



Media Release

Beyond Blue and AMES Australia join forces to improve mental health support for diverse communities

Migrant and refugee communities will have better access to culturally appropriate mental health support thanks to a new partnership between Beyond Blue and settlement agency AMES Australia.

The two organisations have joined together to make it easier and more efficient for people to find the support that best suits them, when they need it.

Together, AMES Australia and Beyond Blue support thousands of people each year with information, advice, resources and referrals.

The partnership will improve access to mental health resources and information on supports/services for many marginalised communities; including refugees and migrants, and those who face additional barriers to accessing help.

With one third of people in Australia born overseas, an increase in people finding refuge and safety in Australia, the continued impact of racism and discrimination, and current global conflicts, the need for more inclusive approaches to mental health is greater than ever.

Beyond Blue CEO Georgie Harman said the partnership will address the unique mental health needs of individuals from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds (CALD), particularly those for whom English is a second language, or who have low literacy levels.

“By working together, we aim to promote the importance of good mental health and destigmatisation and deepen understandings of mental health support services across the community.

“We hope that by coming together, we can ensure that mental health support is accessible, and comprehensive to those who need it most,” she said.

AMES Australia CEO Cath Scarth said the partnership would help improve access to mental health support for migrant and refugee communities.

“We know that refugees and migrants are among the most vulnerable in our society to the effects of poor mental health. We also know that they often find it difficult to access services of all kinds, including mental health support,” Ms Scarth said.

This important work is also a critical step in informing better policy, research, and service development for diverse communities.

Beyond Blue’s most recent *Australia’s 2024 Mental Health and Wellbeing Check* found that respondents from multicultural communities were less likely to *know where to go for information about mental health* compared to the rest of population.

Respondents from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds were less likely to seek professional support (e.g. visiting a psychologist, GP, or calling a phone helpline) but were more likely to reach out to friends and family for support and guidance.

The main support avenues for CALD community respondents was friends (63%), family members or relatives (47%), intimate partners (44%) and community/or religious leaders (11%).

Nepalese-born mum of three, Reshma Manandhar knows all-too-well the feelings of helplessness, overwhelm and anxiety after settling in Australia more than 20 years ago.

“My cultural norms were very different to my Australian neighbours, this stems from the way I was brought up; in Nepal you can’t call a phone line and tell them your problems – they simply don’t exist,” Ms Manandhar said.

“It was culturally-instilled; you share problems with just your family – but now I see sharing issues with a kind-listening ear, as an advantage – sometimes your family isn’t best placed to help you, and you’d benefit from more formal early intervention.

“For people in CALD groups, this collaboration will afford people the opportunity to not only learn a new language (English) but also help identify emotions and help them understand at what stage and where to get help for poor mental health; this is planting the seed for a more mentally healthy Australia,” she said.

Ms Harman said around half of refugees internationally experience post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and suffer from anxiety and psychological distress.

“Despite this, rates of help seeking are often low which can be linked to lower levels of mental health literacy and different cultural understandings of mental health.”

“Multicultural communities may find it difficult to use mainstream services because of language and cultural barriers, may be confused about how services operate, or simply be unaware of what supports are available,” she said.

“In 70 years of servicing migrant and refugee communities in Australia, we at AMES Australia have learned that partnerships can help us extend our reach and maximise our impact in supporting individuals, families and communities from diverse backgrounds,” Ms Scarth said.

“That’s why we are pleased to be partnering with Beyond Blue to provide better access to mental health support to people from migrant and refugee communities.”

Ms Harman said if delivering important mental health information, in an accessible and respectful way, results in an uptake of earlier mental health support for people who belong to at-risk communities, then they will have a much better chance of getting better easier and earlier, before they reach crisis point.

The relationship will also:

Provide targeted training: Beyond Blue will continue to provide training for AMES Australia staff and volunteers who work in multicultural communities, to build on their knowledge around mental health issues, educate them about distress and the early warning signs, plus where communities can find support.

Develop culturally sensitive and accessible resources: Collaborate on mental health resources, including translated information materials, to ensure accessibility for diverse communities. *For example, with the support of Scope Australia, Beyond Blue and AMES Australia recently launched: [Understanding anxiety and depression \(Easy English guide\)](#) and the [How to get support \(Easy English guide\)](#); two simple guides AMES Australia can share and use with their clients and community.*

Promote awareness and education: Work together on public awareness campaigns and community events to reduce stigma surrounding mental health issues and promote wellbeing within multicultural communities.

ENDS

Beyond Blue Support Service 1300 22 4636 or beyondblue.org.au/get-support.

People who do not use English as their first language can get free translation support from the [Translating and Interpreting Service \(TIS National\)](#) [Immediate phone interpreting service](#) and [Pre-booked phone interpreting service](#)

For further information on **AMES Australia**, please visit www.ames.net.au/

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Talent

- AMES Australia CEO Catherine Scarth
- Lived experience and AMES Australia Community Engagement Coordinator, Reshma Manandhar (who can talk on delivering information to communities)
- Beyond Blue CEO Georgie Harman

Background

AMES Australia

AMES Australia is the nation's foremost provider of settlement, education, and employment services for migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers. With over 65 years of experience, AMES Australia is committed to empowering individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds to thrive in Australian society. AMES support those on their settlement journey, while focusing on the strengths of new arrivals and their aspirations to contribute; maximising the economic and social participation of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers; and promoting and celebrating the benefits of migration to Australia.

Beyond Blue

Beyond Blue is an independent, not-for-profit organisation working to reduce the impact of anxiety and depression in Australia. Our mission is to help all people in Australia achieve their best possible mental health. We work with the community to improve mental health and make it easier for people to feel better earlier, get well and stay well.

Australia's 2024 Mental Health and Wellbeing Check

- The representative survey gave a reliable pulse check on the current state of mental health and wellbeing in Australia.
- It surveyed more than 5000 people around the country about the common causes of distress they've experienced in the past year and how they have supported their mental health.