



ACT
Government



Office for Mental Health and Wellbeing

AUTUMN NEWSLETTER

The last few months have been challenging as we responded to several natural disasters. Along with stories of devastation, as a result of the natural disasters, there were many stories of resilience and a strong sense of hope in the community. I'd like to take this opportunity to encourage all to continue in this spirit of resilience and community as we respond to the pandemic of Coronavirus (COVID-19).

A Public Health State of Emergency was declared in the ACT on 16 March 2020, in line with many parts of the country. Health preparedness and economic stimulus packages continue to develop. There are many practices that we all need to observe and promote within the community including practicing good hygiene, social distancing and looking after your mental health and wellbeing. Maintaining a healthy mental outlook during the COVID-19 pandemic is equally as important as taking physical measures to slow the spread of the virus.

Try to ensure you maintain a daily routine as much as possible including regular exercise and a good sleep pattern. Talk to other members of your family, friends or colleagues about the current information. Understanding COVID-19 can reduce anxiety, but constantly watching or listening to information about distressing events can make things feel worse. Be kind to yourself and others around you.

There is growing concern regarding a widespread of misinformation. I encourage everyone to only share information from trusted sources, such as state and federal government authorities. When people have unconfirmed or inaccurate information, they can make decisions which harm themselves, and others.

People who are concerned and want further information can access the [Department of Health website](#) or the [ACT Health website](#) or call the Australian Government's Coronavirus Health Information Line on 1800 020 080 which operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

COVID-19 and bushfires notwithstanding, the Office for Mental Health and Wellbeing (the Office) has collated two Whole of Government submissions; response to the Draft Productivity Commission Report on Mental Health; and a submission for the Inquiry into Youth Mental Health to the Standing Committee on Education, Employment and Youth Affairs. We have also hosted two international speakers as part of our commitment to research, evaluation and quality improvement.

I hope you find this Newsletter useful and interesting. If you have any suggestions or comments, please feel free to contact the Office.

Thank you to all my staff, colleagues and stakeholders who make our work possible.

Be kind to one another, reach out to friends, family, colleagues to make sure they are doing okay.



*Dr Elizabeth Moore
Coordinator-General,
Office for Mental Health Wellbeing*

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













March 2020

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- Identifying the Symptoms of COVID-19
- COVID-19 Information and Resources
- Top tips for looking after your mental health
- Review of Children and Young People in the ACT
- The ACT Wellbeing Framework - a first for Australia
- Embrace Framework
- Share your experience – National Fifth Plan Consumer and Carer Surveys
- Autumn recipe in celebration of Harmony day and International Women's Day
- Youth Aware of Mental Health (YAM) in ACT high schools
- ACT Indigenous Community Forum on Suicide Prevention and Mental Health (postponed)
- New Faces in the Office
- International Speakers
- Charm 2020 CHARM 28-31 July 2020 – Save the date
- Connecting with People
- Crisis Support

IDENTIFYING THE SYMPTOMS OF COVID-19



SYMPTOMS	COVID-19 Symptoms range from mild to severe	COLD Gradual onset of symptoms	FLU Abrupt onset of symptoms
 FEVER	Common	Rare	Common
 COUGH	Common	Common	Common
 SORE THROAT	Sometimes	Common	Common
 SHORTNESS OF BREATH	Sometimes	No	No
 FATIGUE	Sometimes	Sometimes	Common
 ACHES & PAINS	Sometimes	No	Common
 HEADACHES	Sometimes	Common	Common
 RUNNY OR STUFFY NOSE	Sometimes	Common	Sometimes
 DIARRHEA	Rare	No	Sometimes, especially for children
 SNEEZING	No	Common	No

[To access more resources, click on the image.](#)

COVID-19 INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

For the latest information about COVID-19 in the ACT, please visit the [ACT Health Directorate website](#). This site includes Public Health Alerts, which contain the latest information about COVID-19 in the ACT community and is updated regularly.

