



Mental Health Procedure

“No matter what happens in society at large, we as Buddhists have to act in accordance with Buddhist principles and be open to people of all kinds, and their needs. “They are our members, not some people out there, but our members.”
— Sangharakshita

Overview

It is understood that people with varying degrees of mental health will make contact with the Melbourne Buddhist Centre (MBC) and participants in its events, online, on site at the premises and / or through off-site activities such as retreats. People with mental ill-health may disclose personal details of their lives with people they’ve met through the MBC.

This document is developed to provide procedures for:

- adults attending MBC activities, with varying degrees of mental health
- the people they come into contact with through the MBC

We are aware that those attending the MBC and its activities include adults experiencing neurological and / or psychological disorders ranging from mild to severe. We recognise that, as Buddhists, we do not have the professional skills to diagnose or help people with such disorders, nor will they necessarily be helped solely by Buddhist practices. In such cases, it may be appropriate for us to encourage them to seek professional help.

Mental Health First Aid Strategies

The five steps in providing Mental Health First Aid are:

1. Assess the risk of harm to person or others.
2. Listen non-judgmentally.
3. Give reassurance and information.
4. Encourage the person to get appropriate professional help, if needed.
5. Encourage self-help strategies.



How to Help Someone Going Through a Mental Health Crisis

A mental health crisis may occur when a person may feel suicidal, a person may be having anxiety attacks, a person may be in an acute stress reaction or a person may be out of touch with reality in a distressing, psychotic state.

Some strategies that may be helpful, are:

1. Introduce yourself and explain why you are present.
2. Remain courteous and non-threatening, but be honest and direct.
3. Listen to the person in a non-judgmental way.
4. Avoid confrontation at all costs. Be prepared to "agree to differ" with the person's perspective.
5. Clarify and address what the person sees as the major issues first (not what you, the helper, see as the major concerns).
6. Do not attempt to manhandle the patient, except to prevent serious assault or suicide attempts.
7. Encourage / assist the person to receive professional mental health help.
8. If the incident was traumatic for you, or you feel anxious or distressed, discuss these issues with a friend or a professional service.

Compiled by Maitrīdhāraṇī (Secretary / Public Officer): 3rd August, 2025

Ratified by Management Committee: 3rd August, 2025