

Media Release

6 September 2017

No, I'm not ok, now what?

R U OK? Day, on September 14, aims to inspire and empower Australians to connect and have regular, meaningful conversations with anyone who might be struggling.

People in rural areas are more likely to take their own lives than those in metropolitan areas (Centre for Rural & Remote Mental Health Briefing Paper – Suicide & Suicide Prevention in Rural Areas of Australia) so how do you respond when someone says they aren't ok?

Western NSW Local Health District, in partnership with the Centre for Rural and Remote Mental Health and Aftercare, is holding a lunchtime forum to answer this question.

Rural Adversity Mental Health Program Coordinator for Western NSW Local Health District, Di Gill says it is important to empower the community with information on how to respond.

"If we are all equipped with the knowledge and tools to answer this question then we can work together to ensure our communities are safe and people feel supported," says Di Gill.

"If you're worried about someone, even before you have the chat, notice any changes in their mood or behaviour and ask them straight up if they plan to take their life.

"This shows that someone cares and from there you can help them get professional help, keep them safe, nurture positive behaviours and follow up."

Western NSW Local Health District Peer Worker, Brian Duff, says both his professional and personal experiences have equipped him well when having the tough conversations.

"Having a lived experience of mental illness and recovery allows me to understand what consumers are going through. I can be empathetic when having the conversation and can get a sense of what support they need," said Brian Duff.

"When you ask if someone is ok you need to do it with courtesy, respect and in a non-judgemental way."

The community is invited to a forum to discuss how to respond to people who say they aren't ok.

Event details:

Where: LikeMind Orange, 122-124 Kite Street, Orange, NSW (enter via Lords Pl)

When: Thursday 14 September, 12.30pm-1.30pm

Speakers:

- Di Gill, Rural Adversity Mental Health Program Coordinator (Western NSW Local Health District)
- Bob Davidson, Clinical Nurse Consultant, Acute and Continuing Care Team (Western NSW Local Health District) in LikeMind
- Brian Duff, Peer Worker (Western NSW Local Health District)

There will also be an open Q&A Session and light refreshments provided.

Media opportunity – 1.30pm at LikeMind with speakers.

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