



Stress Down Day 2010

Media Kit

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1. Stress Down Day

Friday 23 July, 2010 is Lifeline Australia's Stress Down Day. This day is dedicated to reducing the burden of stress on our community, and will encourage people in schools and workplaces to have fun with their fellows, friends or family to reduce stress levels, have fun and raise funds for Lifeline. The money will go towards helping run our 24 hour telephone support services, a service that is literally life saving for thousands of Australian's every year.

1.1 What do we do on Stress Down Day?

You simply get sponsored to wear your slippers to work or school, dress up or dress down and have a bit of fun to show that you support Lifeline and its life saving work

Or alternatively, other ways to show support could be:

- 1) Purchasing Exclusive Stress Down Day Slippers
- 2) Developing your own event (where slippers or a change in clothes are impractical/against OH&S)

The campaign will also provide participants and organisations with useful tools to manage stress in our everyday lives. For more information visit www.stressdown.org.au

1.2 A bit more info for you

This event is Lifeline's key National Fundraising Campaign. The money raised will go primarily to cover the telephone and IT costs for Lifeline's 24 hour telephone counselling service. Any additional funds raised will support Lifeline's range of other programs to help build our capacity to connect people with care.

Lifeline has engaged a number of high-profile ambassadors to endorse the campaign, and many of these will be available for interviews over the months leading up to the main event.

Advocates include; Steve Bastoni, Rove, John Brogden, Professor Ian Hickey, Kate DeAraugo, Joe Roff, John Howard (actor), Tim Campbell and Chris Bowen MP amongst others.

There will also be a component of hard news associated with this campaign that will look at stress in our society and the affect it has on our community.

2. A little bit about stress...

2.1 What is stress?

Stress is our body's way of dealing with an increase in demand.

When we experience a high level of demand due to situations occurring around us (life, work or anything really), it can trigger an increase in energy, alertness and strength.

In some cases this is a healthy reaction, as it helps us to cope with a situation. It can also be harmful, especially when the stress is significant or prolonged.

Emotional stress or stress from fatigue and over work can be detrimental to our physical and mental wellbeing.

2.2 What happens to people who are stressed?

Stress can affect both your body and your mind. Physical manifestations of stress can include headaches, aches and pains and feelings of exhaustion. But not only can they can make us physically sick, stress can result in significant reduction in motivation and mental wellbeing. Stress can also lead to serious mental health issues, especially if it is prolonged. People who are stressed can be irritable, angry and depressed, they can feel lost and overwhelmed and in some cases can be feel suicidal.

2.3 Hints that someone you know might be feeling stressed

We all experience stress, so it would unrealistic to expect a life totally free from stress. However, we can all do a lot to help the people close to us, some things to look for that may indicate that someone is feeling stressed:

- Unusual sleeping patterns – feeling tired all the time or not getting enough sleep.
- Alcohol and substance abuse – an increase in alcohol intake or dependence on alcohol or drugs to “get by.”
- Loss of interest in activities that were previously of interest e.g. hobbies, socialising and special interests.
- Experiencing high levels of panic and a sense of not coping.
- Feeling down or depressed much of the time.
- Uncharacteristic mood swings or changes in personality.
- Experiencing any behaviour or feelings that may be putting a person at risk of harm.
- Thoughts of suicide, death or ending the pain.

2.4 Ways to deal with stress

Some handy simple tips for dealing with stress:

- Take time to look after yourself physically and emotionally
- Allocate time for thing you enjoy or that make you happy
- Don't place unnecessary pressure or expectations on yourself.
- Make time for friends and family amid other priorities– strong connections with loved ones are good for mental health.
- Make time for discussion about emotions within your family – make mental health a discussion point without judgment or stigma attached to it.
- Limit alcohol intake and use of other substances.
- If you feel your stress levels peaking take a few minutes of time out in a private place to assess the situation.
- Schedule both personal time for relaxation, and social time for getting involved in group activities.

2.5 Places to go for help

Studies show that if people seek out help, some can significantly alleviate issues of distress and negative mental health experiences:

- Talk to a trusted family member or friend, or a professional such as a GP or Psychologist.
- Connect with a helpline such as Lifeline's 24 hour telephone counselling service – 13 11 14.
- Utilise online self help resources. A number of organisations offer information and resources about mental health. Find out more or download a self help tool kit at www.lifeline.org.au

2.6 Simple tips for dealing with financial stress

- Be brave, look at your situation realistically and understand your incomings and outgoings
- Assess your budget
- Seek support from people your trust and who are reputable, getting a second opinion is also a good idea
- There are many ways you can negotiate with credit companies to re-finance loans and repayments
- Break down your financial picture into small pieces and face them one at a time
- Where possible, work with your family or significant others to problem solve
- Forgo luxuries and pat yourself on the back when you do well

3. Some info on Lifeline

For 47 years Lifeline has provided access to mental health support services that connect people with care. Lifeline delivers a range of national services that promote emotional wellbeing, encourage help seeking, and address suicide prevention and awareness.

Lifeline's 24 hour telephone counselling service – 13 11 14 – was launched by the late Rev. Dr. Sir Alan Walker in 1963, and today continues to operate nationally and provide emotional support to anyone in their time of need.

Lifeline also offers access to a range of programs specific to the needs of local communities.

These programs are delivered by a network of Lifeline Centres operating from 42 Centres Australia wide, with a presence in every state and territory.

Each year Lifeline receives over one million contacts from people connecting to care and support by phone, web or face-to-face. The Lifeline 24 hour telephone counselling line continues to answer over 1250 calls every day. Lifeline's services overcome time and distance by providing care at any time day or night, across both rural and metropolitan Australia.

Lifeline is also committed to suicide prevention and encouraging help seeking behaviours.

Services that support suicide safe communities include LivingWorks Applied Suicide Intervention and Skills Training (ASIST), suicide bereavement support programs, and campaigns run in collaboration with corporate partners, which create awareness about suicide and encourage those at risk to seek help.

Other national services include the Lifeline Information Service, which develops and distributes a range of self-help resources and mental health information, and the Lifeline Service Finder – an online searchable database of mental health services.

This work is all made possible by the 11,000 dedicated volunteers who donate their time and skills to support others. Around three and a half thousand volunteers work as trained telephone counsellors, while the others assist with the fundraising, retail and administrative activities that keep Lifeline sustainable.

The generosity of individuals, groups and organisations that support Lifeline make this essential and life saving work possible. Lifeline relies on community support to help fund vital services and to ensure that it can continue connecting people with care into the future.

4. Media contacts

Anyone interested in making a media enquiry about stress down day, or seeking out comment from one of our celebrity advocates should contact:

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