

## World Mental Health Day

World Mental Health Day, on 10 October, is a day to raise awareness of the effects mental illness has on millions of people's lives across the world, and to help educate and inform us all.

### Before reading

Do the preparation task first. Then read the article and do the exercises.

### Preparation task

Match the definitions (a–h) with the vocabulary (1–8).

#### Vocabulary

1. .... volunteering
2. .... stigma
3. .... treatment
4. .... work–life balance
5. .... anxiety
6. .... depression
7. .... nutrients
8. .... wellness

#### Definition

- a. things plants and animals need to live or grow
- b. the use of drugs, exercise, etc. to help someone who is ill
- c. working to help people without being paid
- d. a strong feeling of disapproval society has about something
- e. the state of being healthy
- f. time spent working compared to time spent doing what you enjoy
- g. feeling very unhappy and without hope
- h. feeling nervous or worried about what is happening or what might happen

### Mental health

Around the world, one in four people will have some kind of mental illness during their lifetime. Around 450 million people are living with a mental health problem right now, making it one of the biggest health issues in the world. Yet people rarely talk about any mental health problems they have because there is still a lot of stigma.

#### World Mental Health Day

World Mental Health (WMH) Day was first celebrated in 1992. It was created to raise awareness of just how common mental health issues are, fight against stigma and campaign for better conditions and treatment for people who have a mental health problem. The number of people and organisations involved in celebrating WMH Day has grown and grown, and now many countries, such as Australia, actually have a Mental Health Week, which includes WMH Day on 10 October. Each year there is a different theme. For example, in 2017 the theme was mental health in the workplace.

## Mental health in the workplace

Employers should create an environment which supports good mental health. This also helps to reduce the number of days employees take off work. Employers should help employees to achieve a good work–life balance by encouraging them to take breaks and holidays and discouraging them from working at home in the evenings and at weekends. Employees should also feel that they can talk to their managers about any problems they might have, and employers should be supportive.

## Get some exercise

Of course, we also need to look after our own mental health. Most people know that exercise is good for your body, but did you also know how good it is for your mental health? Regular exercise can really help you deal with anxiety and depression. Spending time in nature can also make people more relaxed and reduce stress. So why not get your exercise by going for a walk in a park or the countryside?

## Eat well

Your diet can also change your mood. If you eat crisps, cake, chocolate, etc., your blood sugar will rise and fall, making you feel cross and tired. Make sure you are eating enough vegetables and fruit or you may be missing some nutrients you need to feel good. It's also important to drink enough water – being thirsty can make it difficult to think clearly.

## Spend time with family and friends

Everyone needs some time alone, but it's also good for us to spend time with other people. If you feel lonely, try volunteering. It's a good way of meeting new people, and you will feel good for helping others. One survey showed that 48 per cent of people who volunteered for more than two years said they felt less depressed as a result. If you do have close friends and family, try talking to them more about how you feel and asking them to support you. Every time someone speaks to someone else about mental illness, it helps to reduce the stigma.

## What to do on World Mental Health Day

World Mental Health Day encourages us to be more aware of both our own mental health and other people's. As well as looking after yourself, think about how you could support other people. For example, you could find out more about common issues such as anxiety and depression, so you will understand friends' and colleagues' problems better. You could also encourage your workplace to start a wellness programme that would benefit everyone – they might offer free exercise classes or encourage employees to take walks at lunchtime. Companies with wellness programmes have found employees take 28 per cent less time off for sickness.

Anything you do on WMH Day, even just talking to people about it, will help us all to understand and support people better.

Source:

[http://www.who.int/mental\\_health/world-mental-health-day/en/](http://www.who.int/mental_health/world-mental-health-day/en/)

## Tasks

### Task 1

Are the sentences true or false?

	<b>Answer</b>	
1. People don't often talk about mental health problems because they are not very common.	True	False
2. Australia doesn't celebrate World Mental Health Day.	True	False
3. The writer thinks that working at home on evenings and weekends is not a good idea.	True	False
4. The writer believes that exercising outdoors may be better than exercising indoors.	True	False
5. Volunteering could make you less depressed.	True	False
6. Wellness programmes at work benefit employees but not employers.	True	False

### Task 2

Complete the sentences with words from the box.

anxiety	cross	four
stigma	supportive	theme

1. Around the world, one in ..... people have some kind of mental illness.
2. Mental health in the workplace was the ..... of WMH Day in 2017.
3. Employers should be ..... towards people with mental health issues.
4. Regular exercise can improve ..... and depression.
5. Eating junk food can make you feel ..... and tired.
6. Every time someone speaks about mental illness it helps to reduce the .....

### Discussion

In what other ways can you support yourself and other people to have better mental health?

## Answers

### Preparation task

1. c
2. d
3. b
4. f
5. h
6. g
7. a
8. e

### Task 1

1. False
2. False
3. True
4. True
5. True
6. False

### Task 2

1. four
2. theme
3. supportive
4. anxiety
5. cross
6. stigma