

Support at *The Big Anxiety 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 processes.

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 with 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.

Finally, it is important to maintain healthy boundaries for the health and safety for yourself and those around you. If at any time you are feeling uncomfortable, please feel free to chat with a volunteer or staff member.

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* is used below to refer to both venue and festival staff, as well as all artists, academics, creatives etc. contracted by The Big Anxiety festival.

Attendee wanting to debrief/process their experience at TBA

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/pink lanyards**, or staff before you leave.
2. If no volunteer is present, talk to venue staff. You do not need to be in distress or making a complaint to do this. Don't Rush Home means that you're welcome to ask for a chat any time!

Attendee needing assistance

If immediate assistance IS required

1. Talk to a volunteer or staff member. If you can't see a volunteer or staff member, see Front of House at all venues who can put you in touch.
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. For some events, we will have professionals on site, such as counsellors 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 assist you in accessing appropriate medical support, or if necessary, call 000.

Attendee wanting to give 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.

Crisis Services

Service name	Who is this for?	Contact methods	When?
Lifeline	Anyone having a personal crisis	Call 13 11 14 SMS 0477 13 11 14 Chat https://www.lifeline.org.au/crisis-chat/	24/7
Suicide Call Back Service	Anyone thinking about suicide	Call 1300 659 467 Chat or videocall https://www.suicidecallbackservice.org.au/phone-and-online-counselling/	24/7
Independent Mental Health Advocacy	People receiving or at risk of receiving compulsory mental health treatment	Call 1300 947 820 to speak to an advocate about your rights about your assessment, treatment and recovery Call 1800 959 353 to hear a recording of your rights under the Mental Health Act 2014 Visit https://www.imha.vic.gov.au/ for more info	24/7
SANE	People living with a mental illness	Call 1800 187 263 Chat https://www.sane.org/counselling-support	10am-10pm weekdays
Beyondblue	Anyone feeling depressed/anxious	Call 1300 224 636 Chat https://www.beyondblue.org.au/support-service/chat	24/7
Kids Helpline	Young people aged 5 to 25 years	Call 1800 551 800 Chat https://kidshelpline.com.au/get-help/webchat-counselling	24/7
1800Respect	Anyone with experience of family violence	Call 1800 737 732 Chat https://www.1800respect.org.au/	24/7
Qlife	LGBTIQ+ individuals	Call 1800 184 527 Chat https://qlife.org.au/resources/chat	3pm-12am, 7 days
RMIT – Student urgent mental health support	RMIT Students	Call 1300 305 737 Text 0488 884 162	24/7
RMIT EAP - Benestar	RMIT Employees	Call 1300 360 364 Visit https://www.rmit.edu.au/staff/service-connect/safety-wellbeing/employee-assistance-program	

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

[RMIT Complaints Process](#)

[UNSW Complaints Process](#)