

MEDIA RELEASE

Support at your fingertips

22 May 2020

It's important to look after your mental health during the coronavirus pandemic. If you need support to keep your mental health on track, there are many resources available either locally, or online.

Late last year, the 2020 Connect Benalla calendar*, published as part of Murray PHN's suicide prevention project, was delivered to every household in Benalla. It features support and help information specific to different population groups, such as farmers and young people. It's a handy resource that can help link you with the support you need.

The Connect Benalla wallet-sized information card, which is downloadable from the Murray PHN website, includes local and national help information, prevention and support details, as well as self-care tips and ideas to help start a conversation with someone about suicide:

www.murrayphn.org.au/suicideprevention/

If you're worried someone you know may be at risk of suicide, you can go online and complete the free 'Question. Persuade. Refer.' training. QPR teaches you the three simple steps that could help you save a life from suicide. It only takes 60 minutes and can be completed in multiple sittings. To find out more and register, visit www.murrayphn.org.au/qpr

Matt Jones, Murray PHN CEO, said that the current pandemic is causing distress for many people.

"It could be feeling fearful, isolation, family conflict, financial difficulties, loneliness or mental health issues," he said. "It's important that people know that they are not alone and there are people to talk to if you need help."

Mr Jones said that no one should be concerned about consulting their GP for support. "You don't need to wait to schedule your next appointment," he said. "It's safe to visit your GP practice and you can also call to request a consultation via telephone or video telehealth."

**Copies of the Connect Benalla calendar are still available at Benalla Community Care.*

If you are in an emergency or at immediate risk of harm to yourself or others, please contact emergency services on 000. Other services include Lifeline – 13 13 14 or lifeline.org.au or Suicide Call Back Service – 1300 659 467 or suicidecallbackservice.org.au

Contact details

For more details, Amity Bradford, Communications Specialist e: abradford@murrayphn.org.au or t: 0436 820 014.

A note on reporting suicide: *There is extensive literature linking media reporting of suicide with increased*

suicide rates. Suicidal behaviour can be 'learned' from the media when reports are sensationalised, focus on celebrities, are repeated, and explicitly describe location and method details. Evidence suggests that responsible reporting of suicide by the media can reduce suicide rates. Mindframe Australia Media Guidelines support the media to report suicide accurately, responsibly, and ethically: <https://mindframe.org.au/industry-hubs/for-media>