

National communications charter

action guide for communities

The *National communications charter (the Charter)* is an evidence-informed document to help guide the way mental health and suicide prevention sectors, governments, businesses, communities and individuals communicate about mental health and wellbeing, mental health concerns and suicide.

Below are some practical examples of how the seven principles can be implemented by communities:

The Charter principles

Example activities

1
We will make communicating about mental health, social and emotional wellbeing and suicide prevention a priority.

- Host activities and events that promote mental health and wellbeing within your community.
- Prioritise talking about mental health, social and emotional wellbeing, and suicide prevention within your community.
- Apply for community grants that focus on mental health and suicide prevention.
- Develop or be a part of a suicide prevention community action plan.

2
We will respect the diversity of, and our actions will be guided by, people with lived and living experiences of mental health concerns and suicide.

- Include people who have lived or diverse experiences of mental health concerns or suicide in community meetings, events, training, development and decision making.
- Invite a trained lived experience speaker to share their story at community events.
- Consider the cultural and diverse needs of your community when promoting and hosting events.
- Promote a safe and collaborative community space where all people feel included.



3

We will listen to and empower Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices and be guided by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-led solutions, to strengthen social and emotional wellbeing.

- Seek guidance, resources and information from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-led organisations.
- Use culturally safe terminology. For example, promote strengths-based (rather than deficit-focused) language, and ask Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples about their preferred language, such as whether they prefer the term 'Social and Emotional Wellbeing'.
- Actively engage in NAIDOC week and other significant cultural celebrations, as well as anti-racism events. Avoid contributing to cultural load by ensuring that it is not always Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples who are leading these events.

4

We will base our communication on clear, consistent and evidence-informed messages.

- When communicating about mental health and suicide, ensure you are up to date with the latest information and if in doubt, ask an expert.
- When promoting events in your community, ensure the communication is factual and use the key messages from the Charter.
- Share knowledge and resources with others in your community that is evidence-informed and best practice for communicating about mental health, social and emotional wellbeing and suicide.

5

We will use appropriate, respectful and person-centred communication.

- Be familiar with preferred and non-preferred language and be mindful of your own language, as well as the language of those around you. Please refer to these [language guides](#).
- Use non-stigmatising language in all communications.
- Inform and educate others on what is appropriate, respectful and person-centred communication.
- Support everyone in your community group to understand that respectful communication about mental health and wellbeing, mental health concerns and suicide is everyone's responsibility.



6

We will work together to combine our efforts and support change.

- Consider partnering with another community group or organisation to amplify your efforts.
- Collaborate with others to action and support the Charter and its principles within your community.
- Seek ideas and input from all people within your community on mental health promotion and suicide prevention efforts that the community can become involved in.

7

We will provide and promote access to the appropriate supports and services for people and communities.

- Ensure all your communications about mental health and suicide contain help-seeking information.
- Assist people in knowing what supports are available and how to access these supports.
- Promote services and supports through putting this information up on community notice boards or in club rooms.
- Reduce stigma by sharing positive stories of help-seeking behaviour where appropriate.