



SPRING 2016

mind View

We're here for YOUTH

"It takes courage to grow up and become who you really are."

E. E. Cummings

Growing up is challenging enough, without the added stress of mental ill-health. About 75% of all forms of mental ill-health emerge in people before the age of 25 years¹, yet young people are finding it difficult to access and engage with support services².

At present, Mind offers a range of programs that specifically target people aged 12-25, including: youth residential rehabilitation services, Youth Prevention and Recovery Care facilities (YPARCs), and services through **headspace**. We also offer outreach support. Mind recognises that young people have a range of needs

that cannot be met by a single approach or intervention. For this reason we partner with a range of other agencies to connect young people with a network that includes all different kinds of support, from employment and education to supporting an active social life!

This edition of *Mind View* coincides with the launch of the **Mind youth services framework**, and will paint a picture of how we work with young people, the principles underpinning our practice, and our commitment to advocating for system-wide service improvement.

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Supporting mental health recovery

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Dear friend,

Welcome to this edition of *Mind View*. One in five of Mind's service users - across all programs and areas - are young people and this youth-focused edition showcases some of the great work we do with them. The growth of our work with young people is a concrete outcome of our new strategic plan.

Recently I participated in the Victorian and South Australian Mind Community Conferences. These conferences allow hundreds of us from all across the organisation to get a good glimpse of the vast range of programs, activities and new initiatives that take place in our community. The high level of engagement and excitement from our customers and the creativity and hard work put in by our staff is truly inspiring.

There are also two major developments that I would like to share with you. Firstly, the Board has signed an agreement with Queensland mental health and disability service provider, Open Minds, to consider a merger of our two organisations. Such a merger would give us even greater

capacity to better respond to current and future mental health needs in Australia. We have commenced due diligence and the Boards of both organisations will make a decision about this merger later in the year.

The second development is to let you know that our Deputy Chief Executive, Margaret Grigg has resigned to take up a new position as the Director of Mental Health at the Victorian Government Department of Health and Human Services. We congratulate Margaret on this appointment and wish her every success in this important position. Bronwyn Lawman has been appointed as our Executive Director of Operations. She has extensive experience working with people with mental ill-health and possesses some strong management skills. I'd like to congratulate Bronwyn on her appointment and welcome her to this new position, and thank Margaret for all her hard work.

Finally, we're pleased to be a major sponsor of this year's Asia Pacific International Mental Health Conference in Brisbane in October. This is a significant mental health event and a unique cross-cultural forum that attracts internationally recognised thought leaders and delegates. The conference will provide progressive, leading edge thinking, presented with people who have lived experience.

I hope you enjoy this edition of *Mind View*, and that this publication continues to offer you insight into the important work being done at Mind.

Warm regards,

Gerry Naughtin



Notice of apology

Mind offers an official apology to Leslie Swearingin for failing to credit the use of her photo as the cover image for *Mind View* edition Winter 2015. As listed under the public photo's Creative Commons Attribution

2.0 Generic license (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.0/>), this photo should have been credited to **Payne's Hut October 2011 / Leslie Swearingin**. Mind takes the intellectual property rights of all of its creative contributors very seriously, and sincerely apologises for this error.



Supporting mental health recovery

Mind Australia

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Mind cares for the environment and uses environmentally-friendly inks on recycled paper.



Mind's youth-specific services:

- **headspace** Greensborough (VIC) – lead agency
- 5 youth residential rehabilitation services (QLD and VIC)
- 3 youth Prevention and Recovery Care services (metro and rural VIC)
- Typo Station youth outdoor adventures (rural VIC)

We work closely with the following **headspace** agencies across Victoria:

- Bairnsdale
- Ballarat
- Bendigo
- Collingwood
- Craigieburn
- Dandenong
- East Bentleigh
- Frankston
- Glenroy
- Knox
- Morwell
- Narre Warren
- Sunshine
- Swan Hill
- Werribee
- Wodonga

Mind Recovery College™ Bendigo campus also works in close partnership with job access agencies in Bendigo (VIC).

Young people have the highest rate of mental ill-health of any age group in Australia (Mission Australia, 2014). But getting help is not easy. Young people face many barriers preventing them from seeking assistance for mental health struggles. These include their own inability to recognise symptoms, and the stigma and embarrassment surrounding mental ill-health.

"At the very time when mental health services are most needed, they are often inaccessible or unacceptable in design and culture to young people."
(Patrick McGorry, InPsych, 2006)

But we at Mind have a special approach to working with young people; one that incorporates their complex needs and diverse interests.

