

Diary



We would like to acknowledge and thank Black Dog Institute for their permission in using content from their website to develop this diary.

We acknowledge and pay respects to the traditional owners of the lands on which MPHn operates; the Wiradjuri, Nari Nari, Wemba Wemba, Perepa Perepa, Yorta Yorta, Ngunnawal, Ngarigo, Bangerang and Yitha Yitha Nations. We recognise our communities are made up of many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples descended from additional mobs and clans who also call the Murrumbidgee region home.

We pay respect to elders past, present and future and recognise these lands have always been places of traditional healing and medicine, and this plays a role in shaping future health services.

mphn.org.au

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This publication is for information purposes only. Please consult your general practitioner or other healthcare professional for personal medical advice.

July



*Leeton NSW. Image courtesy of
Leeton Shire Council*



Dry July

Helping yourself after a disaster

Recovering after a disaster doesn't mean that you forget about it. Recovery means becoming less upset when you remember the event, and having more confidence in your ability to cope as time goes on.

The following strategies may help you recover:

1. Acknowledge your experience

- a. You have been through a hard time. Many people will have an emotional reaction. Give yourself permission to feel the way you do.
- b. Give yourself time to re-think. A traumatic event can affect the way you see the world, your life, your goals, and your relationships.

2. Take care of yourself

- a. Rest and relax. You need time to replenish.
- b. Get regular exercise and eat regular, wellbalanced meals. Good physical health supports good mental health.
- c. Cut back on tea, coffee, chocolate, soft drink, and cigarettes. If your body is tense, stimulants will add to this feeling.
- d. Try to avoid using drugs or alcohol to cope as these can lead to more problems.
- e. Self-soothe through the senses: pleasant sounds, sights, smells, tastes and sensations to help you wind down, relax and feel settled.

3. Have a routine where possible

- a. Structure your days and try to schedule at least one enjoyable activity each day.
- b. Make a timetable for each day, including exercise, work and relaxation.
- c. Get back into your normal routine as soon as possible but take it easy, do it bit by bit.

4. Ask for help and stay connected

- a. Spend time with people you care about, even if you don't want to talk about what happened.
- b. Sometimes you will want to be alone, and that's OK, but don't become too isolated.
- c. Try not to bottle up your feelings or block them out. Talk about your feelings to other people who will understand, if and when you feel able to do so.
- d. Write about your feelings if you feel that you can't talk to others about them.

5. Don't over do it

- a. Tackle the things that need to be done a bit at a time, and count each success.
- b. Don't do activities or work to avoid thinking about or remembering what happened.
- c. Stay informed by watching the news or reading the newspaper, but limit exposure to what you really need.
- d. Make as many small daily decisions as possible - such as what you will eat or what you will do to relax - as this can help you to feel more in control of your life.
- e. Avoid making important life decisions such as moving house or changing jobs.

If you've tried these strategies and things still aren't getting better after three or four weeks, or if you are having trouble coping, talk to your doctor or mental health professional about getting some professional support to help you feel better. **Download a copy of *Recovery after trauma – A guide for people with posttraumatic stress disorder* from phoenixaustralia.org**

JULY

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JULY

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World Population Day

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JULY

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JULY

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World Hepatitis Day

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International Day of Friendship 30

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At the moment, I'm in a great place. I have a wonderful partner and family, and a great support system. But mental health is something I'll manage for the rest of my life. For me, it's just an illness I manage day-to-day. I know there are going to be times when I feel down, and I need to recognise the signs and amp up my self-care and ask for help if I need.

Seryn Adams



Notes and things to do

A large rectangular box with a solid blue border, containing 20 horizontal dotted lines for writing. The lines are evenly spaced and extend across the width of the box, providing a template for notes and tasks.

