

## Participation and Inclusion

**Social isolation and lack of participation in community life have been found to impact negatively on mental health and wellbeing. Alternatively there is general acceptance that the major factors that influence mental health include having access to social networks, engaging in a variety of social and physical activities and a valued social position. Thus, development of organisations and activities which encourage participation and inclusion is vital to the development and maintenance of mental health and wellbeing at an individual and community level.**

### Your organisation should:

- ensure that activities are not difficult to access due to cost or location;
- ensure that people from a range of backgrounds are involved in the planning and staging of your activities;
- ensure that information regarding your organisation and activities is widely circulated;
- ensure that people from a range of backgrounds feel comfortable in participating in activities developed; and
- ensure that your premises and activities are accessible to people with disabilities.

### Some ideas to help you create welcoming and inclusive activities

- Adopt policies regarding the management of discrimination within your organisation including racism, sexism and bullying
- Stage free or low cost activities to increase participation
- Where possible, conduct your activities in proximity to public transport
- Involve people from a range of backgrounds in the planning and staging of your activities
- Develop relationships with community based organisations which may have an interest in your activities
- Distribute information about your activities in diverse forms and through a range of mediums eg: fliers, community radio, local press, ethnic press