The following websites have information regarding mental health and COVID-19 that you might find useful:

- [Australian Government Department of Health](#) - COVID-19 health alert including information and support
- [Australian Psychological Society](#) - COVID-19 information for Australians
- [Beyond Blue](#) - Looking after your mental health during the coronavirus outbreak
- [Beyond Blue](#) - Online forum - Coping during the Coronavirus outbreak
- [Emerging Minds](#) - Talking to children about natural disasters, traumatic events, or worries about the future
- [headspace](#) - Support for young people - How to cope with stress related to COVID-19
- [Lifeline](#) - Mental health and wellbeing during the COVID-19 outbreak
- [MindSpot](#) - COVID-19, Staying mentally and physically well
- [Black Dog Institute](#) have prepared a range of resources targeted at supporting mental wellbeing during the unfolding Covid-19 situation.
- [Phoenix Australia](#) - COVID-19 tips for self-care and families
- [ReachOut](#) - 10 ways to take care of yourself during coronavirus
- [Ahead for Business](#) - Support for small businesses affected by adverse events
- [Centres for Disease Control and Prevention](#) - Managing anxiety and stress
- [World Health Organization \(WHO\)](#) - Mental health and psychosocial considerations during COVID-19 outbreak

TOP TIPS FOR LOOKING AFTER YOUR MENTAL HEALTHS

- *Maintain social connections by finding new ways to remain connected with others*
- *Communicate openly with family and friends about how you are feeling*
- *Set goals for yourself and explore activities and hobbies you can enjoy*
- *Keep up a healthy lifestyle by eating a balanced diet, exercising regularly, getting quality sleep and minimise the use of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs*
- *Practice relaxation, meditation and mindfulness – perhaps in the natural environment.*



The Australian Government Department of Health has issued COVID – 19 Resources in Different Languages.

We would like everyone to access and print these resources and place them in your buildings/workplaces to enable our culturally linguistic community to have access to relevant COVID – 19 information.

This information can be accessed via the following link: <https://www.health.gov.au/resources/translated>



REVIEW OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN THE ACT

As you would be aware, late last year the Office undertook a review of children and young people to understand the challenges and issues they face in relation to their mental health and wellbeing.

This was undertaken in partnership with Mental Illness Education ACT (MIEACT) who undertook a community consultation to hear the voices of children, young people, parents/carers and service providers in our community.

This final report was provided to the Minister for review and is now available online. [You can read the report here.](#)

We want to take this opportunity to thank everyone for their involvement. Through this consultation, we were able to engage with over 800 people from our community, with over 300

people under the age of 25. This is an incredible achievement and has provided us with a better understanding of what our younger community wants and needs to support their mental health and wellbeing.

We will be actively working through the recommendations over the next few months.



Review of
Children and
Young People
in the ACT
Office for Mental
Health and Wellbeing



health.act.gov.au/OMHW



THE ACT WELLBEING FRAMEWORK- A FIRST FOR AUSTRALIA

The Chief Minister launched the Wellbeing Framework on Canberra Day 2020. In partnership with the community, the ACT Government developed Australia's first Wellbeing Framework. The ACT Wellbeing Framework identifies high-level indicator outcomes for Canberra under 12 separate domains. These domains were identified by Canberrans as being important to us. The vibrant floral image depicts these domains.

The Office for Mental Health and Wellbeing contributed to the development of the Wellbeing Framework and will continue to work across government on consolidation of the mental health indicators as well as how

to highlight the wellbeing experiences of people with lived experience of mental illness.

To learn more about the ACT Wellbeing Framework please visit www.act.gov.au/wellbeing

EMBRACE

FRAMEWORK

The Embrace Project is funded by the Australian Government Department of Health to provide a national focus on mental health and suicide prevention for people from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) background.

The Project aims to improve the cultural responsiveness of mainstream mental health services to meet the needs of the diverse Australian population. This is being achieved through further development and implementation of the Framework for Mental Health in Multicultural Australia. It includes self-assessment against cultural competency standards along with implementation guidance and supporting resources. It is a free national resource and available to any service provider.

The Embrace team run half day workshops for mental health service providers across the nation, including one here in the ACT on the 26th of February 2020. Through these workshops the lived experience speakers were able



to share their experiences. The team also showcased resources available on the website, how to navigate the free online framework and also held round table discussions.

They run a series of webinars to provide further information of how services can utilise the Framework, the next webinar is on Wednesday 8 of April from 2:00-3:00pm focusing on *Planning Strategically to meet Multicultural Community Needs*.

Follow this link to join the webinar <https://login.redbackconferencing.com.au/landers/page/fo714a>.

You can contact the team at Embrace to receive further information by simply visiting the website on <https://embracementalhealth.org.au/>

SHARE YOUR EXPERIENCE

Fifth Plan Consumer and Carer Survey

 Australian Government
National Mental Health Commission



The National Mental Health Commission have launched the Fifth Plan Consumer and Carer Surveys for 2020, seeking feedback from consumers and carers on their experiences of mental health services in the past twelve months.

