwards, even though I am nervous and anxious before.
(Borderline Personality Disorder)

Looking ahead

- In 2026, the aim is to continue to provide a safe, consistent service to the community with a continued focus on equitable access while balancing the challenges of the current economic climate.
- Secure long-term sponsorship and funding for program continuation into 2026 and beyond. Solidify the current support model and expand into specialised areas not covered by other charities.

We thank
Dawoodi Bohras
for their support





Immediate Financial Support is required for the Mental Health Support Groups Program

The Mental Health Foundation Australia's Support Groups Program is a vital lifeline for thousands of Australians living with anxiety, depression, bipolar disorder, trauma, and PTSD. Despite its proven effectiveness and high engagement rates, the program continues to operate under severe financial strain.

Currently sustained through volunteer effort, student placements, and community goodwill, this essential service faces the real threat of closure without immediate and consistent funding. Sustained investment is not an act of charity—it is a public health necessity. If discontinued, thousands of vulnerable individuals will lose access to the only safe, consistent, and affordable mental health support available to them.

Urgency of Funding

MHFA's Support Groups Program provides structured, peer-led support for individuals navigating complex mental health challenges such as anxiety, depression, trauma, and bipolar disorder.

Despite measurable success—including a 50% retention rate and powerful testimonials from participants describing the groups as “lifesaving” and “transformational”—the program remains severely underfunded and systemically overlooked by both government and corporate funding bodies.

This neglect is not only ethically indefensible—it is also economically short-sighted. Every dollar invested in preventive, community-based support saves countless dollars in hospitalisations, emergency care, and productivity loss. Community Impact and Accessibility.

Our program fills a critical gap left by overstretched clinical and therapeutic systems. It offers:

- Free, ongoing, peer-led support accessible to all.
- A safe, inclusive space, particularly for multicultural and low socio-economic communities.
- A preventive model that reduces hospital readmissions and suicide risk.

Yet, we continue to operate on a shoestring budget—relying on volunteers, donated venues, and limited operational resources—while community demand continues to rise.

To ignore or underfund this program contradicts the very public commitments made by governments and corporations to address Australia's growing mental health crisis.



Addressing the Disconnect in Current Mental Health Funding

Despite widespread advocacy around “mental health awareness,” much of the current investment landscape remains superficial. Corporate and government initiatives often centre on symbolic gestures—fun runs, morning teas, or awareness campaigns—without directing tangible financial support to grassroots organisations delivering frontline services.

While Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs) provide short-term, impersonal phone support, they do not address the chronic isolation, disconnection, and unmet needs that many individuals face.

Our Support Groups Program delivers what EAPs and awareness events cannot:

- Genuine human connection
- Consistency of care
- Long-term emotional resilience and recovery

This is a scalable, cost-effective solution that should be embraced—not ignored—by both public and private sectors.

Post-COVID Reality: The Growing Need for Human Connection

In a post-COVID world, Australians are craving authentic connection more than ever. Social isolation, financial hardship, and ongoing uncertainty have amplified the need for accessible, community-based mental health support.

Our program bridges that gap. It provides a trusted, inclusive space where individuals can share experiences, build resilience, and regain hope for the future.

By preventing hospital admissions and reducing crisis intervention needs, our groups not only save lives but also save taxpayer money.

For many, particularly those unable to afford private therapy or continue treatment post-hospitalisation, our groups represent the only ongoing support available.



Evidence and Long-Term Value

The data and lived experience outcomes are clear:

- Peer-led, community-based programs significantly reduce reliance on acute mental health services.
- They foster resilience, belonging, and recovery in ways traditional models often cannot.
- They enhance system efficiency by addressing prevention and early intervention.
- When funded adequately, MHFA's Support Groups Program strengthens the entire mental health ecosystem. Neglecting this program sends a harmful message—that only those who can afford therapy deserve care.

This must change.

I urge immediate and sustained funding to ensure the continuation and expansion of the MHFA Support Groups Program.

This program is not a luxury—it is a lifeline for more than 6,000 Australians every year. With your support, we can continue to provide free, accessible, and compassionate peer support to those who need it most.

Without action today, this critical community service faces imminent closure.

We invite your partnership to protect and strengthen one of Australia's most impactful, community-driven mental health programs.

