

02 December 2020

Beyond Blue campaign reminds people that support is “Always Available” over festive season

Beyond Blue is inviting people to use their social media channels, holiday voicemails and out-of-office messages to support colleagues, friends and loved ones this festive season.

The new *Always Available* campaign, which starts this week, encourages people to update their message spaces so they direct people towards Beyond Blue if they are themselves unavailable. Detailed instructions on how to do this can be found at www.beyondblue.org.au/get-support/message-space.

“Missed calls or unanswered messages are a fact of life over the busy holiday period. But that can make it hard for people when they’re struggling and take steps to reach out. So, this year, we’re asking Australians to update their voicemail, out-of-office, and social message spaces with messages that encourage people to visit Beyond Blue if they’re not feeling themselves,” Beyond Blue CEO Georgie Harman said.

“One of the features of 2020 has been a community-wide conversation about mental health and wellbeing, the importance of staying connected and looking out for one another – all powerful in the fight against stigma.

“We hope these powerful personal messages will keep that conversation going – even when you’re taking a well-earned break and not available – and remind everyone that Beyond Blue is always there,” Ms Harman said.

The campaign, which begins this week, offers support and advice via the new www.beyondblue.org.au/get-support/always-available information hub. People can select information and resources, or may choose to contact the Beyond Blue Support Service.

“2020 has been an enormously challenging year for all of us, and we recognise that while the festive season offers many a chance to unwind and catch up with friends and family, it can also bring its own unique pressures,” Ms Harman said.

“Throughout 2020, from the bushfires to the pandemic, Australians have been feeling stressed and anxious, experiencing financial worries and feelings of loneliness, and we know that over the holidays, family pressures and drug and alcohol use can add to the mix.

“We want to reassure people that support is always available via the Beyond Blue website or the 24/7 Support Service, which is free and staffed by skilled mental health professionals. There’s no eligibility criteria and often it can really help to just talk things through.”

Ms Harman thanked Beyond Blue’s ambassadors and Blue Voices lived experience community for participating in the initiative.

The Beyond Blue Support Service is available via phone 24/7 on 1300 22 4636 or via beyondblue.org.au/get-support for online chat (3PM – 12AM AEST or email responses within 24 hours).

The new Coronavirus Mental Wellbeing Service is available 24/7 at coronavirus.beyondblue.org.au. Its dedicated phone line, staffed by mental health professionals briefed on the pandemic response, is now open on 1800 512 348.