headspace: the National Youth Mental Health Foundation

Making headway into youth mental health for rural Australia

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Youth Mental Health: The Facts

- Mental health and substance use disorders are the major health issues affecting young people
- 1 in 4 young people are affected
- They account for 60-70% of the non-fatal burden of disease among 15-24 year olds (Mathers et al 1999)
- Over 75% of all serious mental health problems commence before age 25 (Kessler et al 2005)
Youth Mental Health: The Facts

- Mental health problems have their onset in those aged 15-25 (McGorry 2005)
- Mood and anxiety disorders are the most common types of mental health problems experienced by young people
- Services tend to be targeted towards those with low prevalence and high morbidity disorders
- For the majority of young adults services cut out at aged 18
Access to Services: The Evidence

• Barriers to access for young people have been extensively researched but not addressed

• Issues remain the same as they were 20 years ago (Sanci 2005)

• These include lack of confidentiality, being judged by health professionals, cost and inconvenience of service and inexperience in recognising health issues and where to seek help (Booth et al 2004)
Access to Services: The Evidence

• Services should not be restricted to a particular setting or model of service delivery but address local needs as identified by young people (Sanci et al 2005)

• Up to 60% of young people with mental health problems do not seek professional help (beyondblue 2004)

• Young people have said they wanted mental health services to provide someone to talk to, who they liked and trusted, who would ‘listen’ and allow them to ‘go at their own pace’ (Lloyd et al 2005)
Issues of Importance to Young People

- Family Conflict - 28.6%
- Alcohol and other Drug Issues - 28.2%
- Body Image - 28.1%
- Suicide - 28%
- 6 out of top 10 issues are mental health related

(Mission Australia Youth Survey 2006, 14,700 respondents)
Young People’s Perspective

- Where are they most likely to turn for support/advice/assistance?
  - Friends 86.4%
  - Parents 74.2%
  - Relative/Family Friend 64%
  - Internet 16%
  - Community member/doctor 8.6%

(Mission Australia Youth Survey 2006)
Issues for Rural Young People

- Lack of confidentiality in the services available
- Limited number of GPs and few who ‘bulk bill’
- Difficult to access services because of poor transport options
- Lack of knowledge about services available
- Lack of choice available
- Social stigma associated with ‘help seeking’

(Boyd et al 2006)
Involving Young People

- Recent history of asking young people for their advice/input and ignoring it as doesn’t fit with health professionals thinking of how health care should be delivered
- Young people are now far more informed and articulate about their health and mental health needs
Moving the Youth Mental Health Agenda Forward

- Recent investment in Youth Mental Health by Australian Government and some state and territory governments
- Need to involve young people in the process, far more knowledgeable about mental health then previously
- Need to work in ‘partnership’ to achieve service system reform, not the domain of a few
- Partnerships can bring together a range of different skills and perspectives
Austarlian Government commitment

- The 2005-2006 Australian Government budget included a commitment of $69M over four years to better assist young people with mental health problems.

- Included in this allocation was $51.8M for the establishment of a National Youth Mental Health Foundation.

- **headspace** is the National Youth Mental Health Foundation

- $15 million was also allocated to better facilitate young people’s access to allied health services
The aim of headspace is to reduce the burden of disease amongst young people aged 12-25 caused by mental health and related substance use problems.

The emphasis will be on:

- promoting early identification and effective, evidence-based interventions
- improved access to mental health services
- specialist providers and primary health care working together within an accessible and integrated service framework
Core Components

The Foundation will have a focus on mental health policy and strategic direction as well as the implementation of these key program areas:

1. Centre of Excellence Program
2. Service Provider Education and Training Program
3. Community Awareness Program
4. Youth Services Development Fund
Youth Services Development Fund

- Holds $37 million in funds to be dispersed over two funding rounds
- This Fund will:
  - provide funding and support to communities across Australia to enhance local service partnerships
  - improve the access of young people to high quality mental health and related services
  - promote crucial service system reforms to reduce the risk of young people not receiving a service as a result of poorly coordinated care
Community of Youth Services

Community of Youth Services will be integrated youth focused service platforms that:

• are accessible and youth friendly

• provide specialist mental health and substance use care and respond to primary health care needs

• promote social recovery through support to connect with education, training and employment and other assistance

• ensure the coordination of service delivery
Community of Youth Services

• headspace is looking to establish a minimum of 30 CYSs across the country

• It is anticipated that CYSs will be developed in metropolitan, regional, rural and remote areas that will require different frameworks and models

• It is expected that some CYSs will be specifically developed to meet the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and other population groups
Regional and Rural CYSs

- Great Southern Region, WA
- Darwin and Top End, NT
- Mid North Coast, NSW
- Also a number of small grants funded in many regional and rural areas across the country
Characteristics of Rural Funded CYSs

- Hub in regional centre
- Capacity for outreach to rural and remote communities
- Funds to support transportation of young people
- Engaging whole community about youth mental health and access points for assistance
A Vision for National Youth Mental Health Foundation

- Keeping youth mental health on the national agenda
- Advocating for State and Territory Governments to become proactive in youth mental health as a policy initiative
- Working as a coalition of organisations to improve young peoples mental health
- Having at least 30 communities across the country actively working to provide better mental health services to young people
- Involving young people in the decisions which directly impact upon them