

Final Report: Drought Recovery Initiative

Mental Health First Aid Training



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Drought Recovery Initiative

Mental Health First Aid Training

1. Background

Goulburn Valley Primary Care Partnership called for Expressions of Interest from Lead Agencies to:

- Increase the number of trained Instructors able to deliver the Mental Health First Aid Training across the three local government areas of Greater Shepparton, Moira and Strathbogie.
- Deliver Mental Health First Aid Training across the three local government areas of Greater Shepparton, Moira and Strathbogie.

Goulburn Valley Primary Care Partnership received funding for drought response through the Department of Human Services with a focus on the delivery of the specific Mental Health First Aid Training to three main target groups being professionals (not clinically trained in Mental Health,) volunteers and the general community.

2. Methodology and Outcomes

The Goulburn Valley Division of General Practice committed to undertake the following:

1. Source two persons to be trained from each of the local government areas (Greater Shepparton, Moira and Strathbogie) (six persons in total)
2. Facilitate access to training
3. Increase the number of Instructors to eight by self funding two staff from the Division's mental health & counselling services to be trained at the same time as the six above (at no cost to GVPCP)
4. Deliver Mental Health First Aid training to a minimum of:
 - a. 100 persons with City of Greater Shepparton
 - b. 60 persons in Moira
 - c. 60 persons in Strathbogie
5. Ensure the above training reaches a mix of professional (not clinically trained in mental health,) volunteers and the general community.

3. Reporting

1. The Project Officer provided a written report to the GVPCP Mental Health & Wellbeing Group on a bi monthly basis including the following:
 - a. Update of activities
 - b. Targets achieved
 - c. Barriers encountered
 - d. Learnings from the project
2. The Project Pffocer attending the bi monthly meeting of the Mental Health & Wellbeing Group
3. This final report is inclusive of the following:
 - a. Targets achieved
 - b. Barriers to meeting targets (if any)
 - c. Sustainable change created
 - d. Learnings from the project
 - e. Financial acquittal
 - f. Recommendations

4. Targets achieved - Training

4.1 Recruitment of Facilitators

The Division sought expression of interest from organisations within the respective local government areas (LGAs), in the hopes of attracting local people with the appropriate skills, who live and work in the area. This endeavour proved successful and six prospective instructors were selected. In addition, GVGPs also nominated two staff members to be trained as MHFA instructors.

Shepparton:

Stephen Lee, Program Coordinator and Community Support worker with GVGP's, Karen Dean, Social Worker with GVGP's, Terry Reedy, Social Worker and Drought Support Worker with Family Care Shepparton, and Sandra Beckerleg, Psychologist with Centrelink in Shepparton. Each of these candidates work in Shepparton and all but one candidate resides in Shepparton, with the other candidate residing in Numurkah.

Moira:

Nancy Cowen, Training Manager at Cobram Community House, and Kate Shelley, Mental Health Nurse, Cobram District Hospital and GV Area Mental Health Service. Both candidates work and reside in the region

Strathbogie:

Marjorie Hamilton, Social Worker, Seymour District Memorial Hospital, and Louise Munro, Program Manager, Euroa Community Education Centre. Louise works and resides in the Shire and Marj primarily works in Seymour.

The Division were fortunate to attract such highly qualified and suitable positioned staff to deliver this training. Each of these people were chosen because of their expertise, but also based on the organisation within which they worked. It was envisaged that training candidates from agencies based in the communities, would ensure the MHFA program would extend beyond the current funding arrangement and continue to be offered in these communities well into the future. To date this appears to be the case in each of the LGAs, with particular facilitators beginning to seek further opportunities to run the two day program.

4.2 Facilitator Training

Once suitable candidates had been selected, GVGP's set out to arrange for the five day facilitator training to be conducted in Shepparton. This was not typically offered by Orygen Research Centre, however through negotiation, an outline of the program was provided and agreement was reached for the program to be delivered in locally. In addition to providing training for the prospective instructors through this program, the course was also attended by two people from the Shire of Campaspe.

All attendees completed the training and were awarded Adult Mental Health First Aid training instructor certificates.

5. Targets achieved - Program delivery

Shortly after the facilitator training, the first two day Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) workshop was held in Shepparton.

In total 21 people attended this course with organisations such as Rural Finance, Neighbourhood House, The Education Department, GV Centre and a number of local community members in attendance.

Over the coming months, the Division organised 12 MHFA two day courses with 260 people enrolled and 221 people completing the course.

Overall the program received excellent reviews and interest in the program far exceeded the number of available places. Where spaces could not be provided, parties are either being kept on a waiting list for future courses, or directed to the MHFA website where other courses are available.

Greater Shepparton hosted a total of six courses with 109 people completing the course.

- Sherbourne Terrace, Shepparton 18th September 2008, 21 attended this course,
- School of Rural Health, Shepparton, 24th November 2008, 18 attended this course,
- Goulburn Murray Water Tatura 30th October 2008, 15 attended this course,
- Mooroopna Community and Learning Centre, 05 February 2009, 18 attended this course.
- School of Rural Health, Shepparton 19 February 2009, 19 attended this course,
- School of Rural Health, Shepparton 02nd March 2009, 13 attended this course,
- School of Rural Health, Shepparton, 04th June 2009, 20 attended this course.

Moira Shire hosted three courses with 59 people completing the course.

- Cobram Community & Learning Centre, 19th September 2008, 18 people attended this course,
- Numurkah Community & Learning Centre, 28th November 2008, 20 people attended this course,
- Yarrawonga St. Cuthberts Church, 01st June 2009, 21 people completed this course.

