



ACT
Government



Office for Mental Health And Wellbeing

Spring Newsletter

COORDINATOR-GENERAL UPDATE

Mental Health Month is fast approaching and I encourage you to participate in the diverse range of events and activities in celebration of mental health and wellbeing. For a full list of events, [click here to have a look at the calendar](#).

Mental health literacy and early intervention are key parts of the Office workplan and it has been good to be able to showcase the evidence in community forums and on radio. I have enjoyed meeting many of you at various events and making the connections between people and organisations as we work together. At a recent Construction Breakfast it was great to see the messaging of RuOK embraced and the enthusiasm for learning more with QPR training freely available [through this website link](#).

Our Children and Young People review, which was codesigned with young people and service organisations, is being finalised and will lead to positive change. It is not too late, YourSay remains open until 18 October [through this website link](#). We will be looking to start the design of the Youth Navigation Portal in the coming months.

Lifespan, our whole of community approach to suicide prevention continues to mature, with good representation from across the Canberra region in this important multistrategy initiative.

I want to thank all the consumers, carers, clinicians, support workers and researchers who are actively contributing to improving the mental health and wellbeing of the community.

Please enjoy the newsletter and feedback is always welcome.



Dr Elizabeth Moore

September 2019
Volume 1, Issue 3

A kind, connected and informed community working together to promote and protect the mental health and wellbeing of all.



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ACT CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE REVIEW

A priority area for the Office identified in the Work plan is a review of Children and Young People’s Mental Health and Wellbeing across the continuum.

To this end, the Office engaged Mental Illness Education ACT (MIEACT) to lead a community consultation. Three workshops were held across Canberra with over 100 registrations. The objectives were to understand the current landscape for 0-25 years; engage with children, young people, parents, carers, non-government and government to understand the challenges young people are facing; identify current challenges facing our young people; and identify gaps and potential solutions. There is still an opportunity to participate in the current review [through the YourSay website](#), this will close on the 18 October.

Below is preliminary snapshot of the questionnaires findings to date.



Shannon Malone-Brierley, Program Director, Heidi Prouse, Chief Executive Officer and Rose, Volunteer Educator—MIEACT, Dr Elizabeth Moore, Coordinator-General and Natalie Johnson, Change Leader - Office for Mental Health and Wellbeing, and Kate.

Consultation Snapshot

 **702**
respondents



Parent/Carer/Service Provider (390)

Young people 18-25 years (104)

Children 17 and under years (208)



66% of all respondents live in the ACT.

76% of Parent/Carer/Service Provider respondents have a child(ren) between the ages of 0-25 yrs.



Engagement with youth by Parent/Carer/Service Providers were fairly distributed between Government, Non-Government, Voluntary and Carer only roles.

95% of young people respondents are working or studying.

17% of young people respondents are working full-time.

70% of child respondents attend a public school.

3% of all youth respondents identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.

8% of all youth respondents identified as living with a disability..

9% of all youth respondents identified as born overseas.



Heidi Prowse, Chief Executive Officer, Rose, Volunteer Educator—MIEACT, Dr Elizabeth Moore, Coordinator-General, Office for Mental Health and Wellbeing at ABC Breakfast Radio: Teens and anxiety panel.

“We need to focus on teaching children resilience from a young age. At the core of this is parental responsibility. Teach parents key skills to manage their children.” Respondent, Under 17

WHERE TO FROM HERE

Following the online surveys and the co-design workshops, the Office will continue to work with MIEACT to understand the current challenges facing the children and young people in our community in relation to mental health and wellbeing. We will also undertake further analysis of the suggestions provided and will continue to engage with the community to ensure the information we have captured addresses the concerns raised and that the final recommendations are a true reflection of the needs of our community.

The feedback received to date and the enthusiasm from our community has been incredibly encouraging and we would like to thank everyone for helping guide this review and for sharing their experience and

suggestions for improvements. The final report and recommendations will be finalised over the coming months and presented to the Minister for Mental Health.



Dr Elizabeth Moore, Coordinator-General Office for Mental Health and Wellbeing, presenting at the first workshop for the Children and Young Person Review.

AND SO THEY SPOKE....

