

Media release

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Hospital pharmacists and technicians ask: RUOK?

The Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia (SHPA) has marked [2020 RUOK? Day](#) by calling for hospital pharmacists and technicians, and their colleagues, to maintain conversations around mental health and wellbeing amid a challenging year.

The conversations come as Metropolitan Melbourne and Victoria enter extended periods of strict lockdown measures to curb community spread of coronavirus, the Sydney area remains on alert containing localised outbreaks and other states remain vigilant.

SHPA Mental Health Chair Helen Lowy says the day's goal of encouraging meaningful connection is particularly important in 2020.

'In a year of unforeseen difficulties this national day of action is so valuable, and we join thousands of Australians in reinforcing the message that every day is the day to ask, "Are you OK?"

'We know the importance of connecting to ease mental distress but we also know that, perhaps due to the pace and complexity of their hospital work, many pharmacists and technicians can find it challenging to find the time to open up to vulnerable conversations.

'We encourage setting aside time, as a department or a team, to have a morning tea and check in with how each member is travelling and discuss ways that they can all help and support each other.

'The most important thing is to not try and "fix it", but to listen, validate and normalise the experience of checking in on mental health and ask what people may find valuable in that moment to lift their mood.

'Whether in person, or through a quick call or text, every conversation helps.'

SHPA Chief Executive Kristin Michaels says as the longer-term effects of coronavirus cases and restrictions begin to be felt, focus should turn to sustainable mental health management.

'SHPA is committed to enabling progressive, evidence-based patient care by members and their hospital pharmacy teams across the country, and this commitment includes ensuring practitioners are equipped with the latest tools and resources to be at their best.

'From our increased output of [resilience and wellbeing education](#) from the first wave of COVID-19 in Australia, to our Wellness at Work webinar series, Mentoring Program and Executive Coaching, we will continue to advocate for open conversations and tailored support that enables performance, satisfaction and happiness.'

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About SHPA

The Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia (SHPA) is the national, professional, for-purpose organisation for leading pharmacists and pharmacy technicians working across Australia's health system, advocating for their pivotal role improving the safety and quality of medicines use. Embedded in multidisciplinary medical teams and equipped with exceptional medicines management expertise, SHPA members are progressive advocates for clinical excellence, committed to evidence-based practice and passionate about patient care.

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