Volunteering with DRA has significant benefits for mental health and wellbeing

Disaster Relief Australia (DRA) brings hope to communities devastated by disaster. We unite the skills and experience of military veterans, emergency responders and civilians to deploy volunteer disaster recovery teams in Australia and the world.

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Over time DRA has witnessed the power and positive impacts on volunteer wellbeing whilst helping others in their time of need. In 2022 DRA commissioned the Wellbeing Study to better understand this phenomena.

Funded by a Movember Foundation research grant and led by the South Australian Health and Medical Research Institute (SAHMRI), the Study focused on more than 700 DRA volunteers to explore if service in DRA leads to improved mental health and wellbeing. The Study was finalised in February 2024, and the data illustrates that:

- **Volunteering with DRA has significant benefits for mental health and wellbeing.**

- **Deployments provide a unique setting to support wellbeing, bolstering self-worth through positive engagement.**

- **DRA'S support of wellbeing is unique from mainstay interventions as is demonstrated in DRA's Wellbeing Model.**

- **DRA's Wellbeing Model clearly demonstrates the path by which DRA supports and improves mental health and wellbeing, reducing the risk of developing illness.**

Please turnover to see the key activities that drive wellbeing for DRA volunteers.

Scan to connect with the DRA membership team

Scan to find out more about DRA's Wellbeing Study

WELLBEING PROJECT

Project Partners

MOVEMBER®

SAHMRI
South Australian Health &
Medical Research Institute

DRA's Wellbeing Model

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DRA's Wellbeing Model illustrates that DRA activities map primarily onto drivers of wellbeing (belonging, purpose, self-worth, optimism, enjoyment, and competency). These drivers help protect people from serious illness and behaviours (such as suicide).

LEVEL 1

DRA activities that support wellbeing

Deployments create a positive environment that facilitates:

Active Volunteering
Being physically active and helping others in times of need

Connection
Socialising with like-minded people and connecting to positive role models

Development
Formal and informal upskilling leading to improved competency

Recognition
Being recognised for contribution of valuable skills, supporting positive reframing of past experiences.

Supportive Conversations
Detecting early warning signs by wellbeing officers.

LEVEL 2

Promotion of positive mental health drivers

- Belonging
- Purpose
- Self-worth
- Optimism
- Enjoyment
- Competency

Monitoring for antecendents of mental illness

LEVEL 3

Improved mental health over time

Improved mental wellbeing

REDUCE

Reduced symptoms of illness

Reduced risk of developing illness

LOWER RISK OF SUICIDE