August



*Lake Jerilderie NSW. Image courtesy of
Murrumbidgee Council*



Tradies National Health Month

**Struggling with life, Thinking of suicide,
feeling Overwhelmed,
feel as though things are Pointless?**

STOP

**Don't act
These
feelings
will pass.**



TAKE

**a breath
mate.**



ONE

**thing at
a time.**



PICK

**up the
phone.**



**In an emergency phone 000
Murrumbidgee Accessline 1800 800 944
Lifeline 13 11 14**

A message from:



Health
Murrumbidgee
Local Health District



NSW Police Force



NSW Ambulance

wellways



Lifeline

Scan to visit our website



AUGUST

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National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children's Day 04

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AUGUST

Dying to Know Day

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International Youth Day

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International Left Handers Day

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AUGUST

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World Humanitarian Day 19

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AUGUST

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International Overdose Awareness Day 31

MURRUMBIDGEE LOCAL RESPONSE GROUP



The Murrumbidgee Local Response Group (LRG) comprises of five organisations dedicated to supporting local communities during times of need. These organisations include, Murrumbidgee Local Health District, Murrumbidgee Primary Health Network, NSW Ambulance, NSW Police and Wellways Murrumbidgee. Each member of the Local Response Group is employed by the mentioned organisations but bring individual experience and expertise to the group.

The LRG convenes to respond to the needs of the community after a suicide event or critical incident has occurred and adheres to the Murrumbidgee Suicide Event/Critical Incident Communications and Response Protocol.

If you are aware of a critical event, including a suicide within the Murrumbidgee region you can notify the LRG at localresponsegroup@mphn.org.au

Supporting suicide prevention and aftercare in the Murrumbidgee



Notes and things to do

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September

*Gundagai NSW. Image courtesy of
James Houghton, photographer*



Prostate Cancer Awareness Month

Practice self care

Self care is care provided 'for you by you'. It is about identifying what you need to help keep yourself well and connected to your loved ones and your community. Although it can be hard, looking out for yourself means taking the time to do some of the activities that make you feel better about yourself and your life situation.

1. Stay connected with your community. Attend a local football match, meet with your friends, organise a get together with old mates.
2. Mix with others for work and play.
3. Do things that make you feel happy or good about yourself.
4. Take care of yourself physically – try to maintain a healthy diet, drink water regularly and exercise when you can.
5. Make sure you get enough rest. Sleep improves memory, sharpens attention and reduces stress.
6. If you are stressed or overwhelmed, understand that this is OK. It is OK not to feel OK, the important thing is to connect with others and share how you are feeling.
7. Give yourself a pat on the back – it is important to celebrate and acknowledge the good things (even when they might be few). This helps us feel a little better about how we are feeling.

Remember: Looking after ourselves is just as important as looking after others. To help reduce the negative effects of stress and worry, take time out for yourself or try something new.

Three things I'm going to do to practice self care this September:

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SEPTEMBER

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SEPTEMBER

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R U OK? Day

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World Suicide Prevention Day

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World Sepsis Day

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SEPTEMBER

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International Day of Peace, World Alzheimer's Day

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SEPTEMBER

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World Heart Day

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HEAD TO HEALTH

Head to Health
is a free
confidential
service from
the Australian
Government



It connects you with the help and support you need to keep mentally healthy.

Call 1800 595 212 for free mental health advice and support, or visit headtohealth.gov.au

Notes and things to do

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October



*Galore NSW. Image courtesy of
James Houghton, photographer*



Mental Health Month, Breast Cancer Awareness Month

October is Mental Health Month

Good mental health is more than just the absence of mental illness. Here are four tips for building good mental health.

1. **Build relationships:** Having good relationships with other people is the most important factor contributing to a sense of wellbeing. This can include family, friends, workmates and others in the community. Investing time and energy in your relationships can lead to great benefits for all involved.
2. **Exercise and stay healthy:** Exercise has been shown to increase wellbeing as well as reduce symptoms of depression and anxiety. Good physical health is related to better mental health so a healthy diet, avoiding excess alcohol or drugs, and regular check-ups with the doctor can all help.
3. **Identify and use your strengths:** We all have different strengths and weaknesses but finding out what you are really good at and using those talents can increase wellbeing. Using your strengths to help others or contribute to the community creates a sense of meaning and purpose.
4. **Create flow:** Flow is the state of being so highly involved in an enjoyable activity that you lose track of time. This usually happens when the level of challenge is about right for your level of skill. Flow can happen during work, hobbies, creative arts or sports.
5. **Seek help:** If you are struggling to feel happy, cope with everyday life, find meaning or feel connected to others, see your doctor or a mental health professional. Almost half of Australians will experience a mental disorder at some time in their life — depression, anxiety and substance use are the most common disorders.