Every young person deserves to have a meaningful life and to be able to fulfil their

hopes and dreams. Our approach to youth mental health work is governed by this. At Mind, we respect, value and support young people; we hope to give them a sense of empowerment and ownership of their recovery journey. It is also important to us that the role of family and friends in supporting young people is recognised as vital, and encouraged wherever possible or appropriate.

Young people need youth-specific services that focus on the onset phase of a broad range of mental health concerns, in order to have maximum impact for prevention and early intervention purposes. These services need to be designed not just for, but together with, young people: they need to have input and to know that their input is valued.

We developed our youth services framework, summarised on the following page, to put these principles into practice.

You will read more about examples of our co-production and co-design approach to service delivery in this edition of *Mind View*. Our youth services staff are always coming up with fresh and fun ways of encouraging participation: yoga, cooking, boxing classes, growing their own produce, art therapy, beach getaways, budgeting workshops... if they can dream it, we do our best to work with them to make it happen! ■

¹ Kim-Cohen et al. 2003; Kessler et al. 2005

² Booth et al. 2004; Samargia, Saewyc & Elliot 2006; Mission Australia 2014



Principles in practice

The **Mind youth services framework** is supported by two key approaches: providing effective evidence-based services, and ensuring effective engagement and participation.

This is all about using what we've learned (through rigorous research and through talking directly and often with young people) about being **flexible and person-centred** in our approach. We take into account each individual's particular circumstances and work with them to set goals and support them to achieve these. Throughout this process it is our job to maintain and instill hope: **focusing on their strengths** and what is going well in their lives, as opposed to the negatives – they hear enough of that!

Many of our young clients have a background involving significant trauma. It is paramount that **trauma-informed practice** be embedded in our work. We provide specialised training and support for staff in this regard. The services that we provide our youth must be physically and emotionally safe environments where they feel they have **a voice, choice, and control**.

At Mind, we are open and respectful. Sensitivity to cultural and gender diversity is crucial. Young people from marginalised

communities can experience varying forms of discrimination, which contribute to mental health struggles. One group that faces significant challenges are young lesbian, gay, bisexual, transsexual, intersex (LGBTI) people. The effects of discrimination on their health and wellbeing has been well documented (Australian Human Rights Commission, 2014³). Similarly, young Indigenous peoples, and those with culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds all have unique health needs which must be carefully considered during adolescence.

Mind established its Diversity and Inclusion Committee – a varied group of employees from all backgrounds, all across the organisation and representing all areas of operation – to address any gaps in the support we provide. The Committee has five working groups, each devoted to working within, and advocating for, a particular group of people or a community with specific needs.

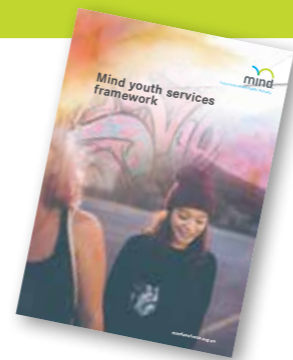
We want young people at Mind to feel respected, included and listened to. We want them to be able to provide input into the decisions that affect them. Their ideas, suggestions and feedback shape the way we develop our services. Part of this work is to establish an holistic, networked 'safety net' around the young person, so that all

important aspects of their lives can be brought into balance.

