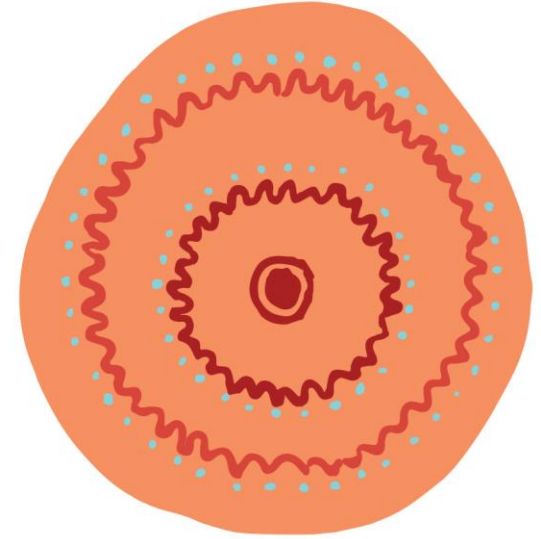Australian Government

National Mental Health Commission

Making
Connections
with your
Mental Health
and Wellbeing

Safety Beach, VIC

05 September 2019

76 Participants

This snapshot identifies key points from the Town Hall Meeting

Content from all Town Hall Meetings is being collated by the Commission

Exploring Mental Health

Participants were asked to share 3 words that come to mind when thinking of mental health:

- Shame, fear and stigma were the dominant responses

- Isolation, struggle and anxiety were mentioned frequently

- Loneliness, suffering, sadness, depression, illness and suicide were also mentioned commonly

- The wide range of other descriptors was apparent

Help Seeking

Participants were asked what stops them or someone they know from seeking help.
Direct comments included:

- 'Trust and not believing that help is out there. Not believing that they need help. No understanding'

- 'Overcoming self stigma'

- 'Indifference from some providers who prescribe inappropriate drugs with terrible side effects'

- 'Fear of not being genuinely listened to'

- 'The system is confusing . There is a lack of communication between services and many wrong doors. Drug and alcohol is a big part of mental illness. The services need to be combined'

- 'Implications of disclosure, eg: professional suspension, potential constraints on practice and earning a living'

- 'Deemed too complex so you give up'

Help Seeking

Direct comments included – continued:

- 'Frustration, lack of education, awareness, no confidence in the system or process'

- 'As a carer, you will be dismissed so why bother?'

- 'Access to ELMHS for young people is so restricted because of the high demand'

- 'Lack of services in the area. All mental health services closed, due to NDIS. Difficulty of mental health clients getting NDIS'

- 'NDIS pays for psychologists, who can not diagnose but who then provide assessments and provide medications, so why not psychiatrists?'

- 'Psychiatrists are too expensive and hard to access'

- 'Overworked workers who don't have time to really listen'

- 'Autism and mental ill health is too complex and no one wants to help, as it is a much longer process than a person without disabilities!'

Help Seeking

Participants were asked what stops them or someone they know from seeking help.
Discussion points included:

- Common and strong concerns around the cost of support and treatment and the expense of getting to health professionals due to limited transport options

- The cost and availability of psychiatric support is seen as a major barrier for treatment

- Frustration that NDIS is not covering critical aspects of mental health recovery and that NDIS services have taken funding away from community health services

- Not knowing who to ask or where to go; difficulties in navigating through the system without causing further distress

- The totally disjointed nature of the system, with clinicians and specialists siloed off and not discussing or working together, for the person

- Past, negative experiences that cause people to avoid services and facilities, sometimes for years

Big Ideas or Initiatives

Participants were asked for one big idea or initiative to improve mental health in their community.
Direct comments included:

- 'An elders program within primary schools and secondary schools'

- 'Bulk billed psychiatrists … a must for long term, mentally ill persons, to see a regular psychiatrist weekly or fortnightly'

- 'Comprehensive, nuanced range of supportive housing for those experiencing severe and enduring mental illness'

- 'A mother mental health service which connects all organisations'

- 'Specialised, fully subsidised psychotherapy for diagnosed mental illnesses'

- 'A health program that provides holistic health nutrition, life coaching, support and financial opportunities'

- '"Navigate" program from Boston University implemented for people with early psychosis'

- '"Don't dismiss me" policy'

Big Ideas or Initiatives

Direct comments included – continued:

- 'Broader understanding of the workforce to provide support, from wellness to mental illness and crisis. Include more peer support'

- 'An app that can find supports in the area, including other holistic therapy, nutrition, GPs, counselling. Assesses the clients then produces a pathway to a range of services'

- 'Specialised Mental Hubs as mental ill health is very specialised from dual diagnosis to dual disability to general anxiety to depression'

- 'Rethink the environment of an acute Mental Health setting, increase privacy and recognise the impact of the environment contributing to trauma and delaying recovery'

- 'Achieve parity of resourcing with physical health'

- 'Create roles in the community sector for mental health advocates who have significant knowledge of mental health systems'

Big Ideas or Initiatives

Direct comments included – continued:

- 'More support for in-home services. Risk CAN be mitigated'

- 'Take any suicide conversation seriously, whether it is the 6 year old child or the 89 year old female or the 56 year old farmer'

- 'More community day programs like Clubhouses or other psychosocial programs that provide meaning, purpose, connection and socialisation'

- 'Real Youth Work. More openness from local primary and secondary schools to accept outside help from youth workers and youth coaches who have grown up in the community and know the demographics. Not the "right fit" but the "best fit"'

- 'We teach our primary school age children about sex education in Grade 5/6, why not mental health!'

- 'Rehab Centres teaching trades. Rather in there than on the street and sick for 3 years to 20 years'

- 'All I am asking is that whatever is done can it please be beautiful, with trees, gardens, water and nature'

Big Ideas or Initiatives

Participants were asked for one big idea or initiative to improve mental health in their community.
Discussion points included:

- Alternative therapies and wellness facilities can have significant positive input to mental wellbeing

- Integrate services and treat people holistically so that the best response is available at the right time in the change cycle

- Increase education around the impact of wifi and electromagnetic radiation signals on mental illness

- Bring the beauty of nature into the environment of our institutions, to free the spirit

- Expose young children to positive experiences in the way that Rosebud Secondary College works to create a sense of community through mindfulness and a wellness centre

- Fast track adult mental health centres for every community

The Developing Vision

Participants were asked for key aspects to be included in the vision of a new system.
Responses included:

- Mentoring
- Role modelling
- Rehabilitation Centres
- Faith
- Empowered
- Mindful
- Meditation in all primary schools
- Ownership

- Recovery
- Beauty
- Availability
- In-home
- Team-based
- Trust, reliability
- Choices
- Ethical

Closing comment: We have a chance to really make a national difference and the time is now.

Thank You, Safety Beach

The Commission thanks the community for their comments and suggestions on improving our mental health system

Ways to stay connected:

✓ Attend a Town Hall meeting

● Read the snapshots from your community and other communities in Australia

● Take the survey online (on our website)

● Follow us on Facebook (@NMHCAustralia) and Twitter (@NMHC)

● Join the conversation online using #ConnectingWithYou

www.mentalhealthcommission.gov.au

STAY CONNECTED WITH US
www.mentalhealthcommission.gov.au
community@nmhcconnections.com.au

To-Date we have connected with:
- ✓ **26 communities**
- ✓ **1090 people**
- ✓ **2000 survey responses**

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