Autumn | 2013

beyondblue
young carers
alive and kicking goals

Youth
Contributions and feedback from individuals and agencies are welcome.

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Front page: Missy Higgins, beyondblue, young carer, Alive and Kicking Goals initiative

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Welcome to the Youth Edition of our Head2Head magazine.

As the first Commissioner for Mental Health in Western Australia and indeed throughout the country, I believe that improving mental health services for children and young people is a matter of high priority.

Good mental health is a cornerstone to build and maintain a good life. Yet nearly half the population will experience mental health problems or mental illness at some point in their lives and around 20 per cent of us will experience this in any year. More people die from suicide each year than die on our roads and 75 per cent of all severe mental illness starts before the age of 24. These are striking statistics.

All of us are touched directly or indirectly by the distress and tragedy that mental illness can bring but equally by the stories of recovery where people have turned their life around with the right support and specialist assistance. Recovery is a journey of healing and transformation enabling a person with a mental health problem to live a meaningful life in a community of their choice. To achieve this and to support people in different circumstances, different forms of collaboration are needed.

Professor Bryant Stokes, AM, was appointed to undertake the review of public mental health services in WA which involved a comprehensive consultation with almost 900 individuals, the review of 29 written submissions and numerous mental health patient files and a data review of 255 individuals who suicided in 2009. The final report released last November highlighted the critical importance of the mental health and well being of all members of the West Australian community and the particular vulnerability of young people.

The Mental Health Commission has established an Implementation Partnership Group to oversee coordination of implementation of Professor Stokes’ recommendations, with their inaugural meeting held in March 2013. The committee will meet on a quarterly basis and be responsible for monitoring and providing advice, facilitating cross-sector coordination in the implementation of actions and supporting communication and information exchange to improve outcomes in the mental health system.

The members include representatives from various agencies and organisations, while the Director General WA Health and I are the executive sponsors for the implementation and will report directly to the Minister for Mental Health on progress.

The Commission has also met with Professor Patrick McGorry and the Commonwealth Government to jointly build a new youth stream of care involving headspace youth mental health centres and also a comprehensive early intervention for psychosis program. We already have good building blocks underway in our State and this is an area of great priority and strategic importance.

Significant progress has also been made in implementation of the mental health court diversion and support pilot program. The court-based mental health team will conduct assessments, report to the court, and develop intervention plans to divert people into treatment which addresses their mental illness and assists in their recovery. The pilot commenced in March this year.

A new green Mental Health Bill, which will significantly improve human rights protection for people experiencing acute mental illness and facilitate greater involvement of families and carers in supporting people with mental illness, was tabled in Parliament last year. There have been over 100 submissions on this green Bill that are currently being reviewed – all wanting to achieve the best outcomes for people experiencing mental illness, their families and carers.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank our Minister for Mental Health, the Honourable Helen Morton MLC for her leadership and support to progress these important reform initiatives.

This edition features personal stories of recovery, friendships, relationships and services for young people, and I hope it will offer you ideas, contact details and tips on reaching out to others and looking after your own mental health.

Eddie Bartnik, Commissioner for Mental Health
An important new initiative to connect school-aged children with mental health services such as specialised Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) and headspace has been funded to reduce the risk of self-harm or suicide of our young people.

The Commissioner for Mental Health, Eddie Bartnik said that improved mental health services for young people are a priority for the Mental Health Commission.

“The complexity of youth mental illness and suicide risk needs a multi-pronged approach in the community, at school and sometimes as a last resort, in hospital. This initiative comes in response to an increase in emergency presentations by young people.”

“Evidence-based research has shown that young people with mental health issues have better long term outcomes when treated in a community-based setting than extended care as an inpatient in a treatment facility,” he said.

“The suicide prevention initiative will offer extra support to these young people and provide guidance to school staff on how to best identify, support and get appropriate treatment for students who they feel may be experiencing acute mental health issues.”

The Mental Health Commission and the Ministerial Council for Suicide Prevention have approved funding of $473,700 for the six additional mental health staff at CAMHS. Another $200,000 has been allocated to the Department of Education for a school psychologist to assist both State Government and non-government schools to connect school-aged children at risk with mental health services such as CAMHS, headspace and non-government services.

These initiatives will complement the rollout of the CAMHS Acute Response Team (ART) which is a 24-hour, seven-day-a-week program to assess and assist children and young people up to 18 year of age experiencing mental health issues in the community with the aim of averting unnecessary hospitalisation.

Based at Princess Margaret Hospital for Children, ART began services in late 2012 as part of the State Government’s $13.5 million Assertive Community Intervention initiative.

The Commissioner said while more was being done than ever before, further development of mental health services in the community for young people linked to NGOs, CAMHS, GPs and other primary care services remained a high priority.

"We are always trying to find the best avenues to provide support, treatment and long term positive outcomes for young people experiencing acute mental health issues," he said.

"We are working together to ensure parents and young people have services available and a detailed list of youth mental health services and supports is available on the Mental Health Commission website."

You can contact the Acute Response Team by phoning 1800 048 636 or by visiting www.health.wa.gov.au/services. A detailed list of youth mental health services and supports is available on the Mental Health Commission website at www.mentalhealth.wa.gov.au.
Biteback and amplify the good stuff in life

BITE BACK is not a new vampire book but rather a new online space where young people can build stronger connections with other people, focus on their mind and have fun.

Powered by the Black Dog Institute, BITE BACK is an online community of people just like you – a space that helps you get into your own head, discover great things and focus on what really matters. At BITE BACK you can discover ways to amplify the good stuff in life, share real and personal stories, check out videos, blogs and interviews or interesting people and get involved in a bunch of activities.

BITE BACK with ‘Things to Do’

Store your thoughts in the Think Tank - start noticing the good things. Take some time each week to share the little things that have happened that made you feel a little bit awesome. Scribble them down onto our online post-it notes and drop them in the Think Tank.

Share your stories - whether it’s good, bad or ugly, if you’ve got something on your mind and you want to get it out then post it onto our BackChat forum. You can also check out other peoples stories. Tell it how it is and share the love.

Power up your mind - have you ever experienced moments where your mind has 50 million thoughts flying around at once? Power Up is a set of modern meditation tracks to help you focus on what’s going on right now. Keep your head in check, chill out, perform at your best, make the most of your friends and amplify everyday life experiences.

Get creative - look around and notice things from your everyday life to snap and share. Use the ‘Theme of the Week’ to spark your photographic imagination.

In the Zone - you know that place you go to when you’re focusing super hard? You’re totally in control and stop noticing what’s around you, all because you’re completely focused on the task at hand. That’s the zone. Watch clips of other people’s ‘zone’ experiences - from rapping, storm surfing, and just about every activity you can think of in between - and use them for inspiration to kick your focus into gear.

Test your mental fitness - we know you can make your body better by exercising and eating better, but what about your mind? BITE BACK has a mental fitness section where you can find a set of quizzes and questionnaires to track your mental fitness, identify your personality type and give it a bit of training to get it into tip top shape.

Whether it’s the good, the bad or the ugly, share what’s going on in your life through www.biteback.org.au and learn from other people’s experiences.

For more information visit www.blackdoginstitute.org.au.
Giving a voice to mental health

Ever wanted to tell your story on stage or learn radio and media skills? Local comedians and artists are running workshops to empower people with a mental illness to share their stories.

Barefaced Stories is Perth’s exciting regular storytelling series. Each storyteller takes the stage in turn with nothing but their true life tales - some humorous, some sad, and some downright strange.

Andrea Gibbs co-created Barefaced Stories in 2010 to offer audiences honest, risk-taking and refreshing entertainment. Andrea has been involved in the local theatre scene and studied storytelling in New York.