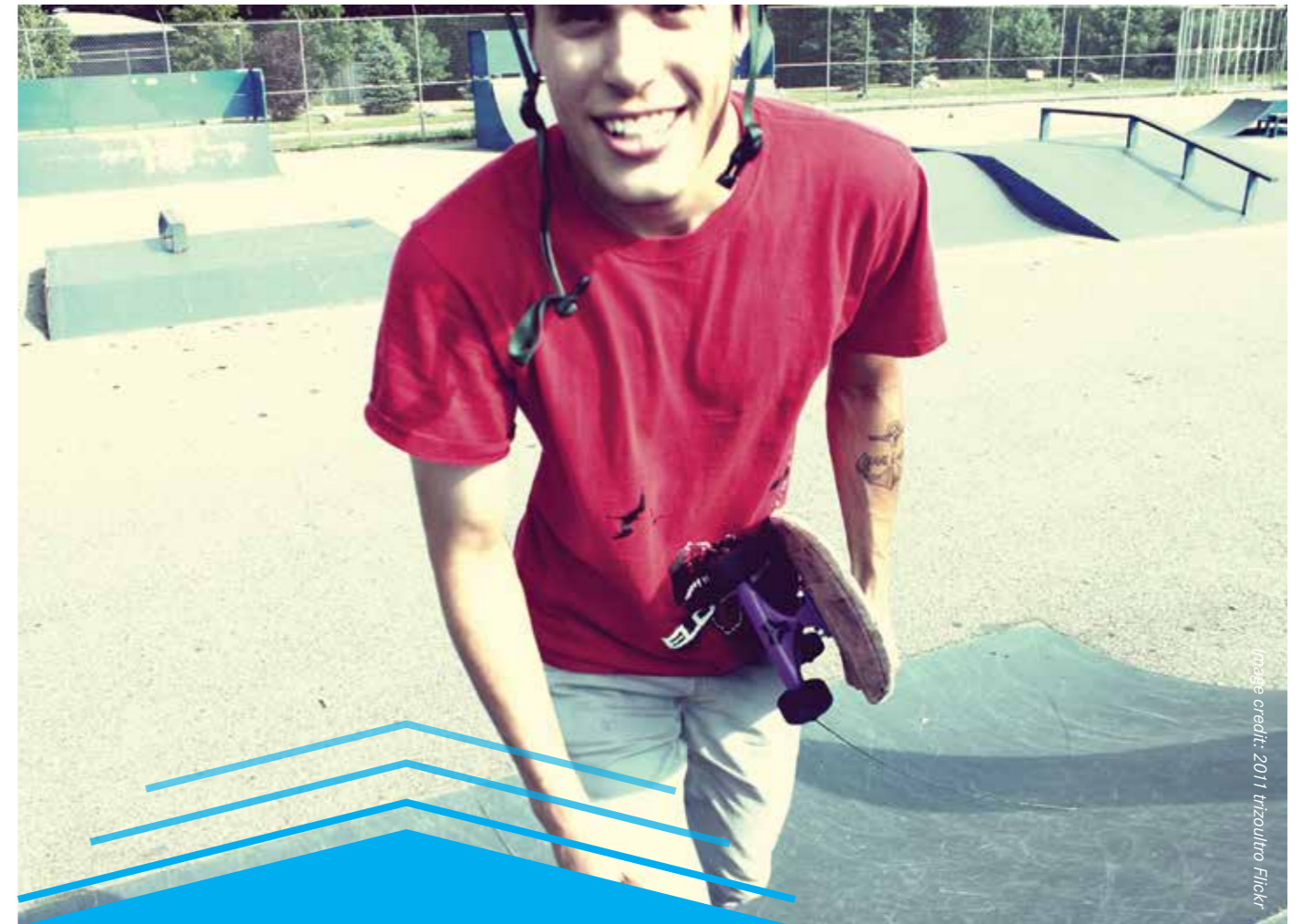
We aim to work in partnership with other relevant organisations and important people in their lives. A young person's needs cannot be met by just one approach or one organisation. Mind works with: employment, educational and vocational services; the National Disability Insurance Agency; specialist services (like the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service); alcohol and other drug services; and of course, family and carers.

Ultimately, this approach will help young people to improve their quality of life by fostering positive relationships, economic participation, and proactive engagement with their communities. ■

You can read our youth services framework and watch its accompanying film on our website: www.mindaustralia.org.au/youth



³<https://www.humanrights.gov.au/face-facts-lesbian-gay-bisexual-trans-and-intersex-people>



Speak up! What young people have to say

We asked a number of young people involved with Mind to give us a bit of insight into their experience of mental ill-health. Here's what they said...

Now that you're a bit older, what would you say to your younger self?

"Don't compare yourself to others. Forget about 'normal' – there is no 'normal'. You don't have to fit in to be happy."
(Amy, 31, Mind client, Williamstown VIC)

"Be patient with yourself. Trust the process. I had a tendency growing up to think that it would always be hard; to my younger self I would thus say, 'Be patient. Nothing stays the same – not even the bad stuff.'"
(Dan, 29, Mind Consumer Consultant, VIC)

"Mental illness does not mean a death sentence, it means that we are human and happen to have an extra struggle than other people. It's not to be ashamed of but something to give yourself some credit for."
(Lizzie, 25, former Mind client, SA)

"If you are stuck in life and suffer mental illness or drug addiction problems, the best thing to do is to try and solve the issues at hand. ... I was only using drugs and alcohol as a coping mechanism."
(Chris, 22, Mind Broadmeadows PARC resident, VIC)

What works when you're in the thick of it?

