

Support at Festival Events - Don't Rush Home!

During the festival you may encounter artworks, experiences or events that give rise to emotions, thoughts or feelings that need to be worked through or discussed. We encourage everyone to take time to review and process these experiences for your own wellbeing.

'Don't Rush Home' Guide

'Don't Rush Home' is a concept adapted from First Fortnight, a festival in Ireland that uses arts and culture to challenge mental health stigma while supporting vulnerable people through creative therapies.

The idea is that no one should leave the festival feeling upset, distressed, concerned or confused. We hope that visitors have positive and beneficial experiences but we recognise that complex material or feelings need processing – and very often an experience is enhanced by discussion.

'Don't Rush Home' is an informal invitation to share your experience, chat to our volunteers or seek out Big Anxiety staff for further engagement. We make an effort to recruit and deploy volunteers at our main events/exhibitions for this purpose.

Don't hesitate to make contact – and if you can't find a volunteer, venues should be able to connect you with our staff. The festival director is keen to connect with you if you'd like to talk.

Procedure

We take seriously our duty of care to all those participating in the festival. The procedure below, developed in consultation with our Mental Health Lead and advising clinicians, sets out the formal process visitors, staff and volunteers should follow if they are in distress, wish to process experience or are simply wanting to chat.

Note 'Staff' refers to all artists, academics, creatives etc. contracted by The Big Anxiety festival.

For Visitors

If the festival raises issues that need discussion and you do NOT need immediate specialist assistance

1. Talk to one of our friendly volunteers, wearing the **black Awkward Conversations t-shirts**, or staff before you leave.
2. If no volunteer is present, ask venue staff to connect you to festival staff. You do not need to be in distress or making a complaint to do this. The "Don't Rush Home" guide means that you're welcome to ask for a chat any time!

If immediate assistance IS required

1. Talk to a Volunteer / Staff member. If you can't see a volunteer or staff member, see Front of House at all venues for a number to speak to a staff member.
2. Volunteers/staff will (where appropriate) provide you with a contact for a 24/7 counselling service; take you to a quiet space and/or seek further professional support. We will have

professionals on site, such as counsellors, volunteering psychiatrists or members of our mental health clinical advisory group. Volunteers can direct you to these professionals or help you find other support.

3. If you are in crisis, a volunteer will direct you to a member of staff who will walk you to the nearest ED or take you to a General Practitioner nearby, or if necessary call 000. NOTE: Volunteers are provided with information about the nearest GP or ED facilities for each of our venues in their Volunteer Manual.

Feedback

1. Leave written feedback via the feedback form available at the venue front desk or from volunteers. NOTE: this form is for feedback requiring attention. It is not an event survey. Feedback is followed up by The Big Anxiety staff in all instances and if necessary, referred to our mental health clinical advisory group.

For Volunteers

1. Contact the Volunteer Coordinator for the event to chat to them about your experience and debrief in a quiet area.
2. If you need further assistance, contact festival staff and/or the Festival Director, who can in turn liaise with our Mental Health Clinical Advisory Group. If necessary, the festival director (Professor Jill Bennett, UNSW) can be reached by mobile phone. Do not hesitate to make contact with them if a serious situation arises.

If immediate assistance is required

1. Call the Volunteer Coordinator.
2. If you are unable to reach the Volunteer Coordinator or Venue Manager, dial one of the 24/7 counselling numbers provided.
3. If you wish to speak to a staff member/the Director or senior supervisor, see the numbers provided at Front of House at all venues.

Feedback

1. Leave written feedback via our feedback form, which will be forwarded to the Festival Director for fast response.

For Staff

1. Reach out to a fellow staff member or Volunteer to talk in a quiet space
2. If you need further assistance, contact the Festival Director, who can in turn liaise with our Mental Health Clinical Advisory Group if necessary.

If immediate assistance is required

1. Dial one of the 24/7 counselling numbers provided.
2. If you are in crisis or distress reach out to a fellow staff member who will take you to the nearest GP or ED, and /or call 000.

24/7 Counselling Service Contact Numbers

Lifeline

13 11 14

24/7 Phone Counselling for Crisis Support and Suicide Prevention

<https://lifeline.org.au>

Suicide Call Back Service

1300 659 467

24/7 Phone and Online Counselling to people who are affected by suicide

<https://www.suicidecallbackservice.org.au/>

Beyond Blue

1300 22 4636

24/7 Phone and Online Counselling

Beyond Blue provides information and support.

<https://www.beyondblue.org.au/>

Feedback Review Process

After hard-copy feedback is received via the Feedback Form it will undergo internal review in the first instance by;

The Big Anxiety allocated Volunteer Coordinator

The Festival Director

The festival director may in turn seek advice from members of Mental Health Clinical Advisory Group.

The Big Anxiety Survey

The survey is designed to allow you to think through your response and experiences of our events and programs. A hardcopy survey is available at our venues and events, as well as on our website. You are also welcome to leave comments in our visitor comment book. Note that for feedback requiring response or immediate action you should use the Feedback Forms at venues and not the survey.

Complaints

If feedback cannot be resolved through the internal feedback process, it will be referred to the UNSW Complaint Management Policy and guidelines. Please refer to the following documents.

[UNSW Complaint Management Policy](#)

[UNSW Complaint Management Procedure](#)

Certification

QUT Venue Staff have First Aid Certification.