“I grew up in Donnybrook, a small town in the South West of WA and can’t ever remember making the choice to become a performer. Although, looking back at my childhood diary entries, I must have thought it possible. I started getting cast in mostly comedy roles, and then one thing led to another. I joined The Big HOO-HAA! Improvisation group in their first year, started doing stand-up, went to Melbourne International Comedy Festival, got poached by 96fm for the breakfast show and then thought, “Ok, I guess I’m a comedian”.

Andrea is “super-excited” to be running free storytelling workshops from April to June 2013, with a $12,000 grant from the Mental Health Commission. The workshops will be a fun and supportive space that helps build people’s confidence and public speaking skills.

Research shows that the most effective ways to break down stereotypes and discrimination towards people with a mental illness is by hearing personal stories and learning from other people’s experiences. Isolation and fear can be a big barrier when someone has mental health problems, so the support of friends and family can make a big difference. Understanding the facts about mental illness and how to access professional help, and strong community connections are vital to help people recover.

Music Feedback is a youth mental health campaign that young people can participate in during National Youth Week events and multimedia workshops throughout 2013. The latest CD/DVD features 19 popular and up and coming Australian artists such as Missy Higgins, San Cisco, Ash Grunwald and Pond. These musicians believe there should be no shame or embarrassment around mental illness and that it’s OK to seek help from friends, family, GPs or counsellors.

Missy Higgins single “Unashamed Desire” is the first track on the Music feedback CD and comes from her new album “The Ol’ Razzle Dazzle” exploring her tumultuous relationship with the music industry.
“By the end of touring the last album in late 2008 I was in this place where I felt I was part of a production line. I was the product. It had just lost the purity and the romance for me. I really wanted to get back to that and I didn’t know how. So after much tossing and turning I threw in the towel and said I’m gonna try something else.”

Missy started a university course in Aboriginal Studies and moved into a share house to experience so called ‘normality’. She travelled and worked on some causes in which she believed. For the first time since she won “Triple J Unearthed” during her final year of high school she wasn’t defined by music making.

“You get the amount of success you dream of and it doesn’t bring the happiness you thought it would,” Missy says. “You have an existential crisis – how do I become happy? If this doesn’t give you fulfilment what does? And when it’s caused by something you’ve always attached as being your identity, what do you do? I’ve always been the singer or the musician or the songwriter. And when I quit music that was terrifying. Who am I? It was scary but it was also important to find out.”

Drew Goddard, of progressive Perth rock outfit Karnivool, is also featured on the Music Feedback DVD. “I think music can be a coping mechanism as well as something fun. It can be escapism. Having dark thoughts is natural, that’s real, that’s gritty, you need an output for it. It takes courage to say something’s wrong and to ask for help. I don’t think that’s anything to be ashamed of.”

The Youth Affairs Council of WA has received $195,000 from the Mental Health Commission to coordinate Music Feedback in 2013. Key partners include the Commission, Department for Communities and headspace.

For more information on storytelling workshops, contact Louise Howe on 6272 1200 or louise. howe@mentalhealth.wa.gov.au.

You can also check out Barefaced stories on the last Tuesday of each month at The Bird in Northbridge.

To get involved in Music Feedback contact YACWA on 9227 5440 or visit www.musicfeedback.com.au.
Sexuality, sexual health and relationships education programs aim to increase positive attitudes, knowledge, skills and behaviour intention associated with sexuality, sexual decision making, sexual health and relationships among young people.

Sexual health is not only about the prevention of infections and pregnancy; it is also about promoting good physical, emotional, mental and social wellbeing in relation to sexuality. It includes a person’s capacity and ability to enjoy positive, respectful and safe sexual experiences.

To build the capacity of the youth sector in WA and to support and educate young people on sexual health and blood-borne virus issues, the Youth Affairs Council of Western Australia (YACWA) has developed a project called Youth Educating Peers (YEP).

The YEP Project views young people’s health within a human rights framework where young people have a right to education and access to services that enables them to be sexually, socially and emotionally healthy, and to prevent the transmission of sexually transmitted infections (STI’s) and blood-borne viruses (BBV’s).

As such, sexual health education needs to be holistic and much more than just information. Reflection on values, skills-development and discussion about behaviours within social and peer contexts are all part of sexual health.

When delivered in safe peer spaces, such education results in significant outcomes for young people, including reduced sexual partners, increased condom use, and increased protective factors such as knowledge, interpersonal skills, empathy, respect, confidence, positive peer influence, and self and social awareness.

The YEP research project conducted between 2009 and 2011 found that the youth workers are ideally placed to play a significant and unique role in supporting and educating young people on sexual health and sexuality for a number of reasons. Youth workers:

- create youth-owned, safe, non-judgmental, confidential spaces for youth peer engagement
- use flexible, personalised, interactive and creative approaches
- build close relationships with young people over extended periods of time that facilitate trust, more in-depth conversations and opportunities for support
- reach those young people most at-risk of adverse sexual health outcomes, due to social, educational and economical disadvantage.

Why does YEP exist?

The WA youth sector is an underutilised resource in addressing these issues, as youth workers often have sustained and effective relationships with young people and can provide safe, confidential spaces for discussing sensitive issues.

Young people are a high-risk group for STIs and BBVs. For example, chlamydia rates have more than tripled in the last decade, with 80 per cent of this being in young people under the age of 30. It is estimated that one in five young people have chlamydia.

Young people have a right to education and services that enable them to protect their health.
Many young people, particularly at-risk young people, are denied these rights due to factors such as a lack of comprehensive school sexual health education, community shame and stigma toward young people and sexuality, and through misinformation and social norms perpetuated through sources such as peers and the media.

**So, what’s on offer at YEP?**

- Training, networking and support events.
- Online peer reviewed resources and support for youth workers.
- Best-practice frameworks for supporting integrated, multi-sector youth service delivery.
- Evidence-based support for running peer based programs.
- Tailored organisational youth agency support.
- Online youth peer education at www.facebook.com/yepcrew.
- Youth peer outreach workshops and events.
- Awards and recognition for best-practice in the sector.

Based on the YEP project findings, the YACWA was funded to translate the research findings into practice, supporting the youth sector to take an early intervention, educational approach to youth sexuality, sexual health and relationships education.

For more information on the YEP project contact Rebecca Walker, Project Manager on 9227 5440 or yep@yacwa.org.au.

You can also visit www.yacwa.org.au > young people or ‘like’ YEP Crew on Facebook to learn about what they are up to.

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**Mental Health Advisory Council**

The Mental Health Advisory Council (MHAC) provides high level, independent advice and guidance to the Mental Health Commissioner regarding major issues affecting people with mental health problems, their families and service providers. Our members include a cross section of the community representing a variety of views and expertise, including issues affecting young people.

We value and respect diversity, work in an inclusive and accessible way, advocate for the most unheard voices, explore innovation in mental health, seek out the best practices and promote hope for recovery.

To be able to provide balanced and confidential advice to the Commissioner, MHAC members obtain feedback from across the mental health sector and community, state-wide. We welcome your views.

For further information about our work visit www.mentalhealth.wa.gov.au or contact on 6272 1200 or email MHAC@mentalhealth.wa.gov.au.

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**Janelle Ridgeway, a youth voice on the Mental Health Advisory Council**
Amy’s recovery

As a teenager Amy was a perfectionist, a people pleaser who took things extremely personally, wanting to be loved and liked by everyone. She didn’t know how to deal with rejection, mistakes or people not liking or accepting her.

Despite being brought up in a family who gave her unconditional love and support, around the age of 14, Amy’s thoughts became internalised, nasty and negative. She would be bubbly in front of others, but in private she hated who she was and strove for perfection and control.

Amy started exercising at a local gym, and over time the pace increased to an unsustainable daily amount. As the exercise increased, Amy’s food intake reduced.

“I remember the gym instructor saying “Missy, you’re fading away to nothing – maybe you should pull back your hours a bit.” Amy said.

