Jenny Biven

Jenny Biven trained as an occupational therapist and commenced as a community practitioner in inner city Redfern, NSW, in the late 1970s. Exposure to such a diverse community fuelled her interest to continue working in community settings and seek roles in which her skills could support others to explore their potential and build capacity towards fulfilling roles important to them within the context of their lives.

With this in mind, Jenny’s working life has ranged from running recycling depots with unemployed youth; developing rehabilitation and skills training programs for people with disabilities on an avocado farm in NSW; developing rehabilitation programs with people with chronic mental illness as an AVI in Sri Lanka; and Life after School programs for special schools in the Philippines and Bhutan. Also working in rural and remote health services, elder abuse, and work rehabilitation have given her an appreciation of the role of social health determinants in health outcomes.

The last seven years has reflected Jenny's interest in how health determinants, meaningful, purposeful activity and self efficacy can influence a person’s health and wellbeing mentally, physically, emotionally and socially.

Currently as a rural Do It For Life lifestyle advisor, Jenny supports people who want to change lifestyle behaviours such as smoking, risky alcohol use, poor eating habits, stress, and lack of physical activity, that increase their risk of acquiring preventable chronic diseases such as diabetes, heart disease, some cancers, and respiratory conditions. With the incidence of weight gain, smoking, poor eating habits, lack of physical activity and a high incidence of diabetes with mental health clients there has been close collaboration between Do It For Life and rural mental health teams to reduce clients’ risk of chronic disease and encourage sustainable healthy lifestyle behaviours.