If you are in an emergency, or at immediate risk of harm to yourself or others, please contact emergency services on 000. If you need to speak to someone straight away, call Murrumbidgee Accessline on 1800 800 944.

Common signs people may need support

Those who have had or are having thoughts of suicide talk about experiencing some or all of the following:

- An extreme sense of worthlessness or of being a burden on people.
- A sense of hopelessness, that things will never change or get better.
- Withdrawing from everyone, becoming isolated and alone.
- Thinking and talking frequently about death or ending their life.
- Taking steps towards ending their life, such as giving away possessions, saying goodbye to people, finding ways and means to act on their thoughts (medication, weapons).
- Taking increased risks, such as excessive alcohol and drug use, or putting themselves in potentially dangerous situations.

Noticing any of these signs in yourself or observing them in others is time to take action to stay safe.

Learn to save a life

QPR QUESTION.
PERSUADE.
REFER.

FREE online training - it takes less than an hour



mphn.org.au/qpr

OCTOBER

International Day of Older Persons

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OCTOBER

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World Mental Health Day, World Homeless Day

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OCTOBER

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World Osteoporosis Day 20

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OCTOBER

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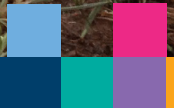
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Notes and things to do

A large rectangular box with a blue border, containing 20 horizontal dotted lines for writing. The lines are evenly spaced and extend across the width of the box, providing a template for notes and tasks.

November

*Coolamon NSW. Image courtesy of
Coolamon Shire Council and
Kathy Maslin, photographer*



November, Pancreatic Cancer Month

Notes and things to do

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Mental health challenges affect everyone

For resources and support go to

 mphin.org.au/connect



In a crisis, call Accessline in the Murrumbidgee 1800 800 944

In an emergency, call 000

For general support, call Lifeline on 13 11 14

phn
MURRUMBIDGEE
An Australian Government Initiative

NOVEMBER

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NOVEMBER

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Remembrance Day

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World Pneumonia Day

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World Kindness Day

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World Diabetes Day

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NOVEMBER

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International Day for Tolerance

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World Prematurity Day

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NOVEMBER

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The impacts of death by suicide are far-reaching. It can be difficult to know where to go and what to do in times of immense sadness and loss.

The Supporting Murrumbidgee Communities Impacted by Suicide guide contains practical info and tips including safely communicating about suicide, supporting people who are bereaved, what to consider when holding a community event, self care, helplines and local services

This guide was developed by the Murrumbidgee Local Response Group.

Read the guide here: mphn.org.au/supporting-murrumbidgee-communities

Notes and things to do

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December

*Berrigan NSW. Image courtesy of
Berrigan Shire Council*



Decembeard

The 12 dos and don'ts of Christmas

Christmas is a time that we should be spending with our family and friends, laughing, remembering those loved ones who have left us, talking about old memories and making new ones. However, a lot of the time we get caught up with trying to do so much before the 25th of December that we become overwhelmed, stressed and worn out.

Here are 12 dos and don'ts for Christmas that will help you enjoy the festive season and have the energy to do so.

DO get enough sleep

Sleep is extremely important if you want to keep your energy levels up and be able to tackle the day ahead. Plan a time to go to bed each night that will allow you to have the recommended eight to nine hours sleep.

DO fit in exercise

Try and fit in exercise up to three times a week to help with higher energy levels and getting out of the slump of the Christmas food and drinks. A walk with the dog, friend or partner is a great way to get outdoors, especially when the weather is warm and the sun is out longer.

DO write lists

Write down your list for who you need to buy for, what presents you are purchasing, what your food and drink shopping is and the around-the-house chores that need to be done before everyone comes over for Christmas. This will help you keep on top of everything and means you can even ask your family to help.