“At the age of 16, Amy was officially diagnosed with anorexia and severe depression and was admitted to Flinders Medical Centre Foundation Eating Disorder Unit in Adelaide for treatment.

Recovery was a slow but steady process.

“Something within me fired up when I was in hospital and I realised that I was the only one who could turn my mind, my illness and my life around. It didn’t matter how much love I had around me, it didn’t matter how many doctors I had – it all came down to me,” Amy remembers.

In 2007, Amy stopped using antidepressants which was supported by her doctor. The withdrawals kicked in, but after a while and with the right support, Amy’s life started to settle.

“It was as if there had been a cyclone in my life and all that was left was rubble and a broken, empty,
The Bentley Adolescent Unit’s transformation from an outdated facility to a modern mental health service for young people’s was completed in January 2013.

The $4.5 million renovation includes new accessible outdoor areas, natural light interiors and open living spaces to give the unit a more home-like feel. Bathrooms have been completely renovated, the dining area is open and spacious, blackboard paint has been used in the bedrooms to encourage the residents’ artistic side, and an outdoor basketball area provides an opportunity to exercise.

Input from young people and their families was at the centre of the project’s design and development. The modernisation of the Unit means the facility’s contemporary model of mental health care can be delivered in an age approved environment.

The newly refurbished unit is a 12-bed inpatient mental health facility for young people aged 12 to 17 years and is located on Mills Street in Bentley. The unit provides a statewide specialised service and admissions are provided to both voluntary and involuntary patients.

Young people are referred to the Bentley Adolescent Unit through a booked admission or transfer from another service such as an emergency department or Princess Margaret Hospital.

The service is staffed by a multidisciplinary group of health professionals including psychiatrists, psychologists, occupational therapists, mental health nurses and youth workers.

For more information and for acute referral enquiries contact the Triage Officer on 0478 474 956, between 8am and 4pm, Monday to Friday. For after hours referral enquiries contact the Psychiatric Liaison Nurse on 9340 8222.
Helping families cope with mental illness

As Commissioner for Children and Young People, I have legislated responsibility to improve the wellbeing of children and young people by working with them, their families, community and government in WA.

The mental health of children and young people has been one of the highest priorities of my work since I became Commissioner in December 2007.

The importance of children and young people’s mental health and wellbeing has been raised with me during my visits to communities around the State. Children and young people and their families are concerned about the lack of practical services and programs for them and what more we need to do as a community to strengthen their mental health and wellbeing.

With this in mind, in 2010, I held an independent Inquiry into the mental health and wellbeing of children and young people in WA, where more than 700 children and young people were consulted.

In 2011, I tabled in the WA Parliament my report of the Inquiry, which included 54 recommendations to the Commonwealth and State governments, and the community sector, to improve the mental health and wellbeing of children and young people in WA.

I am very pleased that progress is being made on many of the 54 recommendations. There is now a greater focus on the mental health of infants, children and young people; a commitment to long term planning and investing more than $15m over the next five years towards a more comprehensive mental health service for children and young people; and the recent refurbishment of the Bentley Adolescent Unit.

However, more investment in services and programs is still required to improve mental health services for children and young people throughout the State, including for those with specific needs.

My Inquiry identified several priority groups including children of parents with mental illness (COPMI).

In 2013, I am very fortunate to be able to work with a group of enthusiastic young people that comprise the Y2Y (Youth to Youth) COPMI group.

Y2Y is a youth development program run by Wanslea which provides support for children and young people of parents with mental illness, and they will be one of my four advisory committees this year.

These young people will work with me over the next 12 months to help me better understand the challenges and needs of young people of parents with mental illness.

One of the things they plan to do is produce a video that aims to de-stigmatise mental illness so that children of parents with mental illness can speak openly about their families’ experiences.

I have already met with the young people of Y2Y this year as they gathered for the ‘launch’ of the year by visiting Moore River and spending the evening horse riding and socialising.

In July last year I released a policy brief which explores the needs of children of parents with mental illness in more detail, which is available in the publications section of my website at ccyp.wa.gov.au

My website also contains information about my advisory committees, including Y2Y, and I invite you to visit regularly to find out what they have to say about de-stigmatising mental health and other issues.

Michelle Scott
This was the question on the minds of Joe Tighe from Alive and Kicking Goals and Helen Christensen from the Black Dog Institute when they attended a suicide prevention conference a couple of years ago.

Joe and Helen decided to develop an app to support Alive and Kicking Goals’ suicide prevention work with young Aboriginal people in the Kimberley. The Black Dog Institute will pilot the app in early 2013, with funding from the Federal Government.

Alive and Kicking Goals has played a vital role in contributing to the design of the app by running local focus groups to decide on the content, finding local Aboriginal artists and graphic designers to provide images for the app, and arranging for young local talent to provide the voices in the app through Goolarri Media in Broome.

The interactive app is designed to deliver a brief treatment program through the use of imagery and metaphors. There is both text and voice overs to ensure it is accessible to audiences with various literacy skills.

There are three modules and self-assessment questions which help participants to track how they are going. The first module helps the person to deal with distressing thoughts, while the second module aims to help them accept and cope with intense emotions.

“Everyone has warpy thoughts at times and many of us need help to cope with our feelings” says Fiona Shand, a researcher at the Black Dog Institute who has been closely involved with the design of the app.

“We hope this app can help young people through some tough times by showing them that there are ways to cope.”

The final module guides the person through a process which helps them think about the kind of person they would like to be. It also guides them to set small goals to help them move in a direction they would like to go to.

The app is for people who are distressed, but is not intended as a crisis intervention. However, it includes information on crisis services.

Other organisations who have assisted with the development of the app include HITnet Innovations, the Young and Well Cooperative Research Centre and ThoughtWorks.

For further information about the app and when it is going to be launched contact Fiona Shand on 02 9382 9291 or visit www.blackdoginstitute.org.au.

For more information on Alive and Kicking goals: suicide prevention project visit www.healthinfonet.ecu.edu.au/key-resources or contact David Pigram via email david.pigram@health.wa.gov.au at Broome Saints Football Club.
Chatting about a chat room

Sometimes it helps just to know that someone is listening, that you never have to be alone. Lifeline, a national 24-hour crisis support line receives a new call every minute. When Fiona Kalaf accepted the job as the CEO of Lifeline WA, she knew she was going to make a positive difference.

Q. Why did you want the job?

When the position at Lifeline WA came up a little more than a year ago I jumped at it as I wanted to bring the business and corporate knowledge I have gained from the private sphere into the non-government arena.

The subject matter at Lifeline can be dark, delicate and at times very difficult. But I am constantly buoyed and motivated by the positive work that we do in the community and it makes working here quite exciting.

I am often asked – wouldn’t it be better if no one ever had to contact you? Wouldn’t it be better if you worked to do yourself out of business?

My answer is always yes! But unfortunately, I know that there will always be a level of mental illness in the community and need for our services. One in five people will experience a mental illness in any given year, so it is not uncommon for any of us to have a mental illness at some time in our lives.

We also know that people reaching out to seek help and seek care during time of need is a great problem for us at Lifeline to have. The more people who are reaching out shows that the message is getting out to reduce the stigma associated with mental illness and to encourage people to seek help.

For us at Lifeline, the more people who are connecting with us online or on the phone, the more we feel that our sector is collectively raising awareness of the importance of people to connect to some level of care.

Q: Can you tell us about Lifeline’s online chatroom?

Following my work in the arts and health care sectors before I came to Lifeline where I developed a number of web-based service solutions, I have been extremely passionate about establishing an online crisis support service that can be accessed by anyone regardless of their age, gender, race, religion or language.

Our statistics show that even though there is a very high demand for Lifeline’s 13 11 14 telephone crisis support line, only 10 per cent of the people who are making contact with us on that line are aged 25 or under. We know that around 75 per cent of mental illness will develop before the age of 25 so it was evident that we needed to provide a medium that is suitable and comfortable for young people to use.