The Commission conducts annual consumer and carer surveys to help inform their reporting on the progress of mental health and suicide prevention reform in Australia, specifically the Fifth National Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Plan.

This year there are two national surveys – one for consumers and one for carers – to better understand their unique experiences and needs.

If you have accessed mental health services in the past year, or cared for someone who has accessed services, they would like to hear from you!

Find out more and share your experience by visiting the Commission's website <https://www.mentalhealthcommission.gov.au/News/2020/March/Fifth-Plan-Surveys-Launched>

SWEET POTATO CARIBBEAN CURRY

Creamy and gently spiced, this vibrant curry will transport you to warmer climates, wherever you are.

Jerk seasoning is available in supermarkets, in the dried herbs and spices aisle. This handy spice mix combines all spice, paprika, chillies, nutmeg and thyme, delivering a warm kick to curries, stews and roasted vegetables with minimal effort. Serve with [Jamaican rice](#).

Ingredients

1. 1 tbsp sunflower oil
2. 4 medium sweet potatoes, peeled and chopped into
3. 2cm (1in) chunks
4. 1 red (bell) pepper, sliced
5. 2 tsp jerk seasoning
6. 400ml (400ml) canned full-fat coconut milk
7. handful of coriander (cilantro), stalks removed
8. pinch of sea salt
9. Throw in spinach, kale or watercress for extra colour, texture and to boost the nutritional value.

Method

- Gently heat the oil in a large pan over a medium heat, then add the sweet potato chunks and red pepper slices.
- Cook for 5 minutes until the sweet potato starts to soften, stirring often to prevent sticking.
- Spoon over the jerk seasoning, then pour in the coconut milk.
- Simmer for 25 minutes, stirring occasionally, until the sweet potato is tender.
- Remove the pan from the heat and scatter over the coriander.
- Season with sea salt to taste.
- Serves 2 generously (suitable for freezing)

Recipe available at: <https://katybeskow.com/sweet-potato-caribbean-curry/>



YOUTH AWARE OF MENTAL HEALTH (YAM) IN ACT HIGH SCHOOLS

YAM is a peer-support program aimed at addressing the mental health needs of young people, which involves discussion and roleplay. YAM aims to get young people involved and talking about mental health and build resilience. It will be rolled out to Year 9 students in the ACT in 2020.

YAM has commenced in the ACT with Calwell High School and Gold Creek High School being the first to receive the program. YAM is run in five sessions across three consecutive weeks and facilitated by a trained YAM instructor and volunteer helper. Eighteen new YAM instructors recently completed their training here in the ACT and are looking forward to delivering YAM in schools in 2020.



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

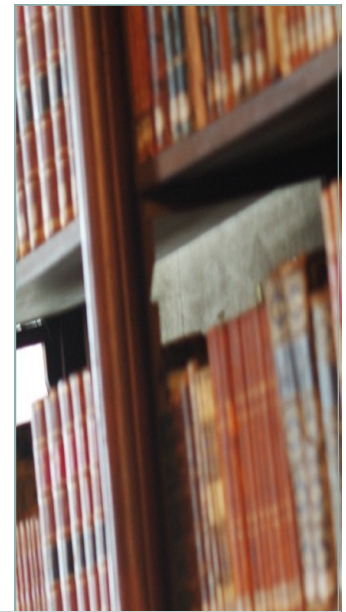
ACT INDIGENOUS COMMUNITY FORUM ON SUICIDE PREVENTION AND MENTAL HEALTH (POSTPONED)

Winnunga Nimmitjiah Aboriginal Health and Community Services (Winnunga) in partnership with other local Aboriginal groups and ACT LifeSpan will be providing an opportunity for the ACT and region's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to come together in a Forum to discuss Mental Health and Suicide Prevention issues in the ACT community.

Due to the current Public Health State of Emergency that has been declared in the

ACT, the forum that was planned to take place on 26 March 2020 has been postponed. We look forward to hosting this event in the near future. We will resend invitations in collaboration with Winnunga Nimmitjiah once the Forum has been rescheduled.

The Forum will focus on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' lived experience of Mental Health and Suicide, and the impact that these issues have on our families, communities and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander service providers. The Forum will be an opportunity for all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to come together to work on solutions and have their voices heard.



NEW FACES AT THE OFFICE

Brooke

On 3rd February I commenced as the Education Suicide Prevention Officer – ACT Lifespan with the Office for Mental Health and Wellbeing. With a background in Social Work I have worked in direct practice in community, outpatient and acute settings with individuals from all walks of life across the lifespan from developmental delay and early childhood trauma to adult mental health and disaster recovery.

