

TIPSHEET

MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING EVENT SUGGESTIONS

Initiatives that raise awareness of mental health and wellbeing may have a positive impact on people's mental health and wellbeing, reduce stigma, and encourage help seeking behaviours. Implementing events and initiatives in your sport may help provide a positive impact on member's mental health and wellbeing.

The purpose of this **Mental Health and Wellbeing Event Suggestions Tipsheet** is to provide some examples of mental health initiatives that State Sporting Associations (SSAs) may wish to implement or share with their community.



EVENT TIPS

- Mental health and wellbeing initiatives do not have to cost money or take up too much time to be highly effective at creating a culture of support and inclusivity.
- Encourage members to participate in a mental health round or initiative. This can be structured or unstructured with the SSA selecting a sport wide initiative, or encouraging members to create their own format. Check out the [Mental Health and Wellbeing Event Guide Template](#) in the [Sport Administrator eToolkit for Mental Health and Wellbeing](#) to help you communicate this to your members.
- Incentivise participation through a competition, prizes, acknowledgements and awards promoted online for the best community initiative or examples of success stories.
- Be alcohol free. Steer away from using alcohol as prizes and run an event where alcohol is not expected.
- Decide early what type of event you are going to run and communicate as soon as possible to give members plenty of notice so that they can prepare.
- Try and link an event with existing resources and external organisations, charities, local businesses and local governments. Local organisations may be available to provide sponsorship, resources or grants.
- Invite the wider community outside of current membership. This can help support the wider community and also encourage local businesses and organisations to get involved, support and sponsor. It is also a great way to raise a club or organisation's profile by promoting an inclusive environment that will attract new members.
- One-off events are useful for sponsorship or starting a conversation but should be supported with more substance – follow up presentations, contacts and links with a call to action (e.g. check-in-on-a-mate or seek help) or practical skills (e.g training or knowledge of resources and links), are advised. Use the event to launch an action or initiative that will run all season long.
- Ensure that resources and support are visible and left behind after any event so that people can access them later in private. Use [True Sport Posters](#) or put information in booklets/programs or venue maps.
- Celebrate the good work being done in your sport by promoting successful initiatives and resources available via social media and any other channels available. Collect feedback and review the success of initiatives to improve on any future plans.
- Share and promote [True Sport Mental Health and Wellbeing](#) resources and always provide links to mental health services in any communications regarding mental health and wellbeing such as:

Mental Health Emergency Response Line

Metro – 1300 555 788
 Rural – 1800 676 822
 RuralLink – 1800 552 002

Provides 24-hour telephone service for people experiencing a mental health crisis.

Lifeline

13 11 14

Provides 24-hour crisis counselling, support groups and suicide prevention services.

Beyond Blue

1300 224 636

Free telephone and online counselling service is open 24/7 for everyone in Australia.

Alternatively, visit the [True Sport – Community Links](#) webpage for more support services.

EXAMPLE ACTIONS

Check out 12 mental health and wellbeing awareness events, initiatives and actions that you could select from to implement in your sport!

1

Encourage a member catch up/get together where clubs host a member catch up/get together after training or a game. This can be a BBQ, meal, coffee, quiz night or any other way to bring the community together. The theme of the event can vary but may be something along the lines of:

- Checking in with a teammate to start a conversation about mental health.
- Bringing the sporting community together.
- Encouraging asking for help and where to go for support.

2

Fundraise for an external mental health charity, cause or initiative for your club or organisation such as paying for guest presenters, training for members or equipment branded with mental health messaging. Collect donations or a percentage of food sales to be donated to a local mental health charity or use for the club. Invite mental health charities and organisations to come to a sporting event to receive the donation and/or visit to provide a talk to members and have representatives, stalls or resources available at events.

3

Show solidarity for mental health causes with a club or organisation group photo and social media posts of support. This could include a group photo after a game with everyone dressing to a theme (think funky socks or a specific colour), videos of members promising to be a listening ear to anyone at the club, and posts highlighting any initiatives or resources available within the sporting community.