The other statistic I came across when we were looking at bringing in the online crisis chat service was that people aged 25 and under in Australia are sending hundreds of messages a day. Text messaging is quick, immediate and is becoming the principal medium for communicating for youth.

In addition, when you stop and look at social media such as Facebook, Instagram and Twitter, you can see that they are text and image based. Young people are not picking up the phone to chat with someone even though they may wish to connect with someone.

So launching the online chat service was a logical move. It combines the passion for ensuring our services are truly accessible to young people and that we are not being inaccessible to anyone else in the community, combined with my passion for the e-commerce world that came from my business background.

Q: How does the chatroom work?

We are still developing it and continuously improving it. Currently we are able to resource the chatroom from 5pm to 9pm Perth time, unlike our 13 11 14 line which is available 24 hours every day of the year.

We have provided detailed steps on how to register and start the live chat on our website - https://crisischat.lifelinewa.org.au.
If the service appears to be ‘offline’ or ‘busy’, please call Lifeline on 13 1 1 14. All internet connections, particularly those from mobile devices, can suffer from dropouts and interruptions. **If you lose contact with our service, please reconnect.**

**If you or someone you know is in danger or needs immediate medical attention please call 000.**

**Q: So, what does the chatroom offer?**

The chatroom is a short-term support for people who are overwhelmed and have difficulty coping or staying safe. We use real time ‘chat’ technology for a confidential one-to-one conversation with a Lifeline Online Crisis Supporter.

For both the 13 1 1 14 line and the online chatroom it isn’t just a friendly voice on the other line that we are offering. Every single person who works at Lifeline and communicates or connects with someone in crisis has been through 15 weeks of training. This is really important to us because we are absolutely focused on ensuring there is a consistency of service.

And also, often someone in crisis has taken a very considered and deliberate step to connect with Lifeline and they have every right to get the best possible care. Our care model is based on confidentiality and safety. We don’t ask for personal details, we don’t judge or criticise, and people don’t need to say anything about who they are or where they are located.

**Q: How has working at Lifeline changed your life?**

I am much more aware of asking friends that question. I have had friends go through some pretty tough times and ordinarily I would have said ‘Hey lets go and have a girly afternoon, let’s go shopping, catch a movie’ or something like that.

Now I am a lot more focused. I will sit down with them and ask them how they are tracking, how they are feeling emotionally and I am much more comfortable to ask – and have done in one particular circumstance – are you contemplating suicide? I am more pointed and focused on what might be the real issue at hand.

I have also had quite a few people come up to me and tell me that they were contemplating taking their own life. **Those people called Lifeline thinking that nobody can help, but without Lifeline they wouldn’t be here today.**

This cuts to exactly what Lifeline is about and what motivates me to do more.

It really is a great privilege to work in the area and with the people that we do.
Shape your look, shape your life

It is a little-known fact that more Australian women will be affected by an eating disorder than breast cancer in their lifetime. Mental health employee of the year, Julie Potts, has seen her share of young people suffering from eating disorders in WA.

Working at Princess Margaret Hospital (PMH) for over 16 years, Julie is the head of a specialised multidisciplinary health team for the assessment and treatment of children and adolescents with eating disorders. Julie was the 2012 Employee of the Year at the annual Mental Health Good Outcomes Awards.

“The Eating Disorders Program is a coordinated paediatric and psychological service that helps young people overcome eating disorders,” said Julie.

“There are many different eating problems which can affect many people. The two most common types are Anorexia Nervosa and Bulimia Nervosa, and they are most commonly present during the adolescent and young adult years.”

“When I started, there was very little evidence in the field of eating disorders. My job was to set up a team of diverse professionals and to develop a youth-friendly service for children and young people experiencing eating disorders,” Julie remembers.

Over the years Julie has led and overseen the expansion of the program providing the clinical leadership, as well as working with children and young people experiencing mental health issues.

“Body image is the number one concern for young people aged 12 to 25 years. One in five Australian teenage girls experience some form of disordered eating,” said Julie.

“The program aims to help young people understand their illness and develop coping strategies that will lead to full recovery.”

“What they need to know is that mental health issues such as depression, obsessive-compulsive disorder and other psychiatric disorders can be present in conjunction with an eating disorder. It is important that these problems are addressed alongside the eating problem,” said Julie.

The team at PMH accepts referrals for young people up to 16 years of age. Referrals can be made by GPs, school psychologists, paediatricians, social workers, psychiatrist or any other agency the young person may have contact with.

The referred child and their family will receive a letter or phone call offering them an appointment at which the severity and risk of the eating disorder will be assessed. The family will be given a treatment plan, which will also be sent to the referrer.

“Admitting to yourself that you need help is a brave and difficult step to take, but once you have, the question of what next can be very daunting. We are here to ease the anxiety of those first steps.”

“Treatment is a very individual thing, and what works for one person may be very different to what works for another. Your recovery journey belongs to you, and is more effective when you are the driver,” advises Julie.

The details of services which specialise in working in the area of body image and eating disorders available to young people and their families include:

Specialist Treatment and Ancillary Services for Children, Adolescents and Adults with Eating Disorders
PMH - Eating Disorders Program
Ph. 9429 5000
Website: www.pmh.health.wa.gov.au/services/eating_disorders

Centre for Clinical Interventions
A free, specialist, state-wide public outpatient service for adolescents, 16-17 years only, and adults with eating disorders. This is a clinical service provided by the Department of Health in WA.
Ph. 9227 4399
Email: info@cci.wa.health.gov.au
Website: www.cci.health.wa.gov.au/resources/consumers.cfm
The Hollywood Clinic
A private, specialist, inpatient, day program and outpatient service for youth, aged 16 to 17 only, and adults with eating disorders. Ph. 9333 8000
Website: www.hollywood.ramsayhealth.com.au

Women’s Healthworks Body Esteem Program
A guided self-help group program for women aged 18 years and over with eating disorders. A 20-week peer-facilitated support group is also available. Ph. 9300 1566
Email: info@womenshealthwords.org.au
Website: www.womenshealthworks.org.au

ARAFMI Mental Health Carers and Friends Inc
A not-for-profit community-based organisation that provides information and support to families and friends of people with a mental health issues. Ph. 9427 7100
Rural Freecall: 1800 811 747
Website: www.arafmi.asn.au

Carers WA
A not-for-profit, community-based organisation that works in active partnership with carers, people with care and support needs, health professionals, service providers, government agencies and the community. They provide information, support, and counselling for people with disabilities and mental health problems including eating disorders. 24-hour Counselling Line: 1800 007 332
Ph. 1300 227 377
Email: info@carerswa.asn.au
Website: www.carerswa.asn.au

National Youth Week
Mental health themes are featured strongly in National Youth Week which is the largest single celebration of young people in Australia.

National Youth Week provides young people with opportunities to express ideas, showcase talents and have their voices heard. The National Youth Week Young People’s Planning Committee consider mental health one of the most important issues for young people in WA. The key events for National Youth Week 2013 are the Youth Hub, youth forums and the KickstART Festival. In addition, around 70 events state-wide have been funded under the National Youth Week small grants program.

The Youth Hub was part of National Youth Week 2012 and again in 2013. Located in close proximity to the Perth Cultural Centre, the Hub is a designated one-stop-shop for young people to participate in National Youth Week activities and events and to hang out. The Hub hosts resources and advice to young people and the very popular youth forums.

The Mental Health youth forum was the most attended youth forum in 2012 and will again be held in 2013. Mental health also features strongly at the KickstART Festival, with the Music Feedback Howl stage. Music Feedback is a state-wide Mental Health Commission initiative to reduce stigma around mental health and young people, by talking about mental health through music. In addition, around 7 000 Music Feedback CD/DVDs will be distributed at National Youth Week activities state-wide.