DO plan ahead

Planning ahead means writing your lists, knowing who is coming for Christmas, knowing how much food to buy and knowing when you can start prepping the food for Christmas Day.

DO wear Christmas gear

Throw on that Santa hat at the work Christmas party, wear your festive t-shirt down the street while shopping and definitely throw on your Christmas outfit, earrings, cap or shoes on Christmas Day!

DO make the most of Christmas

Embrace all that the Christmas season has to offer, make it fun, laugh with friends and family and most of all enjoy Christmas Day with your loved ones eating, drinking and being merry.

DON'T overspend

Create yourself a budget for presents, food and parties this festive season. This will help you to not overspend and to not feel guilty when Christmas passes.

DON'T procrastinate

Stop putting off your to-do list and get it done early. Procrastinating your Christmas shopping, food shopping and even Christmas Day prep will cause you to get stressed as the 25th of December rolls closer.

DON'T try and do it all yourself

Asking for help with shopping or chores around the house does not mean that people will think any less of you. Having your family help out with the shopping, cleaning the house and helping you prep the food will give you more time to spend with them.

If you are hosting a Christmas party, ask your friends to help serve the food or bring the meat in from the BBQ, meaning you will be able to enjoy more of the party with all of your guests and not just be behind the scenes for the whole event.

DON'T get stressed if your feast doesn't look like it does in the recipe book

Create your own version of beauty and happiness in your Christmas feast for everyone to enjoy and do not stress if it doesn't turn out exactly what it looks like in the recipe book. Make it unique to you and that is what your family will love.

DON'T expect to attend every single Christmas event

This is one of the busiest times of the year for Christmas parties and events. It feels like there is no free time to get any present shopping done or even time to decorate your own home. Of all the events you get invited to, do not feel like you have to attend all of them. People understand this time of year is extremely busy and they will not hold it against you.

DON'T neglect your family and friends

Don't turn people away or say you do not have time to spend going for a coffee or sitting at the table for dinner. If you are worried you will not get your present shopping in, ask your friend to meet you and take them shopping with a coffee in hand. Sit down at the table for dinner and go through your lists with your family and make a plan on what should be the next item to tick off the list.

DECEMBER

World AIDS Day 01

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International Day of People with a Disability 03

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International Volunteer Day 05

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DECEMBER

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Human Rights Day

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DECEMBER

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DECEMBER

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Christmas Day

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Boxing Day

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*I am also involved in a group
for retired men called OM:NI
– Old Men: New Ideas.*

*OM:NI gives you something
to do and somewhere to be.
If you've got depression, you
don't want to be staying at
home thinking about it. It
helps to be able to talk to a
group where you haven't got
a beer in front of you making
things worse.*

Peter McCallum



Notes and things to do

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January

*Adelong NSW. Image courtesy of
Cristy Houghton, photographer*





Mental Health and Drug & Alcohol services available in the Murrumbidgee region

For people who are experiencing mental health and/or drug and alcohol concerns as well as their friends, family, carers and service providers.



 [mapmyrecovery.org.au](https://www.mapmyrecovery.org.au)



MapMyRecovery is funded by Murrumbidgee PHN and Murrumbidgee Local Health District

JANUARY

New Year's Day

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JANUARY

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JANUARY

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JANUARY

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Australia Day

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MPHN Central Access and Navigation Service

The MPHN Central Access and Navigation service provides support to community members, GPs and other service providers to help navigate the Murrumbidgee mental health system. The team will connect people with our commissioned mental health providers and can also connect people with broader services to best meet people's needs.

How do I make contact with the Central Access and Navigation Service?

Referrals can be sent via the MPHN Central Access and Navigation Service. **This is not an emergency or crisis service.** You may be required to leave a message. All messages are returned within one business day.