"Learning general life skills – like cooking, managing time and money; resume writing..."
(Chloe, 17, Mind youth residential rehabilitation, Townsville QLD)

"Exploring my creativity. This is a wellness that the hospitals can't give to you. This is a wellness that you can only get by being included back into society."
(Nyssa, 18, former Mind client)

"Mind helped me going to job agencies, helped with writing resumes and supported me doing online job applications."
(Syntche, 21, former Mind client)

The Mind Scholarship Program provides financial assistance for clients who want to get training or education. *"This is particularly important for young clients, whose education is often disrupted by the onset of mental illness."*
Lydia, 23, Mind scholarship recipient 2014 ■



Someone who
'gets it'

"A peer worker is someone who gets it."

Youth Residential and Rehabilitation client, Townsville, QLD

For many adults, their journey has been a long one, and chances are that in that time they have come across someone else who has a lived experience of mental ill-health. For young people, however, coming across a peer worker might be the first time they've ever encountered someone who has a lived experience, who is using that experience to better their own lives and the lives of others."
(Bianca Childs, Peer Practice Coach and Coordinator of Centre of Excellence in Peer Support)

Also, peer workers can 'speak their language' – making young people feel less isolated and misunderstood. Speaking the same language also destigmatises and helps normalise the experience of 'being unwell'.

"Workers without lived experience may not get what it's like for a young client to log on to, say, Facebook and see all their peers celebrating their 18th birthdays or whatever and think, 'Well – I'm in hospital. What's my 18th birthday going to look like? Will I spend it in hospital? Will I even have one? What will my 21st look like?!""
(Louisa*, Youth peer worker)

"When you're a young person talking to another young person you open up a bit more. You're young, you're hip, you're cool. Less of an adult/authoritative figure. When you're young you have adults telling you what to do all the time – particularly when you're mentally ill – everyone is trying to tell you what to do all the time!"
(Melissa*, Peer Practitioner working closely with young people, Peer Recovery Community)

Holding hope and believing in a young person's future and potential is crucial. Peer support work can give young people real and tangible career prospects that offer them an opportunity to use their tough experiences to help themselves and others. Time spent being 'unwell' was never a waste – but rather, it was time spent acquiring the wisdom that can be used in peer work. It's important to acknowledge that these sorts of life qualifications are just as vital as any you can receive or achieve on paper. In fact, an increasing number of paid peer positions have become available across Australia in the past 20 years, indicating that the peer workforce is a rapidly growing workforce (Orygen, 2016). ■

*indicates name has been changed

Another helpful element is that the hierarchy between patient and practitioner is stripped away somewhat when young people have access to a peer worker.

👉 To find out more about peer work at Mind, visit the Centre for Excellence in Peer Support: www.peersupportvic.org/

"Being able to be with people who knew what I was going through and could talk to me about it helped."

"Meeting other people going through a similar experience helped me to not feel so alone."

Youth Prevention and Recovery care exit survey results, Mind Australia, 2016

Peer work is increasingly recognised as a valuable component of youth mental health care. Peer work itself is about people connecting with and supporting other people through a shared experience of mental health recovery, and this common ground is something that many young people crave, in all aspects of their lives, not just health-wise.

At Mind we encourage young people to be peer workers to ensure that positive youth development values are woven into the services we deliver. We employ over 30 peer support workers throughout our services including youth specific peer workers. We also have peer workers in our Learning and Development team; a dedicated Peer Practice Coach; a full team of

consumer consultants and family and carer consultants; and the majority of our Mind Recovery College™ course facilitators have lived experience of mental ill-health.

We employ over 30 peer support workers throughout our services including youth specific peer workers.

So why is peer work important for young people in particular?

Navigating the path into adulthood can be challenging at the best of times, let alone when you're not feeling at your mental best. Peer support workers can help to validate what a young person is feeling or going through in a way that other health professionals may not be able to – **because they've been there themselves.**

Young people experiencing mental health challenges can feel very isolated from, and different to, their peers. They may not have met someone else their age who has mental health challenges:



Watch peer worker Rachel's story, part of our *Great Minds* series: <https://youtu.be/dpdRfszlpr4>



Image credit: Whitney Saha

Tie-dyed curtains hand made and hung by clients at Townsville youth residences.



What's it like

as a young person in a regional or rural town?

Young people living in regional and rural settings come up against a number of challenges that are not normally part of the everyday experience of those living in metropolitan areas. These challenges include: access to suitable support services; education and training; employment; and recreational opportunities. Our youth residential and rehabilitation service in Townsville, far north Queensland, is helping young people to overcome some of these challenges.

