

A U T U M N 2 0 2 2

# Psychcare Bulletin

Autumn 2022 Edition

## A Word from the Editor

Welcome to the Autumn 2022 edition of the Psychcare Bulletin, the quarterly newsletter of the Trauma Centre Australia.

This issue is dedicated to the theme of observing and responding to the signs of struggle in the life of a close friend or family member. In the frenetic pace of modern life, it can be difficult to notice when those around us are struggling with stress, depression, anxiety, or a myriad of other complex issues. The following articles help shed valuable light on how we can respond in a more nuanced and effective way to those around us, while at the same time looking after our own wellbeing.

Read on for some great insights!

Ryan.

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**What to do when someone is struggling?**

Balancing the demands of life, school, employment, relationships, and finances can be exhausting for everyone. On top of our daily struggles, certain unexpected changes, such as losing a job, going through a break-up, doubting one's identity, grieving a loved one etc., can present particular difficulties. As a friend, you are uniquely positioned to recognise warning signs that someone you care about is experiencing more stress, anxiety, or despair than they can handle.

**How do you know when a buddy is just having a terrible day or if they might be experiencing something more serious?** Keep an eye out for the following common warning signs of mental distress:

**Changes in behaviour**, such as withdrawing from previously enjoyed hobbies, isolating themselves from friends and family, and communicating less than usual

**Neglecting hygiene or basic care**, such as how frequently they bathe or change their clothes

**Changes in their communication with you or others**, such as "I am completely useless." Or "I wish I could simply stay asleep." Or "I'm not feeling well." (Or by mentioning other bodily symptoms, such as chronic headaches, tiredness, or stomach pains)

**Changes in the content they publish online**, such as making comments such as "I despise myself" or "I am hopeless at everything." Or, posting gloomy poetry or quotations, as well as distressing music or video clips. They might also utilize hashtags associated with subjects you find weird or concerning, such as #overit #imdone #igiveup).

Worrying about a friend and assisting them in seeking therapy might have a detrimental effect on your own emotional health.

Remember to look after yourself. If the influence on your emotional health is interfering with your life, or if you see any of the warning flags discussed in this article, seek help for yourself as well.

**When someone you love or some you work with is struggling but not getting help**

If you've recently discovered signs that a friend is experiencing emotional distress, you may be wondering why they haven't brought it up directly with you. Bear in mind that there may be a variety of reasons why a friend might not be upfront with you about their situation. They may be unsure of how to express their emotions or their experiences. They may not wish to be a burden or a source of concern to others. They may come from a culture or family in which painful emotions are rarely acknowledged freely. They may wish to seek assistance but are embarrassed or ashamed of their inability to cope on their own.

One method to offer support as a friend is to initiate the conversation about your problems rather than waiting for them to confide in you. This might help them feel comfortable in opening up.

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Therefore, if you, your child, or someone you know is unduly concerned or agitated about a particular situation, or if they are struggling to do whatever they need or want to accomplish, one or more of the following practical strategies is worth exploring.

1. Avoid overscheduling
2. Bear in mind the importance of sleep.
3. Allow youngsters to play
4. Self-management of stress
5. Identify negative feelings
6. Develop effective coping mechanisms
7. Teach that errors are acceptable
8. Reach out to others and inspire others to do the same
9. Concentrate more on what they are capable of.
10. Encourage physical activity

For the children:

An excerpt from Inter-Agency Standing Committee Reference Group on Mental Health and Psychosocial Support in Emergency Settings (IASC MHPSS RG) (from World Health Organization website).

*“My Hero is You” should be read by a parent, caregiver or teacher alongside a child or a small group of children. It is not encouraged for children to read this book independently without the support of a parent, caregiver or teacher. The supplementary guide called “Actions for Heroes” (to be published later) offers support for addressing topics related to COVID-19, helping children manage feelings and emotions, as well as supplementary activities for children to do based on the book. “*

My Hero is You: (Book version)

<https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/system/files/2020-04/My%20Hero%20is%20You%2C%20Storybook%20for%20Children%20on%20COVID-19.pdf>

My Hero is You (Video version)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FdO7MH1Ckys&t=161s>

## Looking for Training in Trauma Counselling?

We have developed the Advanced Certificate of Trauma Counselling.

If you would like more information please visit our website

[www.traumainstitute.com.au](http://www.traumainstitute.com.au)

Or contact our office of (03) 9852 7797

**Nine signs of mental illness infographic (taken from Health Direct website, <https://www.healthdirect.gov.au/signs-mental-health-issue>, accessed December 2021)**

Can you spot the difference between a bad mood and something more serious? This infographic could point to a mental health issue in someone you love:

**1. Feeling anxious or worried**

We all get worried or stressed from time to time. But anxiety could be the sign of a mental health disorder if the worry is constant and interferes all the time. Other symptoms of anxiety may include heart palpitations, shortness of breath, headache, sweating, trembling, feeling dizzy, restlessness, diarrhoea or a racing mind.

