

THE POWER OF A HASHTAG

The Crazy Socks 4 Docs campaign continues to punch holes in the myth that doctors are superhuman, writes Dr Sarah Newman

It all started with a pair of odd socks. Victoria-based cardiologist Dr Geoff Toogood wore mismatched socks to work one day thanks to his over-excited dog destroying all his matching pairs. Known as having a history of mental health issues, the odd socks triggered hushed conversations amongst colleagues about his mental state.

Dr Toogood was, in fact, in good health but felt his colleagues' response was inadequate and unhelpful – he was being 'spoken about' rather than 'spoken to' about his mental health.

In an effort to cheer himself up in the past, Dr Toogood had purchased some "crazy" brightly coloured socks and thus the concept of Crazy Socks for Docs was born.

Fast forward three years and a simple Twitter hashtag **#crazysocks4docs** is now a global phenomenon with doctors around the world donning odd and "crazy" socks on the very first day of June.

Crazy Socks 4 Docs is more than just a day; it is a movement to create awareness about mental health issues amongst doctors.

"To make it OK not to be OK, seek help, to advocate for ourselves, and create action in the area...and to save lives," says Dr Toogood.

In 2018, the campaign went global and reached close to 50 million people in just one day.



Best feet forward: Peninsula Health CEO Felicity Topp, RAAF Group Captain, orthopaedic and trauma surgeon Annette Holian, #CrazySocks4Docs founder and Peninsula Health cardiologist Dr Geoff Toogood, Member for Frankston Paul Edbrooke MP and Ambulance Victoria CEO A/Prof Tony Walker.



#crazysocks4docs
7 June 2019

How are you?: Dr Sarah Newman's simple illustration effectively captures the importance of starting a conversation about mental health.

This year Dr Toogood will launch the Crazy Socks 4 Docs campaign with a forum at Peninsula Health, the public healthcare provider for Victoria's Mornington Peninsula.

During the first week of June, organisations and hospitals are also being encouraged to hold grand rounds, morning teas and other events in the lead-up to Crazy Socks 4 Docs Day on **Friday 7 June**.

Participation is as easy as wearing a pair of eye-catching socks, posting a photograph to social media and tagging **#crazysocks4docs**.

Dr Toogood hopes 2019 will see further growth and momentum of the campaign. So, be part of the movement for better mental health in doctors – start finding your craziest socks, host an event at your workplace and kick start the conversation about doctors' welfare. ■

Dr Sarah Newman is Assistant Director, Doctors' Health Advisory Service WA. DHASWA is an independent not for profit organisation supported through funding from the Medical Board of Australia.

For doctors in crisis or for those wanting to speak with a DHASWA doctor: (08) 9321 3098 – 24 hours/day, seven days/week.

For general enquiries and feedback, phone 9273 3025 or visit www.dhaswa.com.au

If you or someone you know is experiencing depression, you can contact Lifeline on 13 11 14.

To contact Beyond Blue, please call 1300 22 4636 or visit beyondblue.org.au