The Department for Communities coordinates National Youth Week in WA, with Propel Youth Arts playing a key coordination role to ensure a successful, youth led model for key National Youth Week events. This includes support for young people involved and management of partnerships and major events.

To find out about National Youth Week events and activities in your area visit the Department for Communities’ website at www.communities.wa.gov.au/Youth.

For key National Youth Week events and activities in the Perth Cultural Centre visit the KickstART Festival website at www.kickstartfestival.com.au.

Main sponsors and supporters of National Youth Week 2013 include the Mental Health Commission, Department for Communities, Propel Youth Arts WA, Department of Education, Employment and Workforce Relations Office for Youth, youthbeyondblue, Metropolitan Redevelopment Authority, State Theatre Centre of Western Australia, Perth Theatre Trust, X-press Magazine and HyperFest.
Bunbury centre aims to help kids keep in a safe headspace

headspace is a centre designed by young people for young people dealing with mental health problems.

The service aims to achieve early prevention in mental health problems for young people aged 12 to 25 by co-locating a range of services to aid them in one central, youth specific place. Without having to make an appointment, young people can visit headspace centres across Australia and gain access to GPs, nurses, social workers, psychologists, psychiatrists, occupational therapists, vocational workers, alcohol and drug workers as well as youth workers - and all under the one roof.

The new manager of headspace in Bunbury Nicky Smith said headspace is important as it brings together a range of services for young people and their families in one place that is free, confidential and non-judgemental.

“The response in Bunbury has been amazing with over 50 young people accessing the centre in first month and 152 sessions of service. Parents and other services have also been contacting the centre for information and support,” she said.

Located at 82 Blair Street, Bunbury headspace centre provides services to help overcome mental health issues for hundreds of young people in the area. This new centre is a part of the $197.3 million Federal Government funding commitment to headspace.

90 centres in total are planned to be established by 2015 which will allow an estimated 72,000 young people each year across Australia to access support for any mental health problem and/or illness.

New centres have already been announced for Rockingham and Joondalup to complement the already established services in Fremantle, Albany, Midland, Broome, Osborne Park and Bunbury.

headspace has also started a number of other initiatives, called e-headspace and headspace School Support that are now available in WA. e-headspace is a confidential, free and secure space where young people 12 - 25 or their family can chat online, email, or speak on the phone with a qualified youth mental health professional. To access e-headspace and find more information visit www.eheadspace.org.au.

headspace School Support will work to equip schools around the state with information and resources to prevent and respond to completed suicide. Support is provided by working with relevant education bodies, local headspace centres and other service providers.

For further information about the Bunbury headspace email info@headspacebunbury.org.au, call 9729 6800, follow on Facebook or simply drop in to the centre at 82 Blair Street.

For further information about other headspace centres or headspace School Support visit www.headspace.org.au.
Over the years, my husband Malcolm McCusker, Governor of Western Australia, and I have worked with hundreds of charities, unfortunately witnessing their ongoing struggles for funding. Many mental health support organisations spend an inordinate amount of their precious time, seeking funds to provide essential services to those in need.

The generosity of some people, in particular the average hard working mortgage-paying Australian, never ceases to amaze me. But I have pondered for a while, why some people display a generosity of spirit, whilst others find it such a challenge to part with a few coins for a charitable raffle. On further reflection, I have come to realise, that the development of a philanthropic spirit starts early and it is critical that we imbue in our young people a sense of responsibility and duty to one’s community.

We are so fortunate to live in this beautiful state. We are not at war, our children walk to school without fear of stepping on land mines, and we have fresh food and water. But with good fortune comes responsibility; a duty to give back to the community and to those doing it tough.

Ten months ago, Malcolm and I identified 13 inspirational young Western Australians who were committed to serving their community and tried to gain a greater understanding of why they were so generous. Why young Michael Sheldrick was committed to eradicating polio? Why Akram Azimi spent such a large part of his time mentoring indigenous students and why Emerson Leviense was recognised as Volunteer of the Year? It quickly became clear that each youth mentor identified had been imbued with a strong sense of community responsibility at an early age.

On 1 February 2013, following further discussions with the youth mentors - Kids Who Give WA was launched. This program is open to all children aged 12 or under, which encourages them to select a charity or cause - such as Lifeline - to support that charity, and then put that giving plan into action.

There are opportunities for children to visit Government House and to showcase their projects. Whilst we hope that the majority of children will be inspired to get involved because it will make a difference to the lives of others, for those who need a little more incentive, all giving projects will go in the running to win a share in $50,000 worth of prizes.

In February 2013, the Governor and I visited Glengarry Primary School which had organised a fete to raise money for flood victims. The children raised over $1,500. Seeing the children caring about people whose lives had been devastated by flooding and then actively doing something about it, was truly inspirational. Similarly, the ‘Acts of Service’ program developed by Nedlands Primary School is another innovative giving model that can be adopted by schools across Australia.

By common endeavour, the Governor, Kids Who Give WA Youth Mentors and I, hope to work with the many great teachers and youth facilitators in our community to inspire a generation of more thoughtful, caring and giving young Western Australians.

For further information please go to www.kidswhogivewa.com.au.
Adolescence is a critical time of development in terms of social and emotional wellbeing. Young people in their late adolescent and early adult years have much in common with other age groups, but they also have their own particular mental health needs, characteristics, challenges and problems.

Good mental health is fundamental to quality of life and physical health. It contributes to the ability to find satisfying social roles in life and allows people to form positive relationships with others. For young people who are still developing socially, emotionally and physically, the development of a mental health problem or disorder can disrupt and seriously impede their social development, education, family relationships and vocational path.

Mental health issues affect not only the young person, but also their family, carers, friends and the wider community.

Young people in Australia aged 16 to 24 years have the highest prevalence of symptoms of mental health problems and disorders, with many of the major mental health disorders of adult life beginning to escalate during these years. Yet there is evidence that young people do not readily access services to support their mental health needs and that those who do may encounter barriers to ongoing contact.

Who can help?

Depending on your needs, there are many avenues to seek help in WA.

In 2010, Australia’s first Mental Health Commission was established in WA as a key step in creating an effective mental health system which has the individual and their recovery as its central focus. Since its inception, significant progress has been made across WA to improve the quality of services delivered to people – especially young people – with mental health problems and/or mental illness.

Today, many Western Australians are aware of community programs aimed at preventing serious health issues or encouraging people to recognise risk factors and take action. People have become increasingly at ease talking about trying to prevent mental health problems and breaking down stigma and discrimination to improve the lives of people with mental illness.

Activities and initiatives that support mental health in communities have been developed, including Act-Belong-Commit, Aussie Optimism, KidsMatter and MindMatters. Government agencies and community sector organisations are working with each other and with individuals, families and communities to deliver unique combinations of informal and formal supports which meet individual, family and carer needs.

The Mental Health Commission’s vision is for everyone to work together to encourage and support young people who experience mental health problems and/or mental illness. We have made a significant investment in prevention and early intervention, as well as in enhancing mental health services for children and youth in WA, so that they are more accessible, youth-friendly, specialised and integrated.

Where can I find help?

There is a range of specialised clinical and non-clinical mental health services, primary health care services, community based services, including school-based services and voluntary support. Your concerns and needs will be met by professional mental health services in a confidential and supportive environment.

The primary health care sector, including GPs, psychologists, psychiatrists, social workers and allied health workers is ideally placed to identify mental health problems at their early stages including disorders such as anxiety, depression and co-occurring problems like physical problems, health and alcohol and drug problems. There are assessments and screening programs for mental health which can be used to identify people who need early intervention.
If you or someone you know needs help with mental health, the best place to start are your local GPs who are the foundation of primary care. They are medical experts trained to deal with all types of problems including mental illness. For after hours assistance call GP Helpline on 1800 022 222.

