



latest research in ...

mental health promotion & prevention of illness

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The Autumn issue (34) of the VicHealth Letter newsletter provides a snapshot of some of the issues arising at the 'From Margins to Mainstream Conference 2008' and the dynamic nature of the work occurring in mental health promotion and prevention of illness, both in Australia and globally. It demonstrates how mental health promotion and prevention concepts are now being integrated in a sustained way by those working in education, sport, the arts, employment, technology and human rights to name a few. Latest research articles include:

◆ **Overview** - A decade on: moving mental health promotion from the margins to the mainstream

◆ **All tip and no iceberg** - The challenges of addressing the social determinants of mental health and wellbeing

◆ **The Melbourne Charter**
Principles and actions for promoting mental health and preventing mental and behavioural disorders

◆ **Embracing diversity for better health** - Despite a dearth of rigorously researched interventions, a number of methods for tackling discrimination seem promising

◆ **Measuring mental health and wellbeing** - To foster mental health and wellbeing we need to understand not only what creates it but also how to quantify it



◆ **Social connection: the role of non-traditional health sectors** - Inspirational models of promoting community mental health and wellbeing

◆ **Working towards better jobs: exploring the link between work and mental health** - Workplace stress is a widespread problem. Why are some jobs healthy and others damaging?

◆ **Workforce development: a key ingredient in Indigenous health** - Improving the capacity of individuals, communities and organisations to provide health care services for Aboriginal people is critical to improving health outcomes and social wellbeing

◆ **Connecting for health**
Cyber space is emerging as an important sphere for health action

◆ **A scandal of unparalleled dimension: changing attitudes to violence against women**
Preventing violence means addressing the forces that underpin it – the socio-

cultural landscape which allows violence against women to flourish

◆ **Giving for a change?** -

The role of philanthropy in supporting mental health and wellbeing



The Melbourne Charter for Promoting Mental Health & Preventing Mental & Behavioural Disorders ...

This edition also features in the centrefold 'The Melbourne Charter for Mental Health Promotion,' a major driving force and outcome of the conference, which will strengthen the coalitions built between diverse sectors and settings during the conference. The Charter forms part of the Victorian Government's soon-to-be launched Mental Health Reform Strategy. It will also be a central component of VicHealth's ongoing work with stakeholders to build confidence, resilience and mental health and wellbeing in Victorian communities.

Developed at the 5th World Conference on the Promotion of Mental Health and the Prevention of Mental and

Behavioural Disorders: From Margins to Mainstream (10-12 Sept 2008). The Melbourne Charter identifies principles and actions that governments, communities, organisations and individuals can take to influence the interconnecting social, economic, cultural, environmental and personal factors that influence mental health and wellbeing.



The Melbourne Charter asserts that mental health and wellbeing are:

- ❖ an indivisible part of general health;
- ❖ essential for the wellbeing and optimal functioning of individuals, families, communities and societies; and
- ❖ a fundamental right of every human being, without discrimination.

The Melbourne Charter affirms that mental health and wellbeing is:

- ❖ of universal relevance;
- ❖ most threatened by poor and unequal living conditions, conflict and violence; and
- ❖ a key indicator of a nation's social and economic development.

The Melbourne Charter believes that mental health and wellbeing is:

- ❖ everybody's concern and responsibility;
- ❖ best achieved in equitable, just and non-violent societies; and
- ❖ advanced through respectful, participatory means where culture and cultural heritage and diversity is acknowledged and valued. ✕

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Protective factors & risk factors for mental health & wellbeing

(excerpt from The Melbourne Charter)

Protective Factors

- ◆ **Arts & cultural engagement**
- ◆ **Childhood:** positive early childhood experiences, maternal attachment
- ◆ **Cultural identity**
- ◆ **Diversity:** welcomed, shared, valued
- ◆ **Education:** accessible
- ◆ **Environments:** safe
- ◆ **Empathy**
- ◆ **Empowerment** and self determination
- ◆ **Family:** resilience, parenting competence, positive relationship with parents and/or other family members
- ◆ **Food:** accessible, quality
- ◆ **Housing:** affordable, accessible
- ◆ **Income:** safe, accessible employment and work conditions
- ◆ **Personal resilience & social skills**
- ◆ **Physical health**
- ◆ **Respect**
- ◆ **Social participation:** supportive relationships, involvement in group and community activity and networks
- ◆ **Sport and recreation:** participation and access
- ◆ **Transport:** accessible and affordable
- ◆ **Services:** accessible quality health and social services
- ◆ **Spirituality**

Risk Factors

- ◆ **Alcohol and drugs:** access and abuse
- ◆ **Disadvantage:** social and economic
- ◆ **Displacement:** refugee and asylum seeker status
- ◆ **Disability**
- ◆ **Discrimination and stigma**
- ◆ **Education:** lack of access
- ◆ **Environments:** unsafe, overcrowded, poorly resourced
- ◆ **Family:** fragmentation, dysfunction and child neglect, post-natal depression
- ◆ **Food:** inadequate and inaccessible
- ◆ **Genetics**
- ◆ **Homelessness**
- ◆ **Isolation and exclusion:** social and geographic
- ◆ **Natural and human-made disasters**
- ◆ **Peer rejection**
- ◆ **Political repression**
- ◆ **Physical illness**
- ◆ **Physical inactivity**
- ◆ **Poverty:** social and economic
- ◆ **Racism**
- ◆ **Unemployment:** poor employment conditions and unsecure employment
- ◆ **Violence:** interpersonal, intimate and collective; war and torture