Phone: 1800 931 603
Fax: 02 6921 9911
Email: can@mphn.org.au



Mental Health
**Central Access
and Navigation**

Notes and things to do

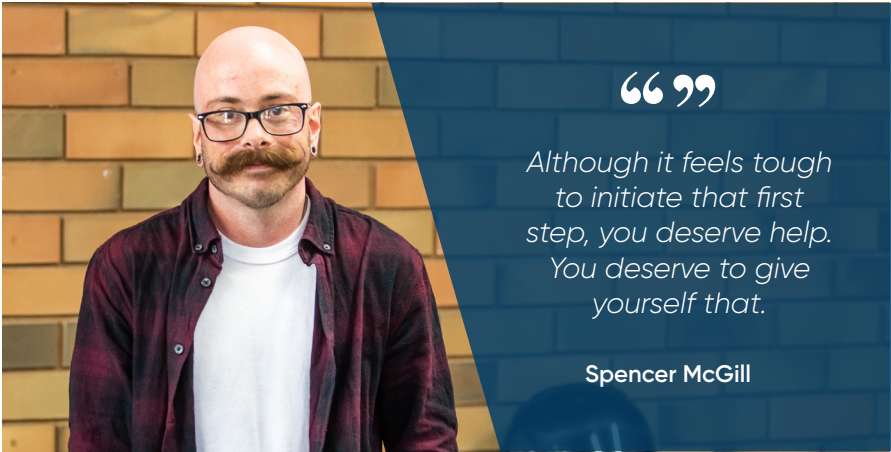
A large rectangular box with a solid blue border, containing 25 horizontal dotted lines for writing. The lines are evenly spaced and extend across the width of the box, providing a template for notes and tasks.

February

*Griffith NSW. Image courtesy of
Griffith Shire Council*



Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month



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Although it feels tough to initiate that first step, you deserve help. You deserve to give yourself that.

Spencer McGill

Coming full circle: Living and working with mental illness

In July 2022, Spencer McGill won the Enriching Consumer Experience Award at the Murrumbidgee Local Health District Awards for his work as a Peer Support Worker with MyStep to Mental Wellbeing (MyStep) in Deniliquin. It's an honour that took him by surprise, but it turns out being a Peer Support Worker is a role he's been preparing for all his life.

At MyStep, Spencer works in conjunction with therapists to provide support to people living with mental illness.

"My role is dynamic and can look very different each day depending on the person and their needs. That could be working on someone's exercise goal, going out in the community with them to practice being in social situations or meeting with somebody at school to chat with them there where they're most comfortable.

"Being a peer support worker means that I have lived experience of mental illness as a qualification for my job. Clinicians are good at doing therapy, and I'm good at knowing how it feels to access a service.

"I never knew mental health peer support workers existed until I accessed services myself. I met two amazing peer support workers and thought, 'Wow, one day I hope I'm well enough to do something like that'. They gave me an amazing sense of hope and recovery, just seeing somebody else navigate the world, working in the field, living with mental illness."

Now, Spencer says it feels like coming full circle.

"I never thought I could hold down a job let alone work in something I am so passionate about. Five years after meeting these peer support workers, here I am doing that same thing to help others like me – it's pretty cool."

Read more of Spencer's story at mphn.org.au/story/spencer or for more stories to inspire you visit mphn.org.au/tellitwell.



MyStep to Mental Wellbeing (MyStep) offers a range of mental health supports for all ages from health information and early intervention to psychological treatment for mental health issue. Services are delivered face to face and using telehealth.

Refer yourself or someone you care for via the MPHN Central Access and Navigation Service on **1800 931 603** or **can@mphn.org.au**

FEBRUARY

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World Cancer Day

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FEBRUARY

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Anniversary of the National Apology

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Valentine's Day

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FEBRUARY

International Childhood Cancer Day

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FEBRUARY

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Teal Ribbon Day

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Notes and things to do

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March



*Junee NSW. Image courtesy of
Junee Shire Council*

Melanoma March, Endometriosis Awareness Month

Notes and things to do

A large rectangular area with a blue border, containing ten horizontal dotted lines for writing notes.