**2. Feeling depressed or unhappy**

Signs of depression include being sad or irritable for the last few weeks or more, lacking in motivation and energy, losing interest in a hobby or being teary all the time.

**3. Emotional outbursts**

Everyone has different moods, but sudden and dramatic changes in mood, such as extreme distress or anger, can be a symptom of mental illness.

**4. Sleep problems**

Lasting changes to a person's sleep patterns could be a symptom of a mental health disorder. For example, insomnia could be a sign of anxiety or substance abuse.

**5. Weight or appetite changes**

For some people, fluctuating weight or rapid weight loss could be one of the warning signs of a mental health disorder, such as depression or an eating disorder.

**6. Quiet or withdrawn**

Withdrawing from life, especially if this is a major change, could indicate a mental health disorder. If a friend or loved one is regularly isolating themselves, they may have depression, bipolar disorder, a psychotic disorder, or another mental health disorder. Refusing to join in social activities may be a sign they need help.

**7. Substance abuse**

Using substances to cope, such as alcohol or drugs, can be a sign of mental health conditions. Using substances can also contribute to mental illness.

**8. Feeling guilty or worthless**

Thoughts like 'I'm a failure', 'It's my fault' or 'I'm worthless' are all possible signs of a mental health disorder, such as depression. Your friend or loved one may need help if they're frequently criticising or blaming themselves. When severe, a person may express a feeling to hurt or kill themselves. This feeling could mean the person is suicidal and urgent help is needed. Call Triple zero (000) for an ambulance immediately.

**9. Changes in behaviour or feelings**

A mental health disorder may start out as subtle changes to a person's feelings, thinking and behaviour. Ongoing and significant changes could be a sign that they have or are developing a mental health disorder. If something doesn't seem 'quite right', it's important to start the conversation about getting help.



**24/7 Mental Health Services**

**Is it an emergency?** If you or someone you know is at immediate risk of harm, call triple zero (000)

<b>Suicide Call Back Service</b> <i>Anyone thinking about suicide</i> <a href="https://suicidcallbackservice.org.au">suicidcallbackservice.org.au</a> 1300 659 467	<b>Lifeline</b> <i>Anyone having a personal crisis</i> <a href="https://lifeline.org.au">lifeline.org.au</a> 13 11 14
<b>Beyond Blue</b> <i>Anyone feeling anxious or depressed</i> <a href="https://beyondblue.org.au">beyondblue.org.au</a> 1300 22 4636	<b>Kids Helpline</b> <i>Counselling for young people aged 5 to 25</i> <a href="https://kidshelpline.com.au">kidshelpline.com.au</a> 1800 55 1800
<b>MensLine Australia</b> <i>Men with emotional or relationship concerns</i> <a href="https://menline.org.au">menline.org.au</a> 1300 78 99 78	<b>Open Arms</b> <i>Veterans and families counselling</i> <a href="https://openarms.gov.au">openarms.gov.au</a> 1800 011 046

These are some services (above) that you can access 24/7. **If you're concerned a friend or loved one is at immediate risk of suicide or self-harm, dial triple zero (000) and ask for an ambulance.**





## Trauma Centre of Australia Pty Ltd

### **WHO WE ARE:**

Trauma Centre Australia are one of Australia's most qualified and experienced providers of psychological support and assistance. We specialise in immediate, on-site response for Critical Incident and Trauma Management services, and 24/7 Employee Assistance and Support.

### **WHO WE SERVICE:**

We provide psychological support services to personnel, and strategic advice to organisations in a broad range of settings including Commonwealth, State, and Local government, large and small businesses including, the aviation industry, multi-national corporations, law enforcement, health care workers, hotels, banks, community clubs and emergency first responders.

### **CONFIDENTIALITY**

Our psychological support team make your confidentiality a priority. Our systems, records and data are kept secure. Our conferencing systems are purpose built and ensure the highest degree of security we could find and are purpose built and owned by us. We do not use mainstream video services that can be easily hacked.

### **SERVICE AGREEMENT BENEFITS**

As part of your psychological support plan, we can work with you to tailor a Service Agreement that provides you with the security and confidence of priority, psychological care response whenever and wherever required 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

A Service Agreement offers:

- A significantly reduced rate of 20-30% on ALL our support services
- To provide you with the confidence of knowing your organisation is cared for by professionals 24 hours a day 7 days a week, onsite or in-person as required.
- Allows your management team to focus on your core business and direct mental health and psychological support issues to caring and qualified professionals
- A typical Service Agreement with us may cost less than \$1 per day

To enquire about a Service Agreement for the mental health needs of your people, please write to me at [peter.marshall@traumacentre.com.au](mailto:peter.marshall@traumacentre.com.au)