Evidence for “Act”

Act refers to keeping active physically, socially, spiritually and mentally. There is substantial evidence from a variety of sources that individuals with higher levels of physical, mental, spiritual and social activity have higher levels of wellbeing and mental health. For example, the mental health benefits of physical activity are well-known for improving quality of life and mood, while reducing depression and anxiety. Social activity predicts cognitive performance and is associated with higher self-esteem. Staying mentally active in both work and leisure reduces dementia risk and more generally protects against cognitive and functional decline later in life.

Evidence for “Belong”

A sense of belonging is fundamental to good mental health. Belong involves keeping connected to friends and family, involvement in groups, or joining in local community activities. Regular involvement in social activities results in strong personal support, one of the most important factors for maintaining good mental and physical health. Overall, the more social interactions an individual has, the greater the contribution to their mental health and the greater their ability to cope with trauma and the stressors of life that affect our mental health. As humans have an innate need to belong, loneliness can make us anxious, increase depressive symptoms, and reduce optimism and self-esteem. Involvement in local community activities and organisations builds social cohesion and is likely to result in a strong personal support group. Furthermore, a sense of belonging or identification with a group helps buffer the negative wellbeing consequences of change. Previous campaigns, such as California’s Friends are Good Medicine and VicHealth’s Together We Do Better have focused on this belong domain.

What is “Act-Belong-Commit”?

The Act-Belong-Commit campaign is a community-based health promotion campaign developed from scientific evidence and primary research undertaken by Curtin University into people’s perceptions of mental health and the behaviours they believed promoted and protected good mental health. The campaign encourages people to take action to improve their mental health and wellbeing by promoting behaviours people can and should do for their mental health under three domains: Act, Belong, and Commit. Evidence that these three domains contribute to positive mental health continues to grow. This document provides a summary of some of the evidence underpinning the campaign’s philosophy.

Why promote positive mental health?

According to the World Health Organisation, mental health is an indivisible part of general health, is essential for individual functioning and wellbeing, and contributes to all aspects of human life. Therefore, mental health concerns everyone!

Increases in population-wide levels of wellbeing are associated with reductions in the prevalence of mental disorder. Higher population wellbeing is also associated with improved productivity and quality of life and is increasingly being used as an indicator of the progress and sustainability of nations.

For more information

Download more information and resources from our website (actbelongcommit.org.au) or contact Mentally Healthy WA on (08) 9266 4648 or email info@actbelongcommit.org.au
Evidence for “Commit”

Commit refers to engaging in activities that provide meaning and purpose in life, such as advocating for a cause, volunteering, learning a new skill, or setting challenging goals. Taking on and meeting challenges, even small ones, provide feelings of efficacy and a stronger sense of self. Similarly, volunteering and activities undertaken to benefit the community at large have special returns for feeling good about oneself and others, and providing meaning and purpose in life.

Volunteers have higher levels of life satisfaction when compared to non-volunteers and consistency and diversity of volunteer activity is linked to wellbeing and self-reported health.

References