Australia's future relies on rural economies, so investing in the health and wellbeing of young people living in these areas is crucial.

Overcoming disadvantage

In lowly populated areas, there are particularly high barriers to young people getting help. For example, transport is difficult when the distances between, say, home and school are vast. Many young people can't drive or don't have access to a vehicle, so public transport is the only option (taxis are too expensive). But when you are struggling with a mental health concern, using intermittent and unreliable public transport over vast distances can be extremely challenging. Chloe, a Townsville youth residential rehabilitation client, walks nearly two hours to get to school which is on the other side of town. This is unsafe because "bad groups hang around. There are heaps of fights and break-ins and car-jackings in the area," she says.

There aren't as many youth-focused activities, or the things of interest to them are prohibitively expensive. Chloe says teenagers here - if they do anything - are probably drinking or taking drugs. "There's literally nothing to do here. The kids are bored so they get up to naughty things," she said. Our youth services manager in Townsville, Ryan Wiggins, who has over 10 years' experience

has noticed that there are more families with low socioeconomic backgrounds in rural and regional areas, putting these young people at a greater disadvantage. His young client Chloe says her medication is too expensive to afford on her own, even with subsidies. "And if you are under 18 you can't even get your medication yourself (even if you are paying for it yourself)," Chloe said.

Engaging young people

At Mind, the young person is in control. We encourage them to 'own' their recovery journey and we empower them to do this by employing committed and passionate staff, and ensuring that young people have a respected voice in our services.

We give them the time to tell their story on their own terms. "They may not want to offer it up straight away or in the way you would like. Not pushing them to a place of re-traumatisation," Ryan says.

We invest in the kind of staff that are able to connect easily and naturally with young people. "Our youth mental health support workers have a positive regard and respect

Our youth residences in Townsville were co-designed with young people, and include special finishing touches like tie-dyed curtains (which they made themselves), an outdoor swimming pool, Netflix, a pool table and games room.

for the young people they work with, despite the significant challenges that come along with this type of work. And we do come up against some quite difficult behaviours, but as workers it's our job to maintain hope and respect. We don't give up." Ryan says.

By example, our youth residences in Townsville were co-designed with young people, and include special finishing touches like tie-dyed curtains (which they made themselves), an outdoor swimming pool, Netflix, a pool table and games room. All the activities are catered to their needs and are flexible around them. Youth mental health worker, Whitney, says, "if a few clients express an interest in a particular activity (say, cooking, for example) we'll work with them to organise a weekly cooking class.

Everything in the house is theirs and theirs to run how they want."

Living outside of metropolitan areas or in a small town is not easy. Ryan says he wants the youth residential rehabilitation services to provide the sorts of things that these young people might not ordinarily have access to: "I want the residence to feel like that feeling when you walk into a really nice hotel or resort. It's crisp and clean, and elegant. As opposed to the mentality of 'you're lucky to be here', we're aiming to communicate to these young people: you have value; we care. You're not lucky to be here; we're lucky to have you." ■

Mind's regional and rural youth services:

- Youth residential rehabilitation services in Aitkenvale and Annandale (Townsville, QLD)
- Community care unit with a large youth intake (Toowoomba, QLD)
- Typo Station youth outdoor adventures (Rose River, VIC)
- Youth Prevention and Recovery Care service (Bendigo, VIC)
- Youth residential rehabilitation service Wannik Gunyah (Traralgon, VIC)
- Youth residential rehabilitation services in Wodonga and Gippsland (VIC)



People power prevails

L-R Alice Loney, **headspace** Greensborough staff member; Kate Byriell, **headspace** Greensborough Youth Advisory Committee member; Robert Williams-Pate, Youth Advisory Committee member.

Young people in Melbourne's north east can now access youth-specialised mental health services. After nearly two years of lobbying by an advocacy group of over 33 organisations (including four local councils) we joyfully celebrated a shared victory with the official opening of the first ever **headspace** in Melbourne's north east on 24 June 2016. With a youth-designed interior, furniture, look and feel, we're proud to be the lead agency and help co-deliver a truly co-designed **headspace** that is the haven that these young people have been waiting for.

The launch event was a full-day affair and a hive of activity, all led by local youth. In the morning, young people welcomed officials and were the tour guides for the centre. Members of the Youth Advisory Committee MC-ed the proceedings and young lobbyist, Kadi, gave an impassioned speech that blew the audience away. In the afternoon, the doors were opened to the general public for a good old fashioned party – young DJs, food, a photobooth, badge-making, a henna tattoo station, videogame challenges and a special performance by the Nillumbik Youth Theatre.

