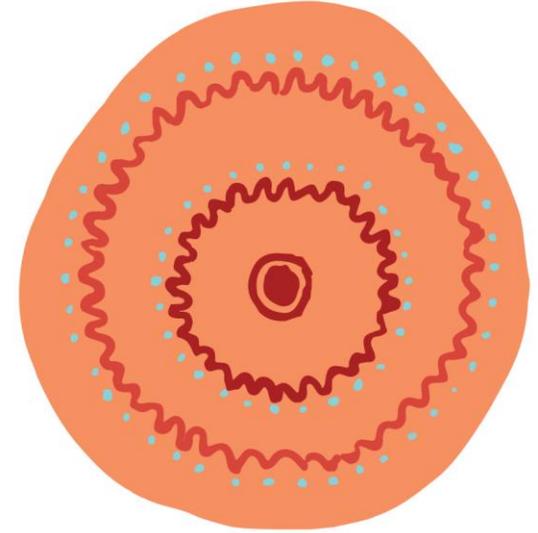




Australian Government

National Mental Health Commission

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



Bendigo, VIC

26 July 2019

50 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.

Responses included:

- No trust, faith or confidence in the system
- Lack of access to services – availability, after hours, locations, wait-lists for GP's, cost
- Embarrassment, shame and stigma
- Fear that no-one is listening, no-one will care
- Being sent home - early discharge without follow-up, lack of ongoing support

Direct comments included:

- 'Having to tell my story over and over again, with no result'
- 'As an Aboriginal, I find the language used in the wider sector is not culturally inclusive or welcoming. Where's the understanding of the multiple generations of dislocation, of recurring trauma, of spiritual wellbeing?'
- 'Tired of fighting the system'
- 'There's no choice or control over my path to recovery'

Big Ideas or Initiatives

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

Direct comments included:

- 'Do mental health care plans have to be initiated by a GP? Can this type of plan be given to a nurse practitioner or mental health nurse / social worker to complete, to make the process quicker and easier to access?'
- 'Preventative measures like exercise programs for people with depression. This could save government money in the long run in mental health and general health as well'
- 'Funding for crisis assessments in the home'
- 'Training for teachers, managers, employees, coaches, etc on mental health first aid. Equip the community to help their members. It takes a village around you to get better'
- 'A safe, supervised site, staffed by mental health specialists that allows access to community members to sleep, eat, shower, access assessments and CBT/medication as required'
- 'Specific mental health triage at Emergency Departments, in a separate space, using teleservice in more remote locations'
- 'Better education for people in psych services and at hospitals, so they don't call the Police unnecessarily'
- 'Programs that teach people to keep a companion animal'
- 'Funding for more Grow groups and Clubhouses to provide peer support'
- 'Accreditation for therapy and emotional support pets'

Big Ideas or Initiatives

In an open discussion session, the following ideas were further developed:

- An area in Casualty where a person can be kept in safety, with food and support, over a period of time, at a time of crisis
- Community based systems like the AA movement where people can meet and discuss issues, operating as a type of triage group, with professional help as a back-up
- Support Grow groups as community based support groups that meet regularly and have been operating for over 60 years
- Embrace telemedicine systems to get professional support where distance is a factor, and to increase in-home assessments via Skype
- Train up Centrelink staff to better identify mental health issues and needs
- Establish accreditation system that can attest to the therapeutic benefits of pets and companion animals for mental health recovery
- Have a dedicated Mental Health (Wellness) Minister in Victoria, to encourage a whole of Government response to mental health
- Widespread mental health first aid training courses throughout the community
- Encourage the Clubhouse movement which provides an environment of support that is led by people with lived experience

Thank You, Bendigo

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