Amanda Cops
Administrator – MHFA Support Groups

Supportive Mind App

Proudly supported by



Impact Snapshot

80%

early users report improved self-awareness of mood and wellbeing habits (user feedback, pilot phase).

65%

of the users engage in regular mood or activity tracking within the first month of use.



At a Glance

Platform Availability: iOS and Android

User Base:  500+ downloads

User Rating: 

Key Features: Mood check-ins, activity tracking, wellness challenges, and personalised self-care resources

Purpose

Supportive Mind is a free self-help mobile app from the Mental Health Foundation Australia, launched in March 2025 in collaboration with Infosys Australia and eNoah iSolution. It offers accessible mental health support through mood tracking, physical activity monitoring, and personalised wellness activities, empowering users to enhance their mental and physical wellbeing.



Only 1 in 20 Australians (4.8%) used a digital mental-health service in the past year — despite 1 in 5 experiencing a mental health concern.

Supportive Mind addresses the gap in access to early, preventive mental health support by offering a free, self-guided platform for individuals dealing with stress, anxiety, or low mood. The app is especially beneficial for those facing barriers like cost, stigma, distance, or time constraints, providing daily mental wellness tools that integrate into daily life.

Australian Bureau of Statistics (2023). National Study of Mental Health and Wellbeing, 2020–2022. Catalogue No. 4326.0. Canberra: ABS. Retrieved from <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/health/mental-health/national-study-mental-health-and-wellbeing/latest-release>

Research



Mental health research is essential to advancing evidence-based practices, informing policy development, designing effective interventions, and improving support systems for individuals and communities. It provides the foundation for meaningful, long-term improvements in mental health care and outcomes.

The Mental Health Foundation Australia (MHFA) is committed to undertaking and supporting research initiatives that contribute to the well-being of all Australians. In particular, MHFA is actively engaged in research focused on multicultural mental health and well-being, with the goal of developing inclusive, culturally responsive programs that address the unique needs of Australia's diverse communities.

Through these efforts, MHFA aims to bridge knowledge gaps, influence systemic change, and ensure that mental health services are accessible, equitable, and grounded in the lived experiences of the populations they serve.

Resilience



Psychological resilience is the ability to respond to stressful life events, emotionally, mentally, and physically and to recover and grow in the face of adversity.

The Mental Health Foundation Australia runs school-based wellbeing and resilience seminars for primary and secondary students, aimed at building coping skills, improving mental health literacy, and fostering safer, more inclusive school environments. These brief, one-hour sessions focus on early intervention by helping young people develop resilience before serious mental health issues arise.

The program complements the MHFA's broader work in awareness, education, support, advocacy, and research.

Looking Ahead

As we continue our commitment to promoting better mental health for all, our focus in the year ahead is on strengthening support, education, and advocacy across the communities we serve. While we remain dedicated to delivering accessible programmes for people of all ages and backgrounds, we will place particular emphasis on women's mental health. This priority reflects the growing need for tailored support, early intervention, and greater awareness of the unique mental health challenges experienced by women. Through targeted initiatives, partnerships, and community engagement, we aim to amplify women's voices and improve mental health outcomes across Australia and globally.



How you can support our work?

Every person deserves access to mental health support, yet many face barriers in getting help. With your generosity, you can make a real, measurable difference.



\$30 provides one counselling session for someone in need.



\$150 funds three peer-support meetings, helping someone feel connected and understood in a caring community.



\$180 funds six counselling sessions, giving sustained support to help someone through difficult times.



\$328 covers a full Mental Health First Aid training for a individual equipping them to recognise, support, and respond to mental health challenges.



\$500 funds community engagement activities, including workshops and presentations that reduce stigma and raise awareness on positive mental health.



\$1000 supports counselling for primary school children, giving young people early support to develop resilience and confidence



Your gift is more than a donation — it's a lifeline.



Provides counselling and support for those who cannot afford it.



Trains community members to respond to mental health challenges.



Sustains free peer support groups where people feel heard and connected.



Reduces stigma and encourages open conversations about mental health.



Gives children early access to care and support for a brighter future.

Donate now

You can be the reason someone feels supported today.





PROUD MEMBER



Research



Support



Education

Awareness



Advocacy



Resilience



Mental Health Foundation Australia

Better Mental Health For All

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