

MEDIA RELEASE



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World Mental Health Day 2019

Carers Australia today joins more than 400 organisations across Australia acknowledging World Mental Health Day.

A particular theme this year is reducing the social stigma attached to mental illness. This stigma not only extends to the people experiencing and exhibiting psycho-social disability, but is often also felt by the family and friends who care for them. It is a major cause of social isolation which, in itself, contributes to mental health problems.

And it is family and friends who are left with the grief of suicides arising from mental illness, which is at least seven times higher than the suicide rate among the general population.

The role and experiences of mental health carers has been increasingly acknowledged through surveys and various other research in recent years. According to the 2015 Australian Bureau of Statistics' (ABS) Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers (SDAC), over a third of the population of primary carers who lived with the person they cared for were carers of someone with a mental and behavioural disorder. This group of primary carers also provided the most hours of care.

In this context it needs to be remembered that every improvement in addressing negative attitudes toward mental illness, as well as to improved access to treatment and mental health support services, positively impacts not only people with mental illness but also the wider group of family and friends who love and care for them.

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