The focus of my role is to coordinate ACT Education's suicide prevention programs, and to work alongside a variety of stakeholders including Black Dog Institute, Mental Illness Education ACT, ACT Education and the Australian National University to oversee the delivery the YAM program to Year 9 students in the ACT. I will be focussed on increasing awareness of suicide prevention and intervention through the co-ordination of Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training for school psychologists and allied health therapists in ACT schools and the promotion of Question Persuade Refer – an online training designed for the whole of community to alert individuals to the warning signs of a suicide crisis and how to respond.

Lou

When I was offered the role of Administrative Support Officer to the LifeSpan team I was absolutely thrilled. I had been looking for a position where I could put my 50 years of work experience to good use as I ease my way toward retirement. This role allows me to support a team of individuals who are passionate about creating a real and positive change in the lives of others. Perfect! I have been a public servant for the past 14 years beginning with an

administrative role with Mental Health and Drug and Alcohol for NSW Health. I was seconded from that role to the Internal Audit Team where I remained for seven years, ultimately becoming an Assistant Auditor and Governance Officer. Most recently I spent some time as an Audit Manager with a Commonwealth Agency. However, I really missed working in Health, so here I am.

Although I've been in Australia for 21 years now, I apparently still have an accent. I've lived in various parts of the USA but my home-at-heart is Alaska where I was a Paralegal specialising in cases with medical aspects. This is also where my daughter, six grandchildren and 3 great-grandchildren (soon to be 4) all remain. When not helping the great LifeSpan team, I am an avid Line Dancer. I also enjoy birdwatching, arts and crafts of all sorts and camping.



From left: Lou and Brooke (picture taken prior to COVID-19 social distancing)

INTERNATIONAL SPEAKERS

BLOCKCHAIN, OPPORTUNITIES AND RISKS IN HEALTH CARE

Arturo is Professor of Finance at International Institute for Management Development (IMD) speaking at a the Blockchain Forum in February 2020. Since January 2014, Professor Bris has also been leading the world-renowned IMD World Competitiveness Center. At IMD he has directed programs for senior executives in several industries and continents. Professor Arturo Bris presented in February 2020. He spoke about Blockchain – opportunities, risks in healthcare which provoked lively discussion.



From right: Professor Luis Salvador-Carulla, Head of Centre for Mental Health Research, Professor Helen Killaspy and Dr Elizabeth Moore, Coordinator-General.



Top picture from Left: Sébastien Monnet, Science, Technology and Education Advisor. Professor Arturo Bris, World Competitiveness Centre, IMD Business School, Lausanne. Dr Elizabeth Moore, Coordinator-General. Dr Julie Wehbe, IMD Alumni Club Melbourne, President. Greg Robinson, IMD Alumni Club Melbourne, Secretary.

Below: Professor Arturo Bris presenting—Blockchain, Opportunities and Risks in Health Care



PEOPLE WITH COMPLEX MENTAL ILLNESS AND PSYCHOSOCIAL NEEDS

Professor Killaspy is Professor and Honorary Consultant in Rehabilitation Psychiatry at University College London and Camden and Islington NHS Foundation Trust in the UK. She leads national and international programmes of research that focus on the assessment of quality of care for people with complex mental health problems and the evaluation of complex interventions for this group.

The Office co-sponsored her tour to the ACT to provide an opportunity for all to engage more closely with an international leader whose work has made a significant difference to people whose needs cross many different government agencies and who require innovative cross-sectorial approaches. Professor Killaspy's work will help shape future planning of services for this cohort.

CHARM 2020 CHARM 28-31 JULY 2020 – SAVE THE DATE

For 25 years, the Canberra Health Annual Research Meeting (CHARM) has facilitated collaboration between health researchers, students, policy makers, carers, consumers, industry and clinicians from a diverse range of health disciplines. The meeting seeks to explore how interdisciplinary research can contribute to a sustainable health system through discovery and collaboration. CHARM is hosted by the Centre of Health and Medical Research ACT Health and Canberra Health Services, in collaboration with the Australian National University, the University of Canberra, UNSW Canberra, Australian Catholic University and Australian Institute of Sport. Principle themes of the meeting include pre-clinical and clinical research, nursing, allied health and population health research, and data

analytics and policy research, quality assessments and evaluations. CHARM is a three-and-a-half-day meeting which includes presentations from invited international and national speakers, and oral and poster presentations from health researchers in our region.