There are more than 300 school psychologists working in WA’s public and non-government school system. Parents and students are able to engage with these services directly through their school. A range of services and supports are also provided by school chaplains.

For mental health emergency assessment, support or referrals call Mental Health Emergency Response Line - MHERL.

**MHERL metro – 1300 555 788**

**MHERL Peel – 1800 676 822**

Staffed by mental health professionals, the 24 hour mental health call centre provides an expert and accurate telephone response to acute mental health issues. All callers will be triaged and referred to the most appropriate acute response team according to the level of clinical priority.

**RuralLink - 1800 552 002** - is an after-hours extension of local country mental health services providing easy telephone access to experienced community mental health staff, with a focus on supporting people with mental health issues. The service provides an after-hours contact point for new and existing clients, carers, other community members, health professionals, and community and welfare services within regional areas.

**Community Assessment and Treatment Teams (CATT)** provide metropolitan after-hours integrated crisis and emergency mental health services in the community. The service is responsive and accessible to people experiencing a mental health crisis or emergency and can be accessed via MHERL on 1300 555 788.

**Sexual Assault Resource Centre – 1800 199 888** provides counselling to people who have been sexually assaulted or sexually abused. You can choose to see a female or male counsellor. The counsellor will focus on your feelings and your reactions and together with you will explore strategies to help you to heal and feel in control of your life.

If you feel someone is at risk of harm or in an emergency, call 000.

Other services available to people experiencing mental health problems include:

- Crisis Care Helpline - 1800 199 008
- Kids Help Line - 1800 551 800
- Suicide Call Back Service - 1300 659 467
- Youthbeyondblue - 1300 224 636
- Men’s Line Australia - 1300 789 978
- headspace - www.headspace.org.au
- Reach Out - http://au.reachout.com
- Youth Focus - www.youthfocus.com.au
- Lifeline - online chat at www.lifeline.org.au.

A range of other mental health professionals can also help.

A detailed list with contact details of mental health services and supports for young people is available on the Mental Health Commission’s website at www.mentalhealth.wa.gov.au.

No matter which avenue to use to get help or more information, the important thing is to take the first step. The help you need is out there.
Helping youth get beyond blue

Research shows that around 550,000 people aged 16 to 24 live with depression or anxiety, while 26 per cent experienced a mental disorder in the last year. This is higher than any other age group.

This is why beyondblue, the national depression and anxiety initiative, believes that the mental health of young Australians is particularly important and has a range of programs aimed at them.

A Mission Australia study conducted in 2012 identified the main issues of concern to young people were coping with stress, school or study problems, body image, family conflict and depression.

The study also found that young people believe mental health is an issue of national importance just the same as anti-bullying, education and employment, highlighting that young people are committed to looking after their mental health and wellbeing.

In response to needs of young people, beyondblue funded a successful program the desk, which is a free online program that provides Australian tertiary students with strategies and skills for success and wellbeing during their time at university or TAFE. The desk is for all tertiary students, not just for those identified as having problems.

The desk is made up of strength based activities, modules and quizzes to help students develop problem-solving and self-management skills, including staying calm, relaxing, staying connected and feeling good.

The special feature of the desk is an online Coffee House used for connecting students with other like-minded students, sharing experiences, music, art, recipes and finding great places to eat around campus.

A Get Help section provides links to information, resources and support services for students dealing with a wide range of issues, including mental and physical health.

The desk can be accessed via www.thedesk.org.au and also via links on intranet pages of registered institutions. Students sign-up on their first visit to the program using any email address they choose and log-in for subsequent visits. In addition, the desk toolkit is available online which provides free information about the desk, including the research behind it, what is involved and how you can help promote it. For free copies of the desk toolkit visit www.beyondblue.org.au or email brendan.hallinan@beyondblue.org.au.

beyondblue also sponsor and participate in National Youth Week. The organisation has partnered with every state and territory to run events and activities that promote the Youthbeyondblue call to action - Look for the signs and symptoms of depression and anxiety! Listen to your friends' experiences! Talk about what’s going on! Seek Help together!

Activities will vary from music events, arts and workshops to film making and skateboarding – all tied into the importance of positive mental health and wellbeing, and looking out for your friends.

For more information visit www.youthbeyondblue.com > national-youth-week-2013.
Youth are the focus

Operated by a team of highly trained and skilled psychologists, social workers and occupational therapists, Youth Focus provide a range of early intervention and prevention services free of charge, aimed at supporting vulnerable young people and their families to overcome the issues associated with suicide, depression and self-harm.

Youth Focus is an independent not-for-profit organisation providing therapeutic early intervention services to young people who are showing signs of suicidal ideation, self-harm and depression.

In 2012, around 35 per cent of the young people counselled by Youth Focus were referred from the WA government school system, 35 per cent from families, and 12 per cent were self-referred. A further 15 per cent were referred from other Government agencies including Princess Margaret Hospital, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service, Youthlink, Youth Reach South and the Department of Child Protection.

Youth Focus has been at the forefront in the expansion to the outer metropolitan and southwest regional hubs of Bunbury, Joondalup, Midland and Burswood with planned expansion into Geraldton as well as the Rockingham Kwinana/Mandurah areas.

This means that the organisation will see face to face, 1,500 young people this year and look to build families supported to 200.

Youth Focus is currently expanding and diversifying its services including:

- the opening of a Geraldton office
- launch of the Young Men’s Project with Inspire Foundation, Meerkats and the 7 Network
- operation of headspace Midland with consortium members
- partnership with Telethon Child Health Research Institute and Princess Margaret Hospital in a joint project relating to suicidality and social media issues
- offer of Mental Health First Aid training and customised mental health awareness programs to the corporate, construction and school sectors
- seeking partnership with others in supporting young people suffering with the issues related to mental health and suicide.

Youth Focus works in preferred partnership with Inspire Foundation and the Black Dog Institute to achieve greater coverage and the ability to help more young people in many different ways. This represents a positive step forward for the mental health and wellbeing of our young people.

You can find out more about Youth Focus through their website at www.youthfocus.com.au.
Children, parents and mental illness - am I alone?

An estimated 310,000 Western Australians provide unpaid care and support to a family member or friend who requires help due to illness, disability or frail age.

For most young carers, helping to look after somebody else is just a normal part of life, just like going to school or work. Even though it is a rewarding experience, it can sometimes get a bit too much.

When teenagers who have a parent who has a mental illness were asked to give advice to others in the same situation they said:

• “Take it a day at a time.”
• “Know that knowledge and time will make it easier to manage.”
• “Remember to have time apart sometimes. Time out and a place to escape to can help.”
• “You don’t have to be perfect – you can show it when you’re struggling.”
• “Don’t blame yourself.”
• “Looking after you actually helps your parents.”
• “It’s normal to feel confused about how to help your parent – or to feel responsible, even though you are not.”
• “You may feel alone or be struggling – but there is lots of help out there.”
• “Remember you’re no different to anyone else – you just have a parent with a mental illness.”

As a young carer, the good news is you do not have to do your caring alone. There are plenty of people close by who can provide you with help and support. And best of all – it is FREE!

You may like time out to take a break. Or even talk to someone who understands how you feel.

The Carers WA Young Carer program offers young carers access to specific information, service referrals and counselling, plus social support in the form of camps, school holiday activities and outings. The Young Carer team also visits schools to educate school staff about young carers in the classroom.

As a young carer, it’s really important to look after your own health too. If you are healthy and have time out for yourself, you will be able to handle your extra caring responsibilities a lot better. Sometimes it’s hard to realise when you are not coping as a young carer, because you are too worried or stressed about the person you care for. Below is a list of things to look out for in yourself. If you find that you identify with them in your day to day life, you need to ask for help.

You may need help if…

• You feel depressed, isolated or lonely.
• You feel ‘trapped’ at home.
• You have sore joints or back pain from helping the person you care for.
• You are having trouble making friends at school.

