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Take a minute for wellbeing: MHCT launches youth-focused mental health initiative during Youth Week

To help combat rising rates of mental health concerns, the Mental Health Council of Tasmania (MHCT) is on a mission to empower young people across the state to take a proactive, preventive approach to their mental health and wellbeing.

Building upon the success of their positive psychology campaign *Take a minute*, MHCT have been developing a version tailored to young Tasmanians. The concept remains the same – focussing on the big impact that a combination of little things can have on our mental wellbeing - but the way it is delivered is being adapted to suit a younger audience.

MHCT CEO, Connie Digolis, said, “We know that young people typically turn to each other for support in the first instance. We’ve designed the Take a minute youth program around this. It helps young people discover the things that are good for their own mental wellbeing, while also learning what works for their peers. This social aspect is quite unique, and a valuable way to explore the full breadth of tools they have available to stay on top of their wellbeing and help their friends do the same.”

The campaign empowers and upskills young leaders to run activities and events that help their peers home in on their strengths by focussing on the things that are important to them and have positive benefits for their mental wellbeing, with a number of schools and clubs across the state already getting on board.

Ms Digolis said, “We hear a lot about the rising rates of distress amongst our young people, and the struggle to access support. But unfortunately, the long-standing response has been to wait until they become so unwell that their only option is joining a growing waiting list to see a psychologist. Take a minute is flipping that script – taking a proactive approach that helps young people develop knowledge and strategies to better prepare them for dealing with life’s challenges.”

She questioned why the recent election campaign announcements didn’t include more focus on prevention.

“The recent pledges by the major parties show they’re aware our young people are facing increasing mental health challenges. But it is concerning that they seem focussed on a purely clinical response, instead of a more balanced approach that prioritises helping them be and stay well. Ensuring people can access timely clinical supports will always be important. But we must ensure we’re doing everything we can to help prevent our young people getting to that point in the first place.”

Schools and clubs who are interested in participating are encouraged to contact MHCT. More information can be found at www.mhct.org/youth

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