By providing opportunities to collaborate and network, this professional meeting strengthens interdisciplinary research and education portfolios of the institutions involved while showcasing the far-reaching impact of health research in the ACT. Outcomes from CHARM contribute to the advancement of health care and service delivery practices, including benefits to society, culture, our environment and the economy.

Kindly note this event might be re-scheduled, for more information, contact ACT Health Directorate Centre for Health and Medical Research:

P: 5124 5257

E: preclinical.research@act.gov.au

CONNECTING WITH PEOPLE

The Health strategies Working Group for ACT LifeSpan convened on

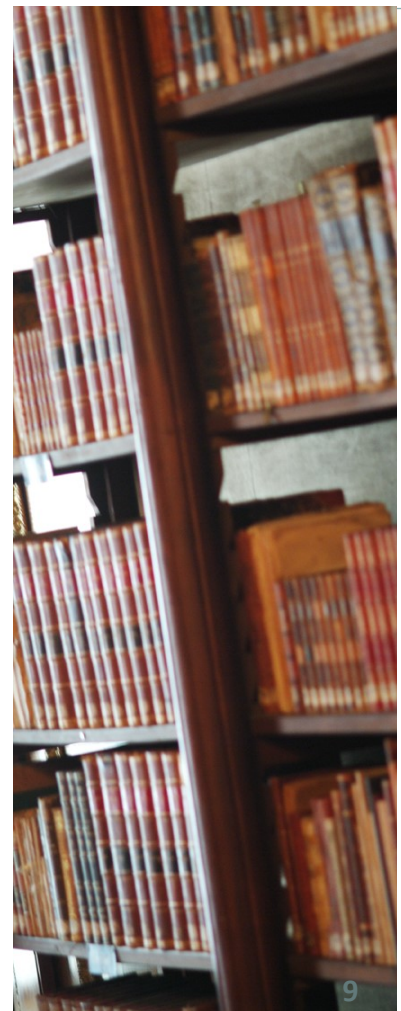
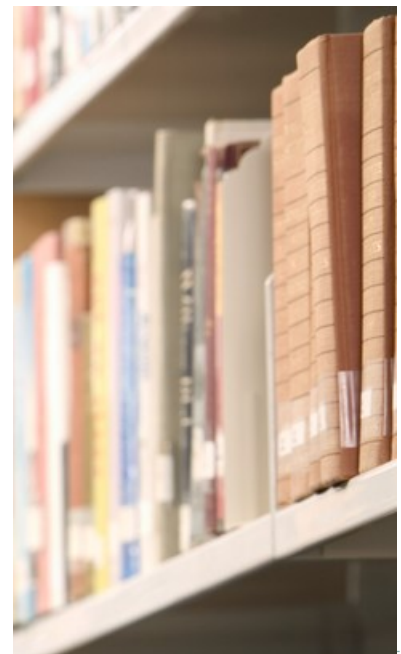
10 March 2020. The Black Dog Institute (BDI) provided an overview of LifeSpan including the three Health Strategies.

- Improving emergency and follow-up care for suicidal crisis
- Using evidence-based treatment for suicidality
- Equipping primary care to identify and support people in distress

Following a thorough review of suicide prevention programs by **Black Dog Institute**, Connecting with People (CwP) is the preferred training program for the ACT. CwP is an internationally recognised program, using evidence-based principles, suicide and self-harm mitigation and prevention training program for clinical staff. Developed in the UK in 2010, the philosophy underlying CwP is that suicide is preventable with the appropriate tools, knowledge and confidence levels. The CwP approach aims to ensure that clinicians acquire the attitudes, knowledge, skills, competence and confidence required to deliver high quality health care to people at risk of suicide.

CwP training is a paradigm shift that challenges the current practice of risk assessment. Its philosophy places compassion, empathy and collaboration at the heart of every encounter with a person at risk of suicide. Every encounter is an opportunity to intervene to reduce their distress and, potentially, to save a life.

More information is found at <http://www.connectingwithpeople.org/courses>



If you are having very strong feelings of worry, unease or fear and you are struggling to cope it is important to seek support, please contact:

Lifeline Australia: 13 11 14
[Lifeline crisis support chat](#)

Beyond Blue: 1300 224 636
[Beyond Blue online chat](#)

Suicide Call Back Service: 1300 659 467
[Suicide Call Back Service online chat and video chat counselling](#)

Kids Helpline: 1800 551 800
[Kids Helpline WebChat counselling](#)

[SANE Forums](#)

MensLine Australia
MensLine Australia: 1300 789 978

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

Any feedback or comments are very welcome.

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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.