Strathbogie Shire, held three courses with 53 people attending.

- Euroa Hospital, October 2008, 18 people attended this course,
- Nagambie Mechanics Institute, 15 people attended this course,
- Euroa Community & Learning Centre, 27th March 2009, 20 people attended this course.

6. Workshop evaluations

Workshop participants were asked to complete a feedback form containing the following questions:

- How new was this material to you?
- How easy was it to understand?
- How well was it presented?
- How relevant was the content for your?

- What is your overall response to this course?
- What do you consider to be the strengths of the course?
- What do you consider to be the weaknesses of the course?
- Are there any other issues, which you think should be included in this course?
- How did you hear about the course?

Questions 1 to 4 had a rating scale with 1 being not at all and 10 being very much. These questions can therefore be analysed and will form the basis of this evaluation. Questions 5 to 9 were subjective and were utilised to assist the Division and the Facilitators in the management of future courses. Comments were varied and overall, very positive.

The following percentages for questions 1 – 4 are based on those who provided a rating between 7 and 10.

Table 1: Percentage of participants who responded between 7 and 10

Workshop	How new was this material to you?	How easy was it to understand?	How well was it presented?	How relevant was the content to you?
Euroa	66%	100%	83%	94%
Euroa	To be provided			
Cobram	66%	94%	66%	94%
Mooroopna	38%	94%	83%	88%
Numurkah	65%	100%	100%	100%
Shepparton	47%	90%	57%	52%
Shepparton	55%	100%	100%	100%
Shepparton	47%	84%	57%	73%
Shepparton	61%	100%	94%	100%
Shepparton	61%	100%	85%	85%
Tatura	60%	93%	93%	93%
Yarrawonga	To be provided			

7. Barriers to meeting targets

The funding application specified a total figure of 240 people were to receive the training. Although enrolments of 260 exceeded that figure, the final number of actual attendances was 221.

It was identified early in the process that the GVPCP recommended course participation rate of 30 was not sustainable. The group size was too large. Also, the project funding did not allow for the provision of lunch, and the first group identified that the opportunity to stay together and network, talk and share ideas, ask questions of the facilitators etc., all would have greatly benefited their learnings.

Therefore, the number of courses, catering and course attendee requirements were reviewed by the Project Officer and the CEO of the Division.

The Division was funded to run 6 x 2 day, 12 hour courses but in actual fact, have run 14 X 2 Day 13 -14 hour courses. In addition GVGP's have provided full catering for each course, increasing the opportunity for participants to interact with the facilitators.

The smaller group sizes have reduced the pressure on facilitators and provided more time for participants to interact in the course, however, it has meant a large increase in the number of courses held in comparison to the original contract (8 additional courses were held.)

The Division has absorbed the additional costs associated with catering and running smaller groups and an increased number of workshops. Some of this was offset by savings that were made by having the training undertaken locally, and by sourcing cheaper / free venues.

In summary:

- The enrolments for the course exceeded the target, however those that were able to complete the course did not meet the target of 240
- The total number of courses held was exceeded by 135%
- The target for two courses in the three LGAs was exceeded with three being held in Moira and Strathbogie and seven in Shepparton, Tatura and Mooroopna

8. Sustainable change created

During the worst drought on record, the program provided vital support and training to individuals without specialist counselling skills. This equipped them with the tools and knowledge needed to identify a developing mental illness, to intervene where necessary and an understanding of what agencies in their local area provide services to people with mental illness and their families.

This funding has ultimately aided in strengthening the local communities to support mental illness and helped address the stigma that is often associated with these conditions. Further, this funding has been successful in creating a lasting change in relation to awareness of mental illness. The success of the program resulted in minimal promotion required by the agency, with participants hearing about the course via positive word of mouth.

The LGAs have been provided with eight trained MHFA instructors. Further, GVGP as a Lead Agency have assisted the newly trained instructors to complete their three MHFA courses in a supportive environment (i.e. via the provision of administrative support, equipment etc.)

It is felt that this factor particularly will aid in minimising the number of instructors who fail to pursue further opportunities to provide the course to their communities. It has also been proposed by the Project Leader to reunite the instructors late in 2009 or early 2010, to continue to provide a supportive framework and encourage further community courses.

9. Learnings from the project

The Division believes that this has been a highly successful project, almost meeting the target of attendees and well exceeding the target for all other indicators.

The Division has compiled a waiting list of persons for future courses, and intends to hold two more by June 2010, funded directly by the Division. The waiting list is indicative of the need and support for this type of training within our community.

The use of multiple instructors in this program has shown to be an effective way of supporting ongoing delivery of the MHFA training. This should be encouraged in possible future funding arrangements.

The Division was pleased to be in a position to support this project through the provision of a Project Leader, administrative support and financial support, as an adjunct to the services provided by Navigating Life, the Division's mental health and generalist counselling service.

10. Recommendations from the project

1. In regards to any future funding opportunities, any submission needs to take into consideration the importance of funding an administrative / coordination position within the Lead Agency with adequate funding provided for catering, as this was highly regarded by participants.
2. It is important that two facilitators present the course, as it is possible that persons will identify a mental health issue during the course, and this needs to be dealt with immediately and away from the larger group. Also, it is much more supportive for the facilitators to co deliver and interaction between facilitators and course participants increases.
3. Ideally, workshop sizes should to 20 maximum. Smaller class sizes can increase learning outcomes.
4. The need for the project has been demonstrated through the waiting list, and Division will hold two more workshops before June 2010, from existing Division funding.
5. If possible, funding should be sourced to specifically target MHFA facilitator training and workshops for the Aboriginal and Youth target groups.