“ ”

My advice to young people is find your tribe. Find the people around you who are going to accept you for who you are. Those are the people that will make you the strongest you can be. And once you find that tribe, speak up for those around you. Start using your voice to impact people's lives for the better.

Kane Stewart

MARCH

World Compliment Day

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World Hearing Day

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MARCH

International Women's Day

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MARCH

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International Day of Happiness

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Harmony Day

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MARCH

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Notes and things to do

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April

*Hay NSW. Image courtesy of
Hay Shire Council*



Are you worried about someone close to you?

Steps that might help:

ACT NOW – do something to let that person know you care and want to support them.

Acknowledge your reactions – learning someone close to you could be thinking about suicide can be scary. Your natural reaction may be panic, avoidance, or to look for a quick fix. Take some deep breaths, slow the situation, listen and plan.

Ask if they are thinking about suicide – this is a hard question to ask, but it may help them to know someone has noticed. Asking the 'S' question is the only way to know that thoughts of suicide is what you are dealing with.

Be there for them – listen to what they are feeling. Spend time and let them know you care. In times like this you need to hear them, not try to fix it. Just being there and hearing their story is most important.

Enquire about safety – ask - Have you attempted suicide before? What support do you need to stay safe for now? IF YOU ARE REALLY WORRIED, DO NOT LEAVE THAT PERSON ALONE – call **Murrumbidgee Accessline on 1800 800 944 for further guidance or 000 for an immediate response.**

Decide what to do – talk together about where to from here. Seek help from others such as a friend, family member, or a professional. Keeping them safe for now is the most important thing, until additional support can be sought.

Take action – connect with a professional such as GP, counsellor, mental health service, priest, coach, crisis supports, emergency services. Offer to support the person to make and attend an appointment.

Look after yourself – share the load with others such as friends and family. Connect with support services such as Lifeline or local services. Remember to take time out from stressors and stay connected with your community.

Mental health challenges affect everyone

For resources and support go to



mphin.org.au/connect



In a crisis, call Accessline in the Murrumbidgee 1800 800 944

In an emergency, call 000

For general support, call Lifeline on 13 11 14

APRIL

April Falls Day

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World Autism Awareness Day

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APRIL

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World Parkinson's Day

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APRIL

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World Haemophilia Day

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APRIL

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ANZAC Day

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World Day for Safety and Health at Work

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Notes and things to do

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May

*Bland NSW. Image courtesy of
Bland Shire Council*



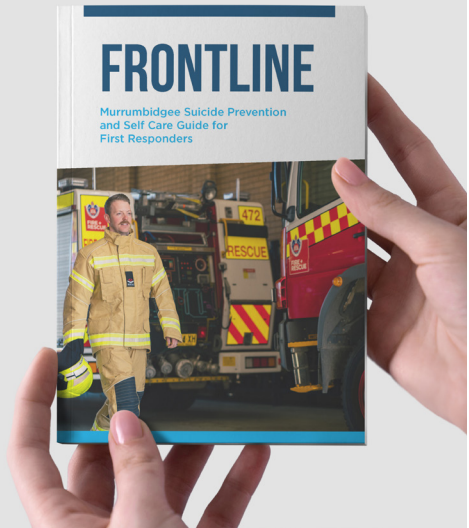
Lung Health Awareness Month

Notes and things to do

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I hope that people who are finding it hard to cope, will talk to someone. It doesn't have to be a member of their family or group of friends, it can be anyone who will listen to you.”

**Colin Smeeth AFSM
Rural Fire Service Group Captain**



View the Frontline Guide at mphn.org.au/frontline-guide

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World Asthma Day 04

International Day of the Midwife, World Hand Hygiene Day 05

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MAY

World Ovarian Cancer Day

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World Lupus Day

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International Nurses Day

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International Day of Families 15

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World Hypertension Day, IDAHOBIT (International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia) 17

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MAY

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World Schizophrenia Awareness Day

