

FAST FACT | The National Survey of Mental Health and Wellbeing in 2007 found that one in five Australian adults experience mental illness

Police focus on health

HUME police have taken part in first aid training of a different kind to help them respond and assist in a mental health crisis.

Broadmeadows' Sgt Phil Nash presented the Adult Mental Health First Aid course to 23 officers from the northern suburbs last month.

The course aims to help police identify the signs and symptoms of

mental health issues and how to respond, provide support and information and where to get help for people developing a mental health problem or in mental health crisis.

It also aims to help police assist those with depression, anxiety disorders, psychosis and substance use disorders as well as people feeling suicidal, having a panic attack,

suffering trauma, overdose or psychosis.

Sgt Nash said the prevalence of mental illness in society meant it was important police had the skills to identify it and offer assistance.

"It could help in everyday life, it could help with family and even colleagues," he said.

"It's better education in recognis-

ing the types of mental illness and the prevalence of mental illness and how to recognise the signs and symptoms."

Sgt Nash and several other Victoria Police officers were trained by Orygen Youth Health Research Centre to deliver the course, which 1500 police have taken part in during the past five years.