A big aspect of **headspace** Greensborough is partnerships with many other youth services. Our consortium partners are co-located at the site so that young people can access support from a range of sources, including: Youth Support and Advocacy Service, Relationships Australia, Mental Health Nurse Incentive program, E-Focus and Austin Health. **headspace** Greensborough also has several allied health private practitioners providing psychological services through the Medicare Benefits Schedule.

headspace Greensborough will be a consistent presence in the local community, partnering with youth services in local councils and getting involved in local recreational activities and social events in the area to combat the social isolation that many of these young people experience.

Having only been open 6 months, the centre has been extraordinarily busy!

So far, they've partnered with Whittlesea School Focused Youth Service (an initiative of the Victorian Government to support vulnerable young people to remain connected to education) to provide group sessions on managing anxiety with ten different schools in the area. They've also delivered training to school teachers as part of SAFEMinds (another Victorian Government initiative focused on mental health in schools) and conducted five parent information sessions about this project, which aims to bridge the gaps between schools and community youth and mental health services.

Not only are Mind and **headspace** connecting with local schools, but we are branching out into the community by getting involved with Jets (a creative arts studio for young people), and collaborating on a few activities together. We took part in Banyule council's annual YouthFest, where members of the Youth Advisory Committee ran a range of activities including Frisbee games and mindfulness colouring – which was run together with Jets.

Having run two packed-out movie nights, and being the host space for the Queer Sphere program, **headspace** Greensborough really nestled in and established ourselves as a part of this thriving community of young people. ■

Young people need family connection

36% of 600 respondents selected 'family' as the most important factor in their happiness. (Hopes and Dreams report, Reach, 2015)

Strong family support is essential to a young person's health and wellbeing. Family and friends are often the first to notice a change in a young person's emotions or behaviour that may signal the onset of a mental health concern. It is important to note that the support networks of young people vary across stages of development and may also vary by social and cultural background. There are many different types and configurations of family and friends, all of whom are welcome at Mind.

When a young person is unwell, not only are they themselves searching for help and answers, but their families and loved ones are too. Families and carers often come up against all sorts of barriers to accessing information that might help them to help their loved one.

We recognise how difficult the carer's journey can be, so we endeavor to 'support the supporters'! Carer support services offered by Mind include: information and referral, counselling, support groups, education workshops, recreational and social outings and activities, and retreat and respite holidays. We also operate a Carer Helpline, a carer warm line and an online forum for carers.

In terms of young people, we go to great lengths to ensure that we keep a young person's loved ones involved, informed, and included, wherever possible and reasonable. To keep this connection strong, or to help improve family relationships, we employ many Family and Carer Consultants who work in various settings all across the organisation.

One of these workers is Cath, based at Mind in Williamstown, Melbourne. She also works closely with family and carers of the young people at **headspace** Werribee. As a carer herself, she knows all about how to relate to this group in a way that benefits both them as people with needs, and the young people they are trying to support.

According to Cath there are any number of challenges faced by families of young people with mental health difficulties. "There can be financial difficulties, when time off work is needed to support the young person, there can be the carer's own mental health which can be affected. It can be really difficult to navigate the mental health system and knowing what services are out there to support families during times of difficulties," she says.

Cath's advice to carers of young people is "don't blame yourself":

"I meet many carers who say things like 'oh if only I hadn't done this or said that to them when they were growing up... if only I could have stopped that from happening' there are any number of factors that influence a person's mental health and many of them are beyond anyone's ability to predict. The most important thing is that you are here now supporting and caring for your young person. Focus on what's happening now."

The newest innovation in Mind's family-inclusive youth work is implementing dedicated family engagement workers in our youth services. Bev performs this role across both our youth residential rehabilitation

centres in Townsville, Queensland. These types of workers have found that a young person is more likely to engage when they're hearing a unified message from those around them who are trying to help (family, friends, workers, school, etc).

"Family involvement from the very start of a young person's wellness journey is a very important part of getting young people to engage with the service. If we can get the family to understand what the young person is dealing with, then they're better able to support them. If we're all on the same page, we can support that young person together. I can help build (or re-build) the safety net around the young person. One that builds trust and works on relationships," says Bev.