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National Sorry Day

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Notes and things to do

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June



*Moama NSW. Image courtesy of
Murray River Shire Council*

National Burns Awareness Month, Bowel Cancer Awareness Month, Pride Month

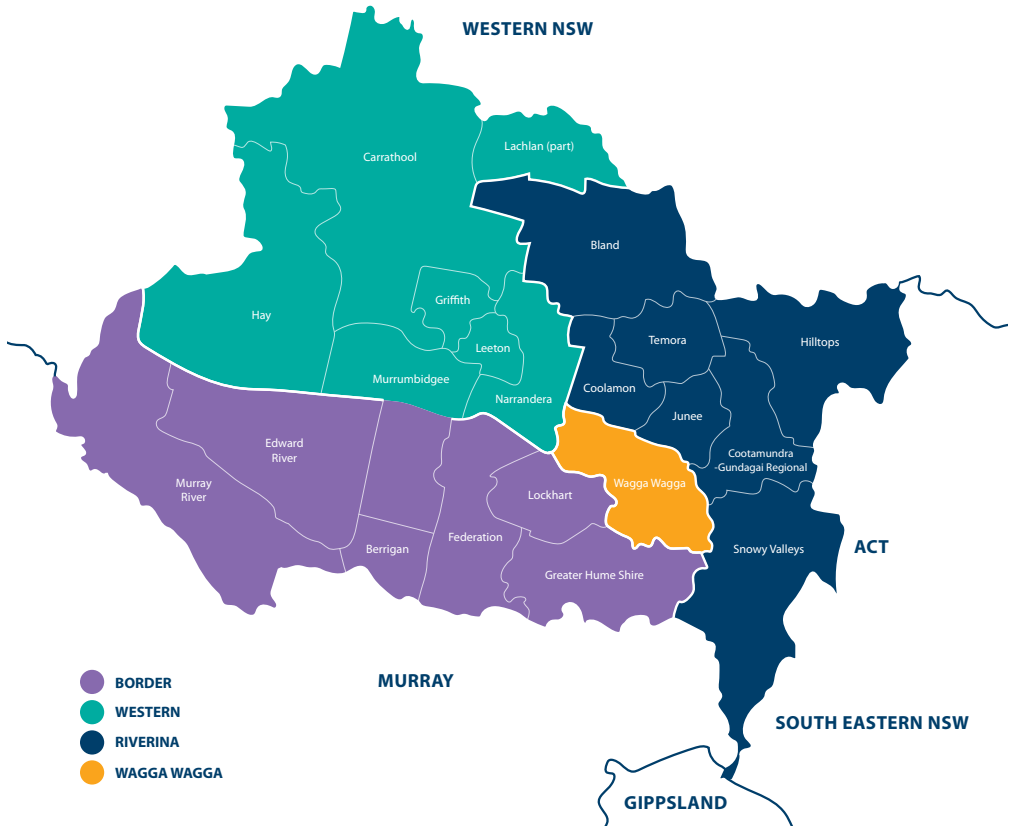
Murrumbidgee Primary Health Network

Murrumbidgee Primary Health Network (MPHN) is a not-for-profit organisation servicing more than 252,000 people, living across 508 communities on a land mass of 136,124 square kilometres. It is one of 31 local and independent PHNs established nationally to support the primary healthcare sector and improve health outcomes, particularly for those at-risk populations.

MPHN is funded predominately by the Australian Government to tackle identified national objectives and local priority areas including mental health, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health, population health, health workforce, digital health, aged care and alcohol and other drugs.

MPHN achieves this by understanding the region's health needs to inform:

- funding services to meet population health needs;
- integrating local services and systems and improve coordination of care; and
- supporting the development of a local sustainable health care workforce through quality improvement and professional development.



JUNE

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World Blood Donor Day

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JUNE

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World Refugee Day

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JUNE

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Notes and things to do

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Special thanks to our supporters of this diary



Riverina Local Land Services
Murray Local Land Services

Need help now?

If emergency help is required, call 000

Call the following numbers for free, confidential support.

Murrumbidgee AccessLine 1800 800 944

Lifeline 13 11 14

NSW Mental Health Line 1800 011 511

Mensline 1300 78 99 78

Kids Helpline 1800 55 1800

beyondblue 1300 224 636

phn
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