

MENTAL HEALTH WEEK 2-10 OCTOBER

This year the theme for Mental Health Week is **Act-Belong-Commit**. Relationships Australia WA (RAWA) is promoting the week by releasing infographics with tips on how to stay mentally healthy on our Facebook ([/RelationshipsWA](#)) and Twitter ([@RelationshipsWA](#)) pages. Don't forget to follow us.

Being Creative

A fantastic way to stay mentally healthy and ensure we take time away from work is to engage with or participate in creative activities like art. Painting or drawing is a fantastic way to de-stress after a hard day at work and can help us solve problems by expressing ourselves creatively.

In July RAWA held its 7th annual Act-Belong-Commit Moorditj Yarning Art Exhibition. The exhibition began after art was used as a form of engagement with clients in weekly workshops coordinated by Moorditj Yarning, a RAWA program for the Aboriginal community. Guests admired the beautiful Aboriginal artwork adorning the walls of the majestic Perth Town Hall.

There were 168 pieces of art displayed this year, from artists whose ages range from three to over 70 years old.

Manager of the Moorditj Yarning program Roy Tester said, "Engaging in art with other people is a fantastic way to develop your social connections. They use art in the program to help strengthen family relationships and to give voice to feelings that are not always easily expressed in word, which all contributes to good mental health.

Participating in art can help people deal with any difficulties and stress they may be experiencing.

It's not the final project that is the most important thing, it's the process of making the art, how you feel while you are doing it and what you learn about yourself that is the focus."



Painting not your thing?

But if painting isn't your thing, here are some other ways you can be creative:

- **Gardening:** Turn your garden into a riot of colour this summer. As Act-Belong-Commit say, next time you are feeling 'blue', act 'green'.



- **Adult colouring in books:** This new craze has its merits. Try some colouring-in in the evening, instead of surfing Facebook on your phone or watching TV.



- **Learn a musical instrument:** A study conducted by the University of St Andrews found that playing musical instruments leads to good mental health and helps fight depression and dementia.



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Creativity can help us

Being creative can help us in many different ways, including:

1. Solving Problems

Juggling multiple roles is part of life but when we make creativity a habit, we can sometimes discover resourceful ways of solving problems.

2. Connecting with your community

Whether we're exchanging ideas, providing feedback to each other, or simply creating next to each other in silence, an instant sense of community is formed.

3. Saving money

Expressing ourselves can control the urge to buy impulsively. If we trade the activity of consuming for creating, we not only save money, but get a deeper sense of fulfilment.

4. An expanded sense of time

Time feels limitless when we are in the creative 'zone' and it feels GREAT! Who couldn't use the feeling of more time?

5. Gaining Energy

Creativity can put you in a good mood and we often gain energy for our other responsibilities when we first make space for our creative work.

6. Freedom

When we create, we are given the opportunity to engage with the world without judging ourselves. We have permission to take risks, try new things, and strip away inhibitions in a healthy way.

7. Stress relief

Making art is meditative. It is also FUN, and doing anything that brings joy reduces our stress levels and improves our quality of life. What could be more important than that?