

National communications charter

action guide for individuals

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 individuals:

The Charter principles

Example activities

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

- Be familiar with key organisations and community groups in mental health promotion and suicide prevention.
- Reach out for or offer support to others if you feel this is needed.
- Share knowledge and resources with others that is evidence-informed and best practice for communicating about mental health, social and emotional wellbeing and suicide.
- Let others know that it's important to talk about mental health and suicide prevention so that we can make change in our communities.

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.

- Listen to others respectfully when they share their experiences of mental health concerns and suicide.
- Undertake training to be able to share your own lived experience story.
- Share your own stories with others where possible.
- If able, engage in opportunities to provide lived experience perspectives to organisations and community groups.



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 strength-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.
- Recognise the influence of culture on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander wellbeing, and encourage practices that promote connections to Country, culture, spirituality and community.

4

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

- Be familiar with [Our words matter](#) and [Images matter](#) guidelines for communicating about mental health concerns and suicide.
- Sign up to evidence-informed newsletters and research updates within the sector.
- Re-share social media communications from reputable sources only.
- Inform others of the evidence-informed information if you hear any myths or misconceptions.

5

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

- If you hear someone talking in a way that it is not respectful or appropriate, take the time to explain a better way of communicating about mental health concerns or suicide.
- Respond with compassion and care when communicating with people experiencing mental health concerns or who may be impacted by suicide.
- Consider how someone else might feel when you start talking about mental health and suicide. They may have their own lived or living experience.
- Be aware of non-stigmatising language and use in all communications.



6

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

- Consider hosting a morning tea or participating in campaign days to support change.
- Let others know that the more we communicate about suicide prevention and mental health then the more we can all help to reduce stigma and improve people's knowledge in this area.
- Make suggestions to businesses and groups you have contact with who would benefit from signing the Charter to support the mental health of customers, clients and members.
- Share information about the Charter and suicide prevention efforts with people you know.

7

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

- Be familiar with your local mental health supports and services.
- Undertake training in how to respond to someone experiencing mental health concerns or distress.
- Share helpful tips from this training with others to improve the ability of others to respond to distress.
- If you see someone in distress, offer to assist them in accessing the right service.