

BELONGING

Matters

Simple moments
Deeper connections
Better mental health

Kia ora e hoa,

Mental Health Awareness Week 2026 is all about the power of belonging – and for workplaces, that message matters every day.

We all deserve to feel like we belong. When we feel included, seen, and valued, we are better placed to work, connect with others and contribute meaningfully.

Research shows that when people feel a sense of belonging at work, they are more likely to be engaged, motivated, and productive – and those everyday connections can have a positive impact on their mental health and wellbeing.

Mental Health Awareness Week is a great opportunity to reflect on what belonging at your workplace looks like. You might like to pose these questions at a staff meeting:

- What does belonging look like at our workplace?
- What sort of welcome do visitors receive when they come here?
- How do our people see themselves reflected in the spaces and places around our workplace?
- What events are on our calendar that highlight diversity and inclusion and make our staff feel that they belong? e.g. Matariki, Diwali, Pride Week?



**Mental Health
Awareness Week** 12–18 | 20
OCT | 26

Health New Zealand
Te Whatu Ora

mhaw.nz


mauri tū, mauri ora
**Mental Health
Foundation**
OF NEW ZEALAND

HOW TO BRING MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS WEEK TO LIFE

There are lots of ways to celebrate Mental Health Awareness Week at your workplace.

Spread the message

Over the coming weeks you'll see Mental Health Awareness Week on your social media feeds, in magazines and newspapers, on the radio and TV, and billboards.

It'll be hard to miss. And we'd love for you to share the kaupapa too.

- **Order a free Event Pack** and display the printed posters around your office, staffroom or public spaces.
- **Send out** an all-staff email or include a mention in your customer newsletter. Here's some copy to get you started:

*At [insert your workplace name] we know how important it is that our staff feel they belong, which is why we're excited to take part in Mental Health Awareness Week 2026 (12-18 October). This year's theme is **Belonging Matters**. We'll be marking the week by celebrating the small, everyday moments that create connections and build a stronger, more inclusive workplace.*

- **Download** a Mental Health Awareness Week social media sticker from our website. Add your own photo that celebrates belonging at your workplace and share it on your social channels. When you share content be sure to tag us [@mhfnz](#), and use [#mhawnz](#).
- Use the InCommon **Belonging Calendar** exercise to identify the cultural dates that matter most to your staff, and ensure these significant events are part of your calendar every year. Find it on our website, [mhaw.nz](#).

Resources and Activities

We have lots of resources you can try out with your staff. Visit [mhaw.nz/resources](#) to download them for free.

- **Kōrero cards** – use the printed set in the 2026 Event Pack or download your own. Keep them in communal areas like the staffroom for anyone to use or use them as a planned activity during the week.
- **Bingo** – we have a workplace bingo your staff can use to discover what they have in common with their workmates
- **Gratitude poster** – spread some gratitude with our tearable compliment strips.

Alongside these resources, feel free to get creative with how you celebrate the week. You might like to:

- **Create** an 'Our Community' display featuring pictures of families, cultures, and places that are important to staff.
- **Host** a potluck lunch and invite your team members to bring a plate of traditional food or kai important to their whānau/family.
- **Draw names** out of a hat and pay for two colleagues who might not know each other otherwise to connect over coffee.
- If you're a small business owner, **watch or listen** to the Xero NZ Open for Small Business podcast which will be released on 15 October. It features the Mental Health Foundation's Kylie Ryan, Head of Health Promotion, talking about how small businesses can help foster belonging for employees, customers and the communities around them.

Thank you for taking part in Mental Health Awareness Week 2026.

Ko au ko koe, ko koe ko au. I am you, and you are me.

Our whakataukī reminds us that when we see one another, value one another, and care for one another, we create an environment where everyone feels they belong.