Riding the wave toward improved mental health

Sunshine Coast Hospital and Health Service (SCHHS) Mental Health and Addiction Services staff have teamed up with OneWave, using surfing and the natural environment to help people recover from mental health issues.

OneWave is non-profit organisation raising awareness for mental health by combining physical health and clinical life skills in a neutral, non-intrusive environment while improving social engagement and quality of life of mental health clients.

“The OneWave program has been around since 2013 but this is the first time it has been run on the Sunshine Coast and will be the first time that OneWave has teamed up with a Queensland public mental health team,” Mental Health and Addiction Services Psychologist Jeremy Thomas said.

Since launching in Bondi in March 2013, OneWave has reached over 70 beaches worldwide. The program uses the beach as an alternative location for therapy and can play a useful role in helping people recover from mental illness.

“Surfing is a fantastic way to improve physical fitness, furthermore, it really requires focus, it takes your mind into the moment and away from other things, which can be very beneficial, in addition to this, learning a new skill and gaining surf safety awareness can have profound impact on improving self-esteem and confidence” Mr Thomas said.

“The ultimate goal of this program is to improve wellbeing and quality of life for people experiencing mental health issues, by providing an innovative approach to treatment, and support that helps people to achieve the best outcomes for their mental health, and physical wellbeing.”

Two surf instructors along with mental health professionals and OneWave volunteers will take out ten participants for the first session, which will be held at Alexandra Headland on Wednesday, 28 September.

The program will be rolled out at Noosa Heads and Alexandra Headland initially. Given the access to beaches on the Sunshine Coast, SCHHS staff hope to make the program a regular occurrence and collect evidence that supports the expected benefits.

Media are invited to attend the first OneWave event at Alexandra Headland.
When: Wednesday, 28 September from 2pm.
Where: Alexandra Headland beach, at the BBQ area between the Surf Club and skate park.

ENDS

Media contact: Alexia Kelly | 5470 5833

Follow us!