4

Create a lasting monument such as artwork or visual reminder of the club/organisation's commitment to mental health issues. Initiatives such as the [Blue Tree Project](#) can be engaged, or the organisation can create their own. Including members in the design or build process is a great way to get buy in. This can be something small, portable and temporary, or large and permanent depending on facilities. Encourage clubs to be creative and celebrate and promote successful initiatives for others to emulate.

5

Guest speaker/visit from mental health experts or organisations can help provide more in-depth information and support. Invite a safe, evidenced-based and professional organisation to talk to members or present at any event you run.

The [Assessment Criteria for External Mental Health Programs and Service Providers](#) is a tool available to help decide whether an organisation is suitable to engage.

6

Mental Health tent, safe space, or bench provides a location that is crewed by a Mental Health Champion or appropriate member where mental health information and resources are provided.

Always ensure that mental health links to professionals are available and the purpose/messaging of the safe space is clear. You don't want people expecting to get professional advice if it is not available.

7

Wellbeing events/groups outside of your scheduled sport are a way to bring new members, include members unable to physically participate, and encourage getting together outside of your normal training. Examples could be fitness/bootcamp sessions, yoga and stretching, a walking group, coffee catch up, wellbeing or fundraising committee. Bring a wellbeing focus by providing resources, encouraging inclusion and support internally, or inviting guest organisations to support or present.

8

Community Service is a way for your club to come together to support a mental health and wellbeing organisation, or provide a positive outcome for the community. Clubs and members could come together to clean up an area, build something or volunteer for a community event. This is a great way to provide an act of service, bring your community together and raise awareness or fundraise. Give it a mental health lens by linking to an existing, or your own mental health initiative, and provide mental health messaging with any promotion.

9

Spotlight the Mental Health Champion(s) so members with mental health and wellbeing questions know who to contact. The **True Sport Mental Health and Wellbeing eToolkits** will provide the details on how to implement a Mental Health Champion(s) at your club or organisation.

10

Mental Health Training is provided by a range of organisations at various costs including some listed on the **True Sport – Community Links** webpage. Your club or organisation may choose key members to upskill to help support the rest of the community and build on their knowledge and skills as a Mental Health Champion.

11

Mental Health Champion Network is a way to host representatives from within your sporting community to come together to brainstorm, network and share success stories and initiatives that have worked in their own individual sporting communities. This is a great way to use any expertise, creativity or experience that may exist in your sport without your organisation having to lead the mental health initiative. It can also encourage buy-in from members by involving them in planning and designing the year's mental health initiatives.

12

Record and share a leadership communication where a short message from the Chair, President, CEO, well known personality or other leader promotes the role that the sporting community plays in supporting mental health and wellbeing. Include a call to action that shares information about the resources available through the **True Sport Mental Health and Wellbeing** initiative, and practical steps that clubs and other sporting organisations can take to have a positive impact on their member's mental health and wellbeing.



TOP TIPS

- Hold an event where alcohol is not expected and avoid providing alcohol as prizes or thank you gifts. Research shows that there is a link between alcohol consumption and reduced mental health and wellbeing. For more information visit <https://alcoholthinkagain.com.au/>.
- Do what is within your sporting organisation's capability and capacity. Just one small thing can make a big difference!
- While bringing the community together is a great outcome, it can be strengthened by providing mental health resources as well as links to services should someone want more information or support. At all events, The Mental Health Champion(s) or appropriate club leader should as a minimum:
 - Welcome everyone.
 - Explain why they are hosting the event (e.g. highlighting the importance of mental health and wellbeing to the club).
 - How the club plans to support members' mental health (e.g. who to contact, resources available, events to be hosted, or initiatives at the club).
 - Provide links and contact details to a few mental health services such as Lifeline, Beyond Blue or others that you can find on the [True Sport – Community Links](#) webpage along with any mental health communication, event, or initiative.

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In an Emergency Dial 000
For support call Lifeline 13 11 14
or visit [True Sport – Community Links](#) for more services.

