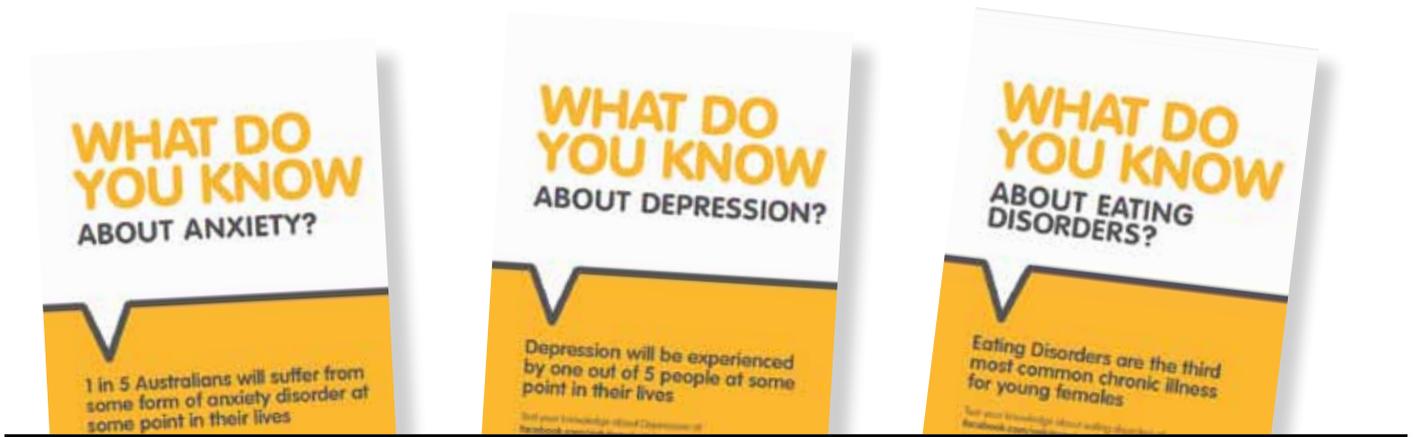


Mental Health Week 2013

Private hospitals put Australians' knowledge about mental illness to the test



To mark Mental Health Week this year (6-12 October 2013) APHA's Valuing Private Hospitals campaign will again test just how much Australians really know about some of the nation's most prevalent mental disorders by asking, 'What do you know... about mental illness?'. Targeting depression, anxiety, substance abuse, eating disorders and mental illness in the elderly, Australia's private hospitals are using Mental Health Week as a focal point to better educate Australians on the lesser known symptoms for these mental disorders and the innovative programs in private hospitals to treat them.

Using an interactive series of 'What do you know...' quizzes both online and within hospitals, APHA is also aiming to dispel negative stereotypes and common misconceptions associated with mental illness and get the Australian public more actively involved and talking about the disease. The quiz format around four common mental illnesses was received positively by hospitals and patients last year and will be expanded this year to cover mental illness in the elderly, which according to the World Health Organisation, is the theme of Mental Health Week 2013.

"While public discussion about mental illness in Australia has certainly improved over the years, we still have a long way to go before we can say that we've fully erased negative stigmas," said Michael Roff, CEO of APHA. "Education plays a key part in this and our campaign looks to actively engage the public in a way that will drive home the facts."

"Our new focus this year on the elderly will provide information for family members who may be caring for an elderly loved one who is suffering from mental illness."

With almost half of Australians experiencing mental illness at some point in their lives, most people will know someone who is affected.

"The fact is that 45.5% of Australians experience mental illness at some point in their lifetime," he said. "But exactly what classifies as a disorder, how to recognise the signs and how to ensure that your health insurance will cover you and your family if you need it is not as clear. Not knowing these crucial facts contributes to why people tend to suffer with mental illness in silence and why it's so important that we address this issue," Mr Roff said.

Pocket-sized quiz cards and Facebook quizzes are all enlisted in the campaign this year. To see the quizzes, go to www.facebook.com/valuingprivatehospitals.

"There's a common belief that hospitals only provide medical treatment for mental illness," Mr Roff said, "but some of the most successful

“The fact is that 45.5% of Australians experience mental illness at some point in their lifetime”

private hospital programs are actually holistic and focus on the bigger picture and improving a patient’s lifestyle. This campaign is about ensuring more people get the help they need and so can better enjoy their life.”

For more information on the Valuing Private Hospitals campaign or to find out how your hospital can get involved, please contact Lisa Ramshaw at the APHA Secretariat on lisa.ramshaw@apha.org.au. 



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