**4 October 2019**

## Take time for mental health

Mental health well being is important for every single one of us, yet it is a part of life that is often overlooked. Our busy lives get in the way of us taking time to nurture our mental health, as does a fear of feeling vulnerable should we reveal our mental health challenges.

**Queensland Mental Health Week** (5-13 October) is an opportunity to shine a spotlight on what all of us can do to look after our mental health and reach out to those who need support. This year's theme is **Take time – for mental health.**

Lisa Newport, General Manager, Mental Health and Addiction Services, Sunshine Coast Hospital and Health Service, said 'take time' is about the simple, yet proven, things everyone can do to boost their mental health wellbeing.

"Mental health is important for each and every one of us. Just like our physical health, we need to embed important strategies to maintain good mental health. By practicing these strategies and taking time in our busy life's, we can live our best lives.

"Sadly, suicide is the leading cause of death for Queenslanders aged 15-44 years and one in every two Queenslanders will experience mental illness in their lifetime.

"This week is important to educate people about how to look after their mental health, break down the stigma associated with mental illness and remind us to reach out to people in our communities who may need support," Ms Newport said.

Pearl Krupa, SCHHS Peer Support Worker, said we cannot underestimate the simple actions we can take to look after our own mental health and those already experiencing their own mental health issues.

"We can lower the risk of developing mental health problems by taking time to connect with other people. This can be by having open and honest discussions about how we are travelling.

"If someone does open up to you about their mental health struggles, first and foremost, listen to the person. You don't necessarily have to try and fix the issue on the spot, sometimes just the mere presence of someone walking alongside someone can be enough to make it through the day," she said.

Six simple actions we can take are:
1. Take time to **be active** – it's good for your mind as well as your body
2. Take time to **learn** – learning new things can make you more confident as well as being fun

3. Take time to **give** – Practicing small acts of kindness, volunteering time or simply helping a friend in need can help you feel more satisfied with life
4. Take time to **connect** – spending time with other people is important to everyone's mental wellbeing
5. Take time to **enjoy the moment** – Paying more attention to the present and the world around you helps relieve stress and makes you feel better
6. Take time to **care for our planet** – keeping our planet in shape is the best recipe for world wellbeing.

If you are experiencing a mental health issue or concern, the biggest priority may be getting some help. Having a chat with a local doctor is a good first step towards getting the right support and treatment. www.headtohealth.gov.au also has a list of phone and webchat contacts you can use to get immediate support.

**MEDIA OPPORTUNITY**

**Interview and photo opportunities will be available with SCHHS Mental Health and Addiction Services General Manager Lisa Newport and a Peer Support worker.**

**When: Thursday October 10, 9:30am**
**Where: Sunshine Coast University Hospital, meet at main reception.**

**ENDS**

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