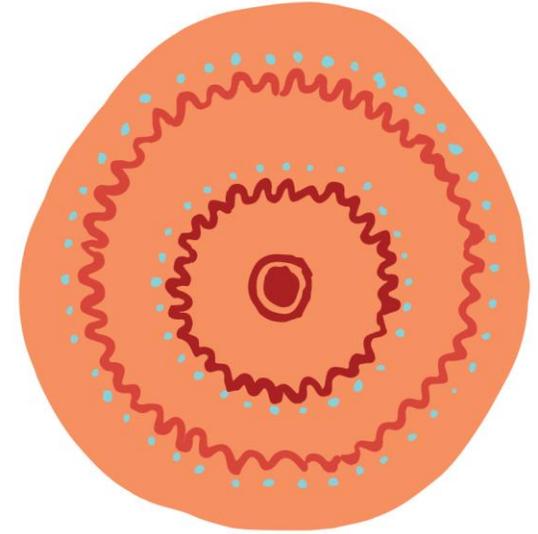




Australian Government

National Mental Health Commission

**Making
Connections
with your
Mental Health
and Wellbeing**



Launceston, TAS

05 August 2019

40 Participants

This snapshot identifies key points from the
Town Hall Meeting

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

Help Seeking

Participants were asked what stops them or someone they know from seeking help.

Direct comments included:

- 'The negative consequences of getting help – impacting employment, getting a tenancy, getting various insurances, Child Safety services getting involved'
- 'Previous experiences of feeling disempowered by professionals – treatment done “to you” rather than planned “with you”'
- 'Fear that after telling my story, the case worker will move on. Continued trauma in telling my story over and over to new workers'
- 'Pressure from society to “get over it”'
- 'Uncertainty of process. Who to speak to first?'
- 'The illness itself can mean that you don't recognise that you need help. Embarrassment of being seen as having a mental illness can stop you from researching how or where to get help. A Launceston specific guide to local help would be less daunting'
- 'Health professionals need better training in mental health. Some come from overseas with little training. Medical students get very little until Year 4 and yet mental health is now the #1 reason people go to a GP'
- 'Workers Compensation is adversarial, stigmatising and retraumatising of people who are already vulnerable'
- 'Help seeking is a skill that needs to be both taught and learned. So if we aren't teaching it, how can we expect people to actively seek help?'

Help Seeking

Participants were asked what stops them or someone they know from seeking help.

Further direct comments included:

- 'Emergency services are seen to have to be strong and there's a stigma amongst workers for being "weak" or that they can't cope with their job. Ordinary people doing extraordinary things'
- 'Knowing there are few practitioners, such as face to face bulk billing psychiatrists'
- 'Long waiting lists at so many services'
- 'Not speaking English, unsure if interpreters will be used'
- 'The illness itself as a disability. Anxious feelings stop getting help for anxiety'
- 'Cost of services. Mental health not being taken as a serious issue for poorer communities'
- 'Not fitting into the right box. Rigid categories and diagnosis'
- 'Emergency room is not an appropriate first contact point'
- 'Fear of judgement and stigma of having a mental illness'
- 'LGBTIQ people are considered not worthy of services because of being a minority group and religious barriers to being allowed services'

Big Ideas or Initiatives

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

Direct comments expanded during discussion included:

- 'Mental health services normalised for everybody in the community and aimed at supporting mental wellbeing rather than only being crisis focused after people become unwell'
- 'Play centres liberally spaced in communities. Accommodation. Massage. Movement. Counselling. Adventure playground. Like a health spa. Holidays. Used by all groups. Businesses paying for staff development. Mental health and homeless at other times. Bused in. 24 hour'
- 'In rural communities I'd like to see more funding to see more visiting psychologists. There are currently two and the backlog is ridiculous. Suicidal kids are being put on monthly waiting lists'
- 'More planning and financing for mental health away from politicians and election cycles'
- 'Easy to access, age-appropriate services and a good amount of these to avoid waitlists'
- 'Early intervention embedded in school systems to catch most children and young people. Education not just focused on academic subjects but multiple life skills, relationships, etc. Support services like doctors, psychiatrists, social workers abundant in schools'
- 'Total opposite of current system ... Community based, person-centred, collaborative, holistic, strengths-based, preventative, embracing diversity and promoting wellbeing'
- 'Positive role models that are out there on mental illness and suicidality'
- 'Tax breaks for volunteers as so many are essential for support services'

Big Ideas or Initiatives

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

Other direct comments included:

- 'A fully integrated mental health system like the current health system with proper funding with specialties and access to all. Fully funded through Medicare so that cost does not limit access to anyone throughout all parts of society'
- 'Build community mini homes as a model for recovery. Community support available in a holistic way. Training there to learn to cope independently'
- 'Extensive mental health literacy programs for primary, high schools and universities. Possibly more media and education for front line mental health care providers so they can increase the mental health literacy of their patients also'
- 'Tax rebates on activities that improve your wellbeing and resilience to incentivise people staying mentally well. Would be cheaper than primary clinical treatment'
- 'Separate Accident & Emergency triage for mental illness presentations'
- 'Services that are educated in all minority group issues and provide an inclusive service to all of our community'
- 'Employment, to keep people with mental health issues engaged in society'
- 'Parents to have more rights if their adult child is struggling with mental health issues and they are not following advice given to them, especially if it is affecting family'
- 'Treat mental conditions as a part of a person's whole life and realise that the life conditions need rectifying as part of both prevention and "cure"'

The Developing Vision

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

- Play
- Inclusion
- Equality
- Positive psychology
- Diversity
- Holistic
- Schools
- Activities
- Kindness
- Empathy
- Connections

Thank You, Launceston

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 (coming soon)
- Follow us on Facebook (@NMHCAustralia) and Twitter (@NMHC)
- Join the conversation online using #ConnectingWithYou

