

8 October 2021

## Move, chat and meditate this World Mental Health Day

This World Mental Health Day (10 October), south western Sydney residents are being encouraged to make exercise, connecting with friends and mindfulness a daily priority.

South Western Sydney Local Health District Mental Health Director Dr Claire Jones said the impact of stress can linger and these behaviours are proven to have a positive impact on our mental health and wellbeing.

“In the case of exercise, it’s been shown to help with sleep, boost serotonin levels, which helps to control moods, and increase our energy levels,” Dr Jones said.

“Social connections can reduce feelings of anxiety and depression and boost self-esteem while mindfulness can give us a greater sense of calm and help us to be less reactive to situations.”

While the easing of restrictions will bring back a degree of normality to our lives, it will be crucial that we remain vigilant about our mental wellbeing.

Dr Jones said adopting these behaviours will improve our overall mental health and wellbeing during the COVID-19 pandemic - and well into the future.

“For Mental Health Month this October, we’re being encouraged to ‘Tune in to our mental health,’” Dr Jones said.

“We’re being encouraged to be aware of what is happening within each of us and in the world around us.

“If we notice we aren’t tracking as well, we should take steps to practise some extra self-care such as relaxation and doing something that brings us joy.”

Dr Jones said some of the long-term impacts of stress included sleeping problems, depression, anxiety and cardiovascular disease.

“The human mind likes predictability and certainty. When life gets stressful, some simple daily routines and structures can make a big difference to how we think and feel. Routine is more important than ever at the moment,” Dr Jones said.

To find out more and to download useful resources visit  
[www.mentalhealthmonth.wayahead.org.au](http://www.mentalhealthmonth.wayahead.org.au)