Over 2.9 million Australians provide help and support to a family member or friend, saving the Australian community more than $40 billion per year.
So, where can you get help?
The Mental Health Commission funds a number of initiatives for Children of Parents with a Mental Illness through Mental Health Carers Arafmi WA and Carers WA.

Resources have been developed to provide information for children, parents, partners, carers, family and friends and are designed to foster better mental health outcomes for children of parents with a mental illness, reduce stigma and help individuals, friends, family and workers in a range of settings.

It is important to know that you are not alone and that there are other young people who have a parent with mental illness. It is good to have someone to talk to, someone you can trust. You didn’t cause your parent’s illness and it is not up to you to make them better. Don’t be ashamed or embarrassed about mental illness – it’s just like a physical illness and anyone can have one.

For assistance, information and advice about looking after yourself, coping with your caring role, supports you can access and much more visit the following websites or join them on Facebook:

  * Young Carers [www.youngcarerswa.asn.au](http://www.youngcarerswa.asn.au)
  * Carers WA - [www.carerswa.asn.au](http://www.carerswa.asn.au)
  * Arafmi WA - [www.arafmi.asn.au](http://www.arafmi.asn.au)
  * COPMI- [www.copmi.net.au](http://www.copmi.net.au).

There are numerous reasons why people like to volunteer. Some do it to make new friends, some to increase their social skills, while others want to learn something new or gain valuable work experience.

But most people do it because they want make a positive difference in the community.

“Volunteering keeps people in regular contact with others and helps to build their skills, as well as confidence, self-esteem and resilience” says 22 year old Yolexis Hernandez, Mentally Healthy WA’s volunteer.

As part of her volunteer work for the Act-Belong-Commit campaign at Mentally Healthy WA, Yolexis coordinates a competition in which young Western Australians, aged 12 -25, are invited to explain how volunteering helps them to stay mentally healthy.

“The aim is to get 150 words or a 45 second video which will showcase positive volunteering experiences and engagement in community work,” says Yolexis.

“Everyone has different motivations to volunteer. Some people get a buzz out of knowing that they have made a difference to people’s lives. For others, volunteering gives them a chance to step outside their comfort zone and challenge themselves. Others are passionate about a cause and want to contribute to making a positive change in the community. All of these things contribute to good mental health.”

For the 2013 adult and youth campaign, entries close on Friday 19 April 2013.

The finalists will be uploaded to the Act-Belong-Commit Facebook page which will invite everyone to vote for their favourite entry.

The youth entry that has the most votes on Monday 6 May will receive a $100 iTunes gift voucher.

To find out more about the competition, or to download an entry form, phone 9266 4648 or visit [www.actbelongcommit.org.au](http://www.actbelongcommit.org.au).

To find out about volunteering in your local area, contact your local volunteer resource centre or visit [www.volunteeringwa.org.au](http://www.volunteeringwa.org.au).
Talking about alcohol and other drugs

Talking openly about alcohol and drug use and building relationships is an important part of working with young people to address their addictions.

Holyoake’s Adolescent program helps young people aged 13-17 years to address their problematic use of alcohol and other drugs. It encourages individuals to develop their own identities, to stay safe and reduce the impact harmful substances can have on their lives.

“One of the comments most often received from young people is they are grateful for a place where they can come and talk openly and honestly without being judged,” says Gary Bailey, Program leader at Holyoake.

“Young people can talk confidentially about their personal situations, and find new ways of moving forward to happy and healthy futures,” he said.

DrugARM CEO, Debra Zanella said their street outreach program Street Van provides information, support and referrals to at-risk young people in identified hot-spots.

“Our volunteers and staff make contact with young people, offering a hot drink and creating an informal environment where young people can talk about alcohol and other drug use,” said Debra.

“Although many of the young people we meet are vulnerable to alcohol and other drug use, we find that they respond really well when we take the time to develop a trusting relationship.”
Both services offer a unique approach that recognises the impact of alcohol and other drug problems on whole families as well as friends. They provide an extensive range of counselling and support programs for young people affected by alcohol, drugs and other addictions.

“With the right support and positive relationships, there’s a real opportunity for young people to choose differently,” said Debra.

“We offer a safe and accepting place to talk about what’s happening to them, as well as information and strategies on how to quit, cut down and reduce the harm of alcohol and/or drug use.”

For more information about Holyoake call 9416 4444, email clientservices@holyoake.org.au or visit www.holyoake.org.au. For more information about DrugARM WA call 9497 9498 or visit www.drugarmwa.org.au.

For information about services for young people in WA or to learn more about the effects of drugs, visit Drug Aware at www.drugaware.com.au or contact the Alcohol and Drug Information Service (ADIS) on 9442 5000, 24 hours, seven days a week.

Did you know a Live Chat service is now available across all three Drug and Alcohol Office websites, for people looking for free, online alcohol and drug information, counselling, support and referral.

Live Chat is operated by the Alcohol and Drug Information Service (ADIS), free of charge for residents of Western Australia, and is operated 7 days a week, between the hours of 7am and 1pm.

The Live Chat option is in addition to the 24/7 telephone counselling and support service ADIS provide on 9442 5000 or 1800 198 024 (country callers toll-free).

If you would like to know more about the Live Chat service call ADIS, or check it out at:

www.drugaware.com.au
www.alcoholthinkagain.com.au
www.dao.health.wa.gov.au
Kids do matter!

A pioneering national project that builds the resilience of young children in kindergartens and long day care and reduces their risk of experiencing mental health problems has delivered significant results.

During 2009 and 2010 KidsMatter Australian Early Childhood Mental Health Initiative was piloted in over 100 preschool and long day care services across Australia. Selected pilot services represented a broad cross-section of early childhood education and care providers.

An independent evaluation was undertaken by Flinders University of South Australia and funded by beyondblue found that KidsMatter Early Childhood has improved the mental health and wellbeing of children, helped staff care better for children and improved links with mental health professionals.

beyondblue CEO Kate Carnell AO said the evaluation confirms the positive impact on thousands of children and early childhood educators across Australia.

“These results show that KidsMatter Early Childhood is working, which is incredibly important for this generation of children,” she said.

“This is the first initiative in Australia which specifically tackles the challenges of developing good mental health in early childhood. It not only helps children, but educators also, with many reporting they are better able to support healthy child development as a result.”

KidsMatter Early Childhood promotes positive mental health by developing children’s social and coping skills, providing parents with resources to support parenting, and helping parents and educators to respond effectively to children experiencing difficulties.

The research identified a number of positive outcomes:

• one in six children identified as experiencing mental health difficulties at the commencement of the project were no longer classified as experiencing difficulties at its conclusion

• staff capacity to recognise and assist children experiencing mental health difficulties increased 20 per cent

• the project significantly improved educators’ knowledge regarding young children’s mental health

• the project improved the quality of educators’ relationships with children in their care.

KidsMatter Early Childhood is a continuous improvement framework that supports early childhood education and care services to promote children’s mental health and wellbeing through:

• professional development and implementation support that informs planning and daily practice

• assisting educators to recognise when children may be at risk of experiencing mental health difficulties

• a greater understanding of pathways that will access professional intervention.

Early childhood educators play a key role in children’s development by addressing protective factors that promote positive mental health and wellbeing.

Photo of children using tablets by kind permission of the Department of Education.
KidsMatter Early Childhood is the first step in the promotion, prevention and early intervention continuum that starts at birth and continues through to adulthood. Along with early childhood education and care services, the KidsMatter framework can also be implemented in schools.

Approximately 800 Australian primary schools have been involved in KidsMatter Primary, and the number is growing every week. It is funded to be rolled out to 2000 schools by June 2014.

There are different ways to get involved, depending on whether you represent a school, early childhood service, are a carer for children, or a health and community professional.