“The mental health support around Canberra is generally very difficult to get. It can feel almost isolating how long waiting lists for free or cheap options can be which makes it almost feel worthless trying to get better or seek help. Improvements into the aid available at schools and cheaper or even free options would be extremely beneficial in helping those in rough times find ways out or simply ways to cope better.” – Respondent, Under 17

“Easier access to counselling services both inside and outside of school, with formal and non-formal settings to help people feel like they’re more comfortable and safe.” – Respondent, Under 17

“I think what’s important is fostering a culture of support, especially between males. Only recently have I started to feel comfortable talking to my friends about my problems and not feel weak for it.” – Respondent, 18-25 Years

“There needs to be more programs/services available for low income earners that provide regular and ongoing psychological support rather than just counselling.” – Respondent, 18-25 years

MENTAL HEALTH MONTH

The Office has been a part of the Mental Health Month Advisory Committee brought together each year by the [Mental Health Community Coalition ACT](#).

This Advisory Committee membership includes consumers and carers as well as several organisations. Through the hard work and dedication of group members, an array of over 35 events and activities have been planned for October in line with the theme 'Conversations & Connection'. [The calendar of events is available online](#).

This year the committee is asking ACT workplaces to take a break and make mental health a priority by hosting your own 'Wellbeing P priori-tea'! It could be a morning tea, afternoon tea or high tea! [Follow this link for more information and resources](#).

If you attend an event, join the conversation by tagging Mental Health Month ACT on Facebook and Instagram or use the hashtag #mentalhealthmonthact.

Also, if you spot the bus pictured here, please take a picture (if safe to do so) and tag mental health month.



KEY EVENTS

Launch Comedy Evening

When: Tuesday 1 October

Where: The Dickson Tradies 2 Badham St Dickson ACT 2602

Find out more: www.mentalhealthmonthact.org/launchevent

Mental Health & Wellbeing Expo

When: Thursday 10 October

Where: Garema Place and City Walk, Civic

Find out more: www.mentalhealthmonthact.org/expo

2019 Mental Health Month Awards

When: Tuesday 29 October

Where: Networking and canapes from 3pm, 3:30pm start, Bradman Room, Manuka Oval

Find out more: www.mentalhealthmonthact.org/awards

10 TIPS TO HELP YOU STAY MENTALLY HEALTH AT WORK

Be kind	<i>Are you considerate of your colleagues? Ask yourself, “Is what I am saying good for others and good for me? If not, don’t say it!”</i>
Take time out	<i>Step away from the workplace and focus on breathing for a few moments. This will divert your brain from whatever is causing you stress.</i>
Go for a walk	<i>A walk is good for the mind and body. A walk will clear your head and place you outside the environment causing you stress.</i>
Organise your day	<i>Being disorganised can build stress and anxiety. Both of these are better managed and can be avoided by taking time to organise and plan.</i>
Learn something new	<i>Take opportunities at work to learn and grow, let work be a place where you learn at least one new thing every week.</i>
Say “Good morning”	<i>Identify the people at work who are receptive towards you and care about you on a personal level. Ask how they are and mean it.</i>
See the funny side of life	<i>Laughter is a wonderful medicine. Sometimes we need to break out and ask ourselves, “When did I last have a good laugh?” Lighten up.</i>
Reach out and help others	<i>Encourage a positive workplace; work as a team towards common goals.</i>
Eat healthy and stay hydrated	<i>Eat at least four healthy lunches in a working week and keep a water bottle at your desk (but don’t beat yourself up if you fall short of the target).</i>
Balance your work and personal life	<i>Work the hours required and create mental and physical boundaries to reduce work/home spill-over stress.</i>

Adapted with permission from Western Australian Association for Mental Health

ACT LIFESPAN UPDATE

ACT Lifespan is an evidence based suicide prevention program with nine strategies.

Working Groups are a key element in the current implementation phase of ACT LifeSpan.

Schools Working Group: The ACT LifeSpan Schools Working Group met in July and August 2019, with regular monthly meetings scheduled, to coordinate all ACT LifeSpan activity in schools. All schools involved in Lifespan can attend, as well as representatives from ACTED, Catholic Education, ANU, headspace and MIEACT. The focus is currently on planning for the rollout of the Youth Aware of Mental Health Program in ACT high schools. Black Dog Institute (BDI) supports and attends the meetings.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Working Group: The Group held its inaugural meeting on Friday 19 July 2019, and will meet monthly. It is composed of key Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representatives from across the ACT, and has been initiated primarily to provide advice and guidance on culturally appropriate and safe Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander suicide prevention strategies, as well as to guide the actual implementation of these strategies, for the ACT. Terms of Reference for the Working Group have been established, and the potential need for a culturally appropriate suicide intervention, postvention and aftercare service was raised.

