

National Missing Persons Coordination Centre



MISSING PERSONS AND MENTAL HEALTH

FACT SHEET

How do you find someone when they struggle to find themselves?

MISSING PERSONS

In Australia, 38,000 people are reported missing each year. Although the majority of these people are located within a short period of time, the impact on those who are left behind, and the vulnerabilities experienced by those whilst they are away from their support networks, are both traumatic and challenging.

A missing person is defined as someone whose whereabouts are unknown and where there are serious concerns for their wellbeing.

Having a relative or friend go missing can affect every Australian regardless of age, gender, race, ethnicity or socio-economic group.

THE LINK BETWEEN MENTAL HEALTH AND MISSING PERSONS

Research has identified that one of the factors that contributes to the rate of people going missing is the impact of mental health on a person's ability to cope with life.

There are many issues that trigger people experiencing poor mental health to go missing such as: frustrations with health professionals; opposing ideas with loved ones about how to address a mental

health issue; uncertainty about who or how to ask for help; or a sense that there are no alternatives but to go missing. Some may go missing for a short period of time; some may go missing time and time again whilst others disappear for the long term – increasing the risk of harming themselves or being harmed by someone else.

There is a persistent stigma within the community of acknowledging that poor mental health is a community health issue. With the added secrecy that also often accompanies a missing person's case, those who are left behind and the missing person can feel that they have little support available to them.

The National Missing Persons Coordination Centre is working in partnership with a number of mental health organisations to inform the Australian community of the link between mental health and missing persons with a view to alleviating the trauma experienced by those people living with a mental illness, their families and friends and to reduce the incidence of people going missing due to mental health issues.

The NMPCC, funded by the Australian government through the Australian Federal Police, coordinates and promotes a national integrated approach to reduce the incidence and impact of missing persons.

SUPPORT AGENCIES

Beyond Blue

Phone: 1300 224 636
Web: www.beyondblue.org.au

Black Dog Institute

Phone: (02) 9382 4530
Web: www.blackdoginstitute.org.au

Carers Australia

Phone: 1800 242 636
Web: www.carersaustralia.com.au

Compassionate Friends

Check your local community pages

Family and Friends of Missing Persons Unit - Attorney Generals Dept. NSW

Phone: 1800 227 772
Web: www.lawlink.nsw.gov.au

Lifeline

Phone: 13 11 14
Web: www.lifeline.org.au

Mental Health Council of Australia

Phone: (02) 6285 3100
Web: www.mhca.org.au

National Missing Persons Coordination Centre

Phone: 1800 000 634
Web: www.missingpersons.gov.au

SANE Australia

Phone: 1800 18 SANE
Web: www.sane.org.au