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P21 - Cosmic Perspectives: Using Astronomy to Support Mental Health and Wellbeing

Monday, 23 November 2026 11:30 (30 minutes)

Looking up at the night sky can shift how people feel about their own worries. The sense of awe and vastness that astronomy brings pull attention into the present moment and helps us change what feels important. These same shifts sit at the heart of Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) which is a practice built around accepting difficult feelings, stepping back from unhelpful thoughts, and reconnecting with what matters.
This talk looks at how the perspective astronomy offers, and the simple act of being under the stars, can be used to support mental health and wellbeing. Building on the IAU Astro for Mental Health initiative, it connects stargazing to the language of ACT and to the wellbeing that comes from being in nature, showing why astronomy outreach is well suited to encouraging acceptance, perspective, and connection.

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