Staff of BDI have also attended the Working Group to provide information on the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander aspects of ACT Lifespan. The Working Group is currently discussing the proposed United Ngunnawal Elders Council (UNEC) ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Forum on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Suicide Prevention, date to be confirmed for October/November. ACT LifeSpan will collaborate with UNEC and the ACT Office for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders Affairs to organise this important inaugural Forum.

Further meetings of this group are scheduled for Wednesday 30 October and Wednesday 27 November.

Improving Public Safety Working Group:

Meets quarterly at ANU, and is chaired by the Centre for Mental Health Research. The Group has prioritised areas that will be the main initial focus, potentially including improving frontline training and processes; improving provision of self-care and wellbeing programs for frontline workers; ensuring the establishment of a local suicide data capture process to inform planning activities; means restriction opportunities; postvention support; key actions from the suicide audit; and encouraging safe and purposeful media reporting across the ACT. The next meeting is scheduled for Tues 3 December 2019, 12noon, Henderson Room, Centre for Mental Health Research.

Health Working Group: A Suicide Prevention Officer position is being funded based in MHJHADS, and will convene the first meeting of this Working Group in October. The Group will analyse clinical practice in relation to suicide prevention, facilitate training for mental health professionals, and promote the BDI Guidelines for Emergency Departments



QUESTION, PERSUADE, REFER (QPR) TRAINING IS A FREE ONLINE COURSE THAT WILL HELP YOU

- identify warning signs of a suicide crisis
- confidently talk to someone about their suicidal thoughts
- understand how to connect someone to professional care

SIGN UP FOR QPR TRAINING TODAY

www.chnact.org.au/mental-health-programs-hp

QPR for individuals living in the ACT region is free.



ONLY TAKES
60 MINUTES



[Click here to complete the course](#)

STUDENT PLACEMENT

My name is Eden and I am a fourth-year social work student undertaking my final placement at the Office for Mental Health and Wellbeing.

As part of my placement I am excited to be working on a project that identifies and further explores the need for targeted supports for people with a mental illness in their parenting role. This project will additionally look at any existing service delivery gaps in the Canberra region and outline any recommendations for future consideration. I am currently within the consultation phase of the project and have been meeting with key stakeholders.

This is the current scope of my project to support parents with a mental illness in their parenting role, that will aim to inform the work of the Office.



“Quality of life and feeling healthy and happy will mean different things to different people.”

A WELLBEING FRAMEWORK FOR CANBERRA

The Chief Minister announced that a Wellbeing Framework will be launched on Canberra Day 2020. In partnership with the community, the ACT Government is developing wellbeing indicators to monitor progress across areas that reflect the values of Canberrans and influence our quality of life.

Quality of life and feeling happy mean different things to different people. There are likely to be range of attributes that we value and consider to be priorities when it comes to wellbeing for ourselves, our families, and our community.

In July and August, Canberra community organisations, advisory bodies and individuals representing the diversity of our city were asked about what matters to Canberrans. This feedback has informed the development of a draft wellbeing framework. The next phase of our community engagement has

commenced and broad feedback on the framework is being sought.

The OMHW would like to encourage people with lived experience and their family and carers to participate in this process. Or feedback can be provided through the ACT Government’s Your Say website at <https://www.yoursay.act.gov.au/wellbeing>

The OMHW is sponsoring a panel discussion on the Wellbeing Framework and Mental Health during Mental Health Month, details will be shared once confirmed.



WHO'S WHO AT THE OFFICE



From Left: Neville Perkins, Eden Roberts, Purity Goj, Lee-Anne Rogers, Elizabeth Moore, Ros Garrity, Natalie Johnson and Amy Clark. Absent Grace Hernandez

Since the last Newsletter, the team at the Office for Mental Health and Wellbeing has grown. Eden joined the team to undertake her final placement in her Bachelor of Social Work. Purity, previously at the ACT Mental Health Consumer Network is now working on projects alongside Amy. Amy brings with her a strong background in procurement, contracts and project management. The Office is pleased to welcome them to the team.

We would like to take this opportunity to farewell Grace. Grace has been an incredible support to Dr Moore and was instrumental in the children and young people review. Her cheerful professionalism will be missed and we wish her well in her future career.

Thank you for taking the time to read this newsletter, please circulate it within your networks.

Any feedback or comments are very welcome.



We acknowledge the traditional custodians of the ACT, the Ngunnawal people. We acknowledge and respect their continuing culture and the contribution they make to the life of this city and region.

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