

Safety Tips and Mindful Language



Mental health can be a tricky topic to speak about when fundraising for batyr as some themes can be sensitive for others, possibly because of their own lived experience. This means you need to be mindful of how you choose to speak about the topic.

Safety is so important, not only for your supporters hearing about mental ill-health, but also for YOU. If someone donating to your page or attending your fundraising event is going through some challenges of their own, do your best to ensure you're not speaking about mental health in a way that brings up intense emotions for them, encourages them to overshare in a harmful way, or accidentally gives them negative coping strategies. Instead, provide them with safe coping strategies and feelings of hope.

While talking about how you look after your own mental health and wellbeing helps to remove the stigma surrounding it and encourage help-seeking for those that need it, there's absolutely no requirement to talk about your own experience with mental health if you don't want to.

If you would like to share some of your own experience with mental ill-health during your fundraiser or on your fundraising page, we strongly encourage you ahead of going live for youth mental health to learn how to talk about your experience in a safe, impactful way. You can do this by:

- **Attend an upcoming Being Herd workshop, designed to help you shape difficult experiences into an empowering story.** Workshops are delivered either online or face-to-face, and comprise of a small group of people as well as some of the batyr crew to facilitate the content and conversation! Completing the Being Herd workshop is the first step to becoming a paid Lived Experience Storyteller at batyr. However, anyone aged 18-30 that has a story to share is welcome. Find out more and register for an upcoming workshop [here](#).
- **Sharing your story on the OurHerd app - it's our mental health storytelling app filled with stories of hope by young people across Australia.** Use our story creation guide to share your own experience in a safe way that brings hope to others - every piece of content is reviewed by our team before it goes live on the app. Download the OurHerd app free on the app store or find out more [here](#).

On the next page, we've provided some general guidelines to help you make your fundraiser as safe as possible when discussing mental health.



If you do have any concerns or questions around talking safely about youth mental health, we're more than happy to help! Feel free to reach out to us at events@batyr.com.au

General guidelines to keep in mind

- **Consider the environment and your audience.** If you're sharing your fundraising page online on platforms like TikTok, be mindful that these often have safety features that flag the use of certain words like 'suicide' as unsafe, which may impact your ability and fundraise. When talking about mental health or batyr and what we do, be mindful of this and instead you can use the phrase 'mental health crisis,' focusing on the importance of mental health education and how stories of hope can help break down the mental health stigma and encourage help-seeking.
- **Particular language can stigmatise or sensationalise mental ill-health.** Avoid terms like 'crazy', 'psycho', 'insane', 'lunatic', 'mad' and others that could perpetuate negative stereotypes of how mental ill-health presents or discourage people from reaching out and seeking treatments.
- **Use person-first or person-centred language.** People are so much more than a diagnosis or tough moment. Instead of using terms like 'schizophrenic', 'anorexic' or 'alcohol' we look to use more neutral phrases such as 'has a diagnosis of schizophrenia', 'is being treated for anorexia', or 'has experiences with problematic substance use'. Some people may choose to self-identify with some of these which is still valid if that's how you identify, but in the context of sharing on a public platform or at an event, or when talking about other people (such as caring for a loved one living with mental ill-health), it's best to stick to the neutral terms suggested.
- **Particular language can stigmatise or sensationalise experiences of hospitalisation or in-patient care.** Avoid terms like 'committed to', 'confined to', 'released from' and 'escaped from' which can sound like a prison sentence. Instead use terms that won't perpetuate stigma such as 'admitted', 'left' and 'discharged'.
- **Limit the amount of detail you give about certain experiences.** This doesn't mean that you shouldn't talk about the challenges, but have a think about how they are spoken about. To avoid copycat behaviour, refrain from disclosing methods or locations associated with suicide/thoughts/attempts/self-harm and avoid glorifying drug or alcohol use.
- **Focus on the steps you took to reach out for support, and how you manage your wellbeing today.** Talking about the positives including how you got help is a good way to remind yourself of where you are today, and it also provides useful information for your supporters on avenues of help they can reach out to. Talking about this also creates hopeful messages and empowers others to take action of their own wellbeing.

