

Media alert

14 December 2022 | Please cascade to all media staff

Safe and sensitive reporting around deaths in Wieambilla (Qld)

As further details on the Western Downs incident and the alleged perpetrators emerge, Australian media professionals are reminded to apply *Mindframe* guidelines when reporting on mental illness in the context of violent crime, as well as the use of drugs.

To ensure accuracy when reporting about mental illness in the context of violent crime, avoid:

- Assuming the cause of crime or violence is mental illness.
- Attributing a mental illness to someone purely because their actions are shocking or seem inexplicable.
- Speculating about the person featured in a story having a mental illness.
- Implying that everyone with a mental illness is violent, or is a risk to the public.
- Asking for an 'on air' diagnosis from mental health experts.

It is also important to exercise caution in reusing information about a person's mental health from original reporting done in the immediate aftermath of an event.

Please refer to [Mindframe guidelines on media reporting of severe mental illness in the context of violence and crime.](#)

Language relating to mental ill-health

Australian media are reminded that the language used when communicating about mental ill-health plays a big role in perpetuating stereotypes and stigma.

Terms such as "crazed", "mad", "deranged" and "psychotic" can sensationalise important issues, increase stigma for those with lived experience of mental ill-health, and reduce the chances of people seeking help when they may need it.

Please refer to [Mindframe guidelines around language use](#) when reporting on mental ill-health and always include links to relevant support services

Reporting on the use of alcohol and other drugs

Media are also reminded when reporting on suspected drug use by an individual, that portraying people who use crystal methamphetamine as delinquent, psychotic and violent can lead to further stigma, which can prevent help seeking behaviour.

Although the use of crystal methamphetamine can increase paranoid thoughts, mood swings and irritability, which can make some people more likely to exhibit violent behaviours, most people who use this drug do not become violent or aggressive.

Specific [Mindframe resources for reporting on crystal methamphetamine](#) are available for free reference and use by media and include a guide to non-stigmatising and accurate reporting. Mindframe also has broader guidelines providing advice for media reporting or communicating publicly about the use of [alcohol and other drugs](#).

Support services

Adult

Lifeline: 13 11 14 | Text 0477 13 11 14
lifeline.org.au

Suicide Call Back Service: 1300 659 467
suicidecallbackservice.org.au

Beyond Blue: 1300 224 636
beyondblue.org.au/forums

MensLine Australia: 1300 789 978
mensline.org.au

StandBy Support After Suicide
1300 727 247

Youth

Kids Helpline: 1800 551 800
kidshelpline.com.au

headspace: 1800 650 890
headspace.org.au

ReachOut: ReachOut.com

Other resources

Head to Health: mental health portal
headtohealth.gov.au

Life in Mind: suicide prevention portal
lifeinmindaustralia.com.au

SANE: 1800 187 263 (10am-10pm)
online forums: saneforums.org

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander: 13YARN.org.au or 13 92 76

Lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, and/or intersex: 1800 184 527 qlife.org.au

Culturally and linguistically diverse: embracementalhealth.org.au

For more information including free advice for media, please contact **Mindframe:**

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