

Toolkit Resource

Example actions to address mental health

Women face a greater risk of experiencing mental health challenges compared to men, so our health and social care systems must be gender-responsive to meet these challenges. This document contains examples of gender-responsive actions that can be taken by individual professionals and community members, as well workplaces and organisations to address gendered inequities in mental health.

Individual professional/practice

- Learn more about how gender affects mental health, including the [social, environmental and gendered determinants](#) that disproportionately impact women
- Provide plain language information about and available services that relate to mental health conditions and psychosocial disabilities that disproportionately impact women
- Strengthen referrals between health, mental health, and other relevant care and services including domestic, family and sexual violence (DFS) services, disability support and maternal health care such as abortion care, perinatal and postnatal health services
- Incorporate [vicarious trauma](#) training and considerations in practice
- Expand trauma-informed care and consider ways to address the impacts of trauma on mental health and wellbeing, including with somatic, expressive arts therapy and nervous system practitioners
- Connect with community led support groups, mental health carer support and lived experience advocates to strengthen referrals and inform practice

Workplace/organisation

- Develop innovative models that incorporate gender-responsive mental health as part of multidisciplinary and holistic people-centred care
- Identify ways to improve affordability, accessibility, appropriateness and availability of health care, addressing the gendered, socio-economic and environmental barriers to access that can impact mental health and wellbeing
- Address gendered bias and harmful stereotypes that can impact women's mental health by embedding anti-discrimination measures into organisational policy and practice
- Connect with community-led support groups, mental health carers and lived experience advocates to strengthen referrals and inform monitoring, evaluation and learning
- Include referrals to or consider establishing relevant [health justice partnerships](#) that incorporate women's mental health specialists and counsellors
- Collaborate with community organisations, events and the arts that support women's health, rights and/or people who have experienced gender-based violence and discrimination



Community/studies

- Learn about what local or online mental health support is available – how might or might they not cater to the unique and diverse needs of women and gender diverse people?
- Choose a children’s popular culture movie and apply a gendered lens to the way mental health is portrayed (for example, Finding Dory, Frozen, Inside Out, Mary and Max, My Life as a Zucchini, Soul, Turning Red or Up) – how might you explore some of the themes around mental health with a child or young person?
- Create a campaign at university or TAFE for a [day of significance](#) relevant to mental health and integrate health promotion messages for women and gender diverse people (for example, International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia (IDAHOBIT), R U OK? Day, Wear It Purple Day, World Mental Health Month and World Suicide Prevention Day)
- Engage with community organisations, events and the arts that support women’s mental health, rights and/or people who have experienced gender-based violence and discrimination

Notes

- **Could you or a workplace/organisation/community group you know implement any of the suggested actions?**
- **What support might assist in taking these actions?**

This resource is from the ‘[Introduction to Gender-Responsive Health](#)’ e-learning course by Australian Women’s Health Alliance.

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