

Mentally Healthy WA Management Committees...

Perth:



Perth Management Committee

The Perth-based M H WA management group has been meeting since August 2004. The management group has advised on the selection of rural towns, the logo and brand for the campaign and on the implementation of the campaign. The group includes key stakeholders, funders, the project team and two consumer representatives. Ms Lorraine Powell says: *"On first hearing about this committee I was very excited as while the awareness of the prevalence of mental illness and the disabling effect it has on lives is widely known, there is really nothing done in regard to prevention in the first instance. The benefits of me joining this committee, as someone who experiences the distress associated with a mental illness has been immeasurable. I realised that I, too, needed to take action around the ABC message in my own life and so I did. This has had benefits to my own health and has meant I have expanded my own network incredibly.*

The unfortunate part of this project is the lack of capacity to enable it within the metropolitan area. I have sent the message to the policy makers I have contact with on this valuable project and the benefits to (not) being a consumer. I am constantly encouraged at our meetings by the partnership and collaborative work methods by all parties involved, and the incredible level of communication and support to the staff working in our most isolated environments in our vast state. This is encouraging to see not all services are only gearing to acute care but to true community spirit, buoyed along by this project. I am honoured and privileged to be a part of this important work".

Dr Lisa Wood says *"It is a sign of a worthwhile project and a well functioning management group when you enjoy the meetings, are happy to respond to any email queries or requests for input that arise between meetings, give your time voluntarily and proudly tell others about the project when opportunity arises. Having been part of various management and advisory groups for a range of projects over the years, it is refreshing to participate in one that is so egalitarian in its approach, affirming of successes, reflective on 'lessons learnt' and truly encompassing of consumer and other perspectives".*

Kalgoorlie-Boulder: Kalgoorlie's management committee has played a vital role in getting the Mentally Healthy WA campaign off the ground. The committee has been key in promoting the A-B-C message through local networks within the community and all committee members bring different expertise and experiences to the A-B-C campaign. The Committee consists of a number of key organisations including WA Country Health Services, the Goldfields Women's Health Care Centre, Dept. Sport & Recreation, Centrecare, Division of General Practitioners, the YMCA and Investing in Our Community. The group meets every two months to discuss updates, progress and ideas.

Natalie Ord, Coordinator for Goldfields Women's Health Care Centre offers a great deal of support and expertise to the management committee, especially when it comes to women's health in the Goldfields.

Natalie recently volunteered her own time at the Mentally Healthy WA display at the Community Fair in March and talked to a number of community members about ways to improve their mental wellbeing.

Natalie explains that *"being involved in the community is essential to everyone's mental wellbeing as well as helping the whole community feel more connected as a group".* She says *"I belong to the local Dog Club, do regular exercise and regularly meet my friends during the week for a coffee and chat-up because I really believe doing things like this can do wonders for your mental wellbeing so I strongly agree with the ABC concept".* Natalie says the A-B-C campaign has *"developed a number of positive partnerships with some groups in Kalgoorlie, especially young people, and hopefully we will see the concept grow better and better in months to come!"*



Natalie Ord – Kalgoorlie Boulder

Karratha:

The Karratha Management Committee is represented by a range of organisations with representatives offering valuable advice and input into the campaign. The group work together well, with the project objectives fitting in with their roles.

Rod Jones, Manager for Department of Sport and Recreation, Pilbara says that in his position *"Increasing participation in community groups works in well"*.

Shantell McClenaughan, Community Development Officer for Shire of Roebourne says *"the community wide approach works in well with my role and also educating the community on what mental health is, as opposed to mental illness"*

Geraldton:

The Geraldton A-B-C Management Committee is comprised of five individuals who were hand picked from the community due to their dynamic and creative personalities, their invaluable expertise and well established networks, their commitment to building community connectedness, and their interest in mental health promotion (as opposed to mental illness).

Our members have been integral in the initiation and planning of some of our key activities which include: Dilmah Tea - Get to Know Your Neighbour Day, Healthy Workplace Project, Get Fit & Healthy Kit, Volunteer's Expo, and the Youth Service Providers Conference. They have also played an important part in raising the profile and promoting the Mentally Healthy WA message in and around Geraldton.

Jo Blayney a A-B-C management committee member says *"The opportunity to share networks & resources with other members and involvement in this committee & contribute to a positive community program"*.

Esperance: The Esperance MHW steering committee consists of a number of local community members who have a vested interest in the M H WA project and who are influential and dedicated individuals within the local community. The steering committee helps to provide strategic direction and consultation re A-B-C projects and events in Esperance. Participation and involvement of committee members has been both encouraging and difficult at times but continues to grow in many different ways.

Kath Donovan, Strategic Club Development Officer, Esperance District Recreation Association says "Esperance District Recreation Association (EDRA) became involved with the Mentally Healthy WA Campaign as we believe we can contribute to a mentally healthier community through our connections and involvement in sport and sporting clubs. The Act Belong Commit concept to improve your mental health and the health of the community is very important in sporting clubs and organisations. Firstly, we Act on the desire to become involved in a particular sport, then a Commitment is made to that sport either by the individual or team. Once we have established a team or sport to Belong to we can then develop as a person growing in confidence and self esteem, a greater sense of meaning and satisfaction is achieved. The promotion of the campaign through our regular newsletters, health forums and club workshops has helped to extend the Mentally Healthy



Esperance Management Committee

WA message. I feel that with the aims of both EDRA and Mentally Healthy WA, to improve the health, fitness and well being of our community, we can work together to strengthen both campaigns."

Albany: The Albany management committee has met three times, and has been a valuable resource for the project - both in terms of input into the steering of the project and also in terms becoming strong advocates of the project. As revealed by an activity conducted by the project officer at the most recent committee meeting, all committee members have been 'doing their ABC' in their own workplaces and community groups. There are excellent examples of how members include Act, Belong, Commit in discussions with staff and at executive levels.

Our newest management committee member, David Schober, made our hearts sing at his first attendance recently, for he had already started placing some of the information the project officer has been sending via email, in his workplace (CALM) and incorporating into his role as the Occ Health & Safety Rep! He has completed a personal profile which can be found on the website - http://www.mentallyhealthywa.org.au/info/albany/general/profile_david_schober.pdf.

Davis says *"I enjoy a very active lifestyle where running, swimming and team sports feature strongly in my weekly routine. Together with my family we also enjoy regular walks and social outings with friends and extended family. I believe involvement in physical activity allows me to cope with stressful situations more effectively as my self-esteem, physical and mental fitness is greatly enhanced"*. David says *"Belonging to a number of associations has broadened my professional and social networks and made settling into a new town nine years ago much easier"*.

Northam: Northam's Management Group has been instrumental in the development of the M H WA project in the Avon Valley. The diverse range of organisational representatives have strengthened the links to the community and provide many opportunities for collaboration.

Wheatbelt Regional Officer for DSR, Belinda Kenney says *"The Department of Sport and Recreation has found working with Act-Belong-Commit to be a successful partnership for improving the health, well-being (both physical and mental) and community capacity of Northam. We look forward to more exciting events and activities in conjunction with A-B-C"*.

Chantelle Jeffrey, Acting Manger for Wheatbelt Public Health Unit, says Act-Belong-Commit means *"Getting back to basics. Simple, everyday strategies to live a better life"*.



Northam's Management Committee

Find out more about the Mentally Healthy WA Campaign

For more information about our regional activities, project officers, advertisements and local press articles, please check out our web site or contact our Project Team in Perth on 08 9266 4648 or ray.james@curtin.edu.au.