Mind is wholeheartedly devoted to supporting its families and carers as much as its clients as we know that the path to mental health is a team effort. After all, 'it takes a village...!' ■

👉 If you are caring for a young loved one and would like to get the latest in carer news, research, updates, and self-care, you can sign up to our monthly carers newsletter here: www.mindaustralia.org.au/community

👉 If you are caring for a young loved one and looking for some extra support, try our online carers forum: www.mindaustralia.org.au/carersforum

👉 If you would like to learn more about our family and carer inclusive practice, visit our family and carers hub on our website: www.mindaustralia.org.au/families

Mind acknowledges and would like to thank **headspace** Werribee and Cath, for their contributions to this article. You can read the full interview with Cath here:

<http://headspace.org.au/headspace-centres/werribee/meet-cath-our-family-and-carer-consultant/>



Cath Walters - Family and Carer Consultant

Image credit: headspace 2016



An Australian-first recovery model for parents to help themselves and their young ones

The 'Let's Talk About Children' (*Let's Talk*) research project aims to determine how we can improve the longer-term recovery of people with severe mental ill-health by addressing their parenting role as a core part of their treatment. Mind services and clients are participating in this important and pioneering research and it formed the basis of our 28 July Colloquium.

At the Mind Community Conference 2014, one of the parents from the *Let's Talk* project travelled all the way from Warrnambool on the train (they got up at four in the morning!) and co-presented at the conference to shed light on the great work being done.

To read more go to:
www.med.monash.edu.au/srh/mudrih/mirf/

Let's Talk... with project lead, Dr Melinda Goodyear:

What is the recovery model for parents?

It's about supporting and validating the parenting role to help people recover from mental ill-health. We're really excited about what this model can bring to recovery-oriented services and have trained the Mind Personal Helpers and Mentors (PHaMs) team in the south west to deliver the model with some fascinating results!

What drew you to this area of research?

I started to realise that child resiliency really can't be looked at alone. Their family situation can have a dramatic impact on both their ability to thrive and survive through various adversities and – conversely – to not do that well.

Do mental health services currently meet the needs of families as a whole?

I think there's really good potential here. If workers can see the person's inner context and they can see beyond clinical symptoms and they can see what's important to a person – like parenting, for example – there's a better chance for recovery. This work is about better supporting practitioners and services to do that.

How important is family resilience?

Thinking about whole families and how family systems work to support and develop children is really important. We need to start thinking families; not just individuals. We're typically in situations where we just think about individuals. But we live in a context of families (whether that's families of choice or otherwise).

Mind and the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC)

We are delighted with the successful application by the University of Melbourne for an NHMRC partnership grant. We are a major partner in this project that will involve seven inter-related studies designed to evaluate the appropriateness, effectiveness and efficiency of Victoria's Prevention and Recovery Care services

(PARCs). The project represents a partnership between universities, PARCs providers, clinical services and the Victorian Government, and will actively engage service users and their carers and other experts. As the largest provider of recovery support in PARCs in Australia, Mind is excited by the potential of this study to inform service development.





Supported decision making project website launched

Mind's Director of Research, Dr Lisa Brophy, has led a team of researchers at the University of Melbourne in this investigation since 2014. The supported decision-making project aimed to investigate and support the rights, agency and self-determination of people in the mental health system. The outcome of this research is the launch of

two innovative online resources: one on lived experiences of severe mental ill-health and one on the experiences of family and carers of those with severe mental ill-health.

30 people with lived experience and 30 family and carers throughout Victoria were interviewed for the study. Excerpts from their video and audio recorded interviews are used in the online resources.

 **Lived experience resource:**
research.healthtalkaustralia.org/supported-decision-making/overview

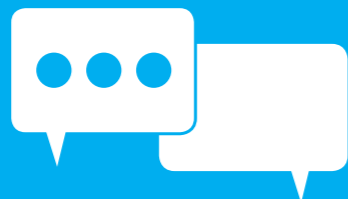
 **Family and carers resource:**
research.healthtalkaustralia.org/carers/overview
research.healthtalkaustralia.org/supported-decision-making/overview

A strong organisation to help more people

Mind Australia is exploring a merger with leading Queensland mental health and disability service provider Open Minds in a move set to help more people with mental ill-health and disability. We are now in a due diligence process, which if all goes to plan will mean the proposed merger will take place in December 2016.

This announcement does not affect the service our clients and their families are currently receiving.

According to Mind Chief Executive Gerry Naughtin, "together, a combined entity can better support existing clients and many more people across Australia to live the life



they want to lead. It will also allow us to offer a broader range of services and improve the information, advice and resources available."

Both organisations have a shared vision and history of successfully supporting people with mental ill-health or disabilities, their families and carers.

