

Media statement

4 October 2018

Mental Health Week – Shatter the Stigma

Sunshine Coast Hospital and Health Service (SCHHS) is hoping to shatter the stigma surrounding mental health next week.

SCHHS is supporting Queensland Mental Health Week, which aims to promote the importance of positive mental health and wellbeing at home, at work and at play.

During the week, people across Queensland come together through events, conversations and activities to value mental health; their own, that of loved ones, friends and colleagues, and people in our communities that need support.

Lisa Newport, Acting Service Director of SCHHS' Mental Health and Addiction Services, says we can all play a part in the positive mental health of our community.

"The Mental Health Week theme for 2018 is 'Shatter the Stigma'. Stigma associated with mental illness is still very present in our community and something we all need to work on," Ms Newport said.

"This is a great opportunity to promote and enhance awareness of the stigma related to mental health, the effect it has on individuals and their families and ways to challenge it.

"By having these conversations, we hope to see a heightened and sustained awareness, an improved understanding and an organisational culture of inclusion which supports our colleagues, consumers, visitors and the community," Ms Newport said.

For many people living with mental illness, stigma and discrimination is a part of their lives. Stigma and the fear of being judged is a major barrier to people seeking help. A delay in seeking help can have a significant impact on the quality of someone's life.

"During Mental Health Week, we are asking people to make a personalised pledge on ways they can help shatter the stigma, and we will be displaying them throughout the week, and at display stands at Sunshine Coast University Hospital and Nambour General Hospital," Ms Newport said.

This year's theme encourages people to value mental health with six (6) steps that have been proven to improve wellbeing. They are:

1. Be active – do what you can, enjoy what you do, move your mood
2. Keep learning – embrace new experiences see opportunities surprise yourself
3. Give – your time, your words, your presence

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4. Connect – talk, listen be there
5. Take notice - remember the simple things that give you joy
6. Care for our planet – it's the home we all share

For more information on Mental Health Week events, visit <https://www.qldmentalhealthweek.org.au/>.

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