To find out more about KidsMatter Early Childhood visit www.kidsmatter.edu.au which also features the evaluation report summary, FAQs, resources and useful links.

Early Psychosis Youth Centre

Young people experiencing early psychosis will have access to a new world-leading Early Psychosis Youth Centre.

In Australia, young people aged 16 to 24 years have the highest prevalence of mental illness in any one year of any population group, with 26 per cent experiencing a mental health problem and/or mental illness each year. However, less than one quarter of this group will access help.

WA’s Commissioner for Mental Health, Eddie Bartnik said the new Early Psychosis Youth Centre (EPYC) is an important part of youth mental health reforms consistent with the strategic directions of the Mental Health Commission as contained in Mental Health 2020: Making it personal and everybody’s business.

“We know that asking for help is hard,” said Mr Bartnik. “When you are young, you are challenged to think about who you are, who you want to be and who you want to be with. And when stressful experiences are thrown in the mix, things can get tough.”

“Young people with psychosis struggle to access scarce specialist services and often face lengthy delays between the first experience of symptoms, diagnosis and services actually being delivered.”

“Having access to innovative youth early psychosis services will ensure more young people and their families get the services they need, when they need them,” he said.

What is early psychosis?

Occurring most commonly in late adolescence or early adulthood, the onset of psychotic symptoms is often extremely disturbing for a young person and their family members. Research shows that the immediate and future harm associated with an episode of psychosis can be reduced by effective, early intervention and assessment.

“This is the first centre of its kind in WA and once operational, it will provide a service for up to 600 young people per year aged 15 to 24 years who experience early psychosis. Funding of $15.3 million over three years was provided by the State Government. Establishing this EPYC will ensure young people have access to early intervention. It will also contribute to reducing the negative impact of an episode of psychosis on young people, their families and carers,” said Mr Bartnik.

The EPYC is an innovative and exciting initiative that will deliver significant long-term mental health outcomes for the WA community in general and young people in particular. It will be modelled on the early psychosis model of care developed by Orygen Youth Health in Victoria.

The Mental Health Commission is negotiating funding arrangements with the Commonwealth Government for a second EPYC in WA.

For regular updates visit www.mentalhealth.wa.gov.au.
Culturally and linguistically diverse

Integrated Services Centres

Australia is known as a multicultural country because people from all over the world come to live here. For refugees who now call Australia home it’s a fresh start, but it’s also a big adjustment.

Coming to Australia is only the first hurdle. After that, it can take time to get used to a different way of life and to deal with often traumatic past experiences. That’s where the Integrated Services Centres (ISC) try to help.

Two centres established at Koondoola and Parkwood Primary Schools, provide culturally appropriate support to children who are refugees and their families with settlement and mental health needs.

Koondoola ISC Senior Social Worker, Tessa Scholefield, joined the team in 2011 to provide individual and group therapy for children who have been identified to be experiencing difficulties with their emotional wellbeing and mental health.

“Most of the kids come from war-torn countries and their refugee journey is often very traumatic,” said Ms Scholefield.

“Some people may spend up to 17 years in a refugee camp. They come here wanting to live somewhere safe, because of poverty, war or violence in their home country. However, when families arrive in Australia they meet with a new culture, a new language, new schools, new houses, new foods and lots of new people.”

Ms Scholefield believes this transitional time can be very difficult and overwhelming and a lot of work is needed to help children to understand and manage their emotions so that they can make friends, enjoy and learn at school and learn how to live in their new world. Art, music, stories and play are used to help children with this transition.

“I work alongside teachers at Koondoola Primary school to see how each child is progressing in the classroom. I also work with families so there is support in the home. I can refer families to other appropriate community services, for example, for parenting skills or counselling,” said Ms Scholefield.

“I feel very privileged to work with these children and their families and I am inspired by their resilience.”

Mandis Whitton, a Multicultural Liaison Worker at the Koondoola ISC, offers practical support to 65 per cent of the families of students who attend the Intensive English Centres.

“These services include advocacy for families with their ongoing tenancy issues with private real estate agents or Homeswest and interacting with Government organisations such as Centrelink and Medicare. We also help with understanding systems of daily living such as access to services, household maintenance, financial management in paying bills and living expenses. We facilitate groups to empower the community,” said Ms Whitton.

“I also facilitate education and information groups on issues of resettlement and other identified needs, including physical, emotional and mental wellbeing. The support offered to these families is long-term and ensures that families basic needs are met which then enables therapeutic intervention to be appropriate and effective,” she said.

The initiative is a joint partnership project between the Mental Health Commission, the Department of Education and the Edmund Rice Centre, a non-government incorporated, charitable organisation that supports humanitarian entrants through the provision of educational programs and community development activities.

For more information visit ercm.org.au/programs_Integrated_Services.html or contact the Mental Health Commission on 6272 1200.

Children from the Integrated Services Centre
What is a...

RESPECTFUL RELATIONSHIP

WHEN IT COMES TO RELATIONSHIPS

YOU HAVE TO HAVE RESPECT

It’s about knowing where to draw the line, making that clear difference between what’s OK and what’s NOT OK.

“WHY IS CONSENT SO IMPORTANT?”

It’s a crime to have sex without consent. To give consent you must be:

Ready
(16+)

Willing
(you get to choose)

Able
(not drunk, stoned, asleep or unconscious)

“CAN I TRUST EVERYONE WHO I CHAT TO ONLINE?”

The awesome guy or girl you are chatting to online could be 50 years old. It is easy for people to pretend to be someone they are not online. So...

You can NOT trust everyone you talk to online.

“WHAT ARE THE ISSUES WITH SEXTING?”

Sending sexually explicit photos & text can end up on lots of people’s phones and on the internet.

WHAT’S OK AND WHAT’S NOT OK

Is it OK to have your own opinion? YES!

Is it OK to start touching then say stop? YES!

NEED INFO & ADVICE ON RELATIONSHIPS

CONTACT:

respectfulrelationships.org.au
1800 MY LINE (1800 695 463)

If you get sexually assaulted contact:
SARC emergency line
08 9340 1828 (24 hours) or 1800 199 888
kemh.health.wa.gov.au/services/sarc

Anna’s Story

“I thought everything was great between us... then things slowly changed. He started trying to tell me who I could hang out with, what subjects I should take at school, even what to wear! He was my first boyfriend so I didn’t really have anything to compare it to, but I just didn’t feel ok about all this. I didn’t know how to stand up for myself so I put up with it for a while.

I knew things weren’t right when he tried to make me do stuff at a party when I’d told him I wasn’t ready for sex. I didn’t want my mum to think badly of him... but I spoke to some friends and looked up some info on this website about respectful relationships. It was sad but I knew I didn’t’ want to be in a relationship like that. It took me a while to get over it, but I’m with a guy who respects me now and I’m proud of myself that I made that choice.”
If you or someone you know needs help with mental health, the best place to start is your local GP or call after hours GP Helpline on 1800 022 222. A range of other mental health professionals can also help.

If you feel someone is at risk of harm or in an emergency call 000.

For mental health emergency assessment, support and referral call Mental Health Emergency Response Line (MHERL)

- MHERL metro - 1300 555 788
- MHERL Peel - 1800 676 822
- RuralLink - 1800 552 002

Alternatively, go to your nearest public hospital emergency department.

If you need someone to talk to contact:

- Crisis Care Helpline 1800 199 008
- Kids Help Line - 1800 551 800
- Lifeline - 13 11 14 or online chat at www.lifeline.org.au
- Suicide Call Back Service - 1300 659 467
- Youthbeyondblue 1300 224 636
- Men’s Line Australia - 1300 789 978
- headspace - www.headspace.org.au
- Reach Out - au.reachout.com
- Youth Focus - www.youthfocus.com.au

For a detailed list of mental health services and supports visit the Mental Health Commission’s website at www.mentalhealth.wa.gov.au