Mind Australia and the Open Minds names will be retained and a new Board will be appointed with a representation from both organisations later in the year.

Hellos and goodbyes

We'd like to pay special tribute to colleague Dr Margaret Grigg who has taken up the position of Director Mental Health at the Victorian Government Department of Health and Human Services. Margaret was a well-respected part of the leadership team whose contributions were substantial. We thank Margaret for her work at Mind and wish her every success in her government role.

In her stead, we are delighted to advise that Bronwyn Lawman (previously Director Operations & Clinical Practice) has been appointed to the position of Executive Director Operations.



Dr Margaret Grigg



Victorian Community Conference 2016

Run Melbourne a great success

On a chilly winter's morning on Sunday 24 July, Team Mind blazed the trail at Run Melbourne. This year we had 59 competitors – including staff and clients – across three distances. We would especially like to thank our fundraisers and donors this year. Due to their hard work and generosity we have raised a record breaking amount.

Go Team Mind!



Carly Dober, Community Mental Health Practitioner – North West Community Services

Legislate; don't discriminate

Mind recently released a statement about the marriage equality plebiscite. At the time of writing this story it was still unclear as to whether or not the plebiscite would go ahead.

Mind's statement read: Mind Australia is deeply concerned that the proposed marriage equality plebiscite could cause significant damage to the mental health of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) community.

The campaigns in the lead up to a plebiscite could have a negative and destructive impact on LGBTI Australians, especially young people and their families, some of whom are already grappling with mental health issues.

Stigma around sexuality and gender identity and related exclusion are existing drivers for poor mental health.

LGBTI people have the highest rates of suicidality of any population in Australia. An Australian survey of gender variant and sexually diverse young people found that almost two thirds had experienced homophobia or transphobia, and that more than two in five young people interviewed had had thoughts of self-harm (41%) and/or suicide (42%). (Robinson et al., 2014)

This situation has the potential to worsen dramatically in the context of the negative public campaigning that is likely to occur if the plebiscite goes ahead.

There is strong evidence from other countries that legislating for marriage equality following a public decision-making mechanism had a negative effect.

Mind Australia supports the immediate legalisation of marriage equality, giving the LGBTI community the long awaited recognition of their human rights. Funds saved as a result could be redirected to help underrepresented communities, particularly young people with mental ill-health.



Robinson K, Bansel P, Denson N, Ovenden G, Davies C (2014) *Growing Up Queer: Issues facing young Australians who are gender variant and sexually diverse*. Young and Well Cooperative Research Centre, Melbourne, Australia.

Come together

This year's Community Conferences were full of good old fashioned fun and were even bigger than last year's, with over 430 attendees in Victoria and over 100 in South Australia.

These conferences are the highlight of many a social calendar, as they provide a festive space where our whole community can come together to celebrate achievements, share knowledge and experiences, catch up with old friends and of course make some new ones too!

Katherine, a Peer Support Worker at Williamstown Peer Recovery Community, said of the Victorian conference: "There were so many touches, from the cute desserts to the amazing location, but the one that stood out for me was our name badges. From the corporate heads to clients, we all had simple first names, and blended as a group which was fantastic."

Go west

We have been appointed by the Western Australia Mental Health Commission to operate a new 10-bed sub-acute, short-stay residential service in Rockingham, south of Perth. Working in partnership with the Southern Metropolitan Health Service and Access Housing, Mind will provide support to residents to stabilise their mental health and prepare them for return to the community and independent living. We have considerable expertise in this area, operating 400 residential bed-based recovery services throughout Australia.

The new service is modelled on the step-up/step-down care provided in Prevention and Recovery Care (PARC) centres that Mind delivers in Victoria and Queensland in partnership with hospital networks in those states. This is the first instance of this model being used in Western Australia.



DONATION FORM

Make a real difference to the lives of young people recovering from mental ill-health.

I would like to make a tax deductible donation to Mind (Donations of \$2 or more are tax deductible)

monthly quarterly half yearly

annually one-off

Amount

\$25 \$50 \$100 \$200 Other \$

or In-kind gift of

Payment options (choose one)

Website: visit www.mindaustralia.org.au

Cheque/money order: made payable to Mind Australia

Credit Card: VISA Mastercard Amex

Credit card no.

Expiry date /

Name on card

Signature Date

Donor details

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Please contact me or send me further information on:

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PO Box 592
Heidelberg Vic 3084

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MVA16

Behind the scenes:

Mind staff explain our approach to youth mental health work



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