

**Gold Coast Primary Health Network  
NEEDS ASSESSMENTS 2020  
NATIONAL PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT**



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GOLD COAST

An Australian Government Initiative

# NATIONAL PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT

In June 2018, the Commonwealth government announced funding for national psychosocial support measures for people with severe mental illness who are not more appropriately supported through the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS), to be matched by State and Territory governments through bilateral agreements.

The Commonwealth component of the NPS measure is being implemented through purpose specific funding to Primary Health Networks (PHN) to commission these services. The PHN commissioned services will need to be implemented in a flexible way to complement the State and Territory funded psychosocial support.

People with a severe mental illness can access a number of Commonwealth funded psychosocial support services that provide support which aim to help people increase their ability to do everyday activities.

Psychosocial support can be provided individually or in a group and might focus on one or more of the following areas:

- Developing social skills and friendships
- Building relationships with family
- Managing money
- Finding and looking after a home
- Building skills and qualifications
- Developing work goals
- Staying physically well, including exercise
- Support with drug alcohol and smoking issues
- Building life skills including confidence and resilience



# NATIONAL PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT

## Local health needs and service issues

- Short-term, non-clinical, recovery-focused psychosocial support services for people of all ages
- The most frequently identified areas of unmet psychosocial needs include:
  - obtaining employment/volunteering opportunities
  - managing physical health issues
  - engaging in a fulfilling social life
  - participating in daytime activities
- Limited engagement in services with people who
  - identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander
  - are from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds
  - identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer, asexual, pansexual and others (LGBTIQAP+)
- Diverse workforce required including peer support workers, life coaches and support workers able to provide client-centred, trauma-informed, culturally appropriate, and recovery-orientated support in both outreach and centre-based settings
- Limited office space available for psychosocial and clinical services to collocate
- Desire for improved service coordination for individuals with severe mental illness and associated psychosocial functional impairment, while considering supports available across levels of governments, the community, and relevant sectors
- Increased awareness of psychosocial services in primary care to support complementary use with other primary health interventions
- Efficient referral pathways required to increase accessibility to new psychosocial services

## Key findings

- Individual and group psychosocial support and rehabilitation services for clients and their carers/families that is focussed on building capacity and connectedness at times when it is most needed rather than providing ongoing support
- Greater support and intervention are required to prevent escalation of mental health conditions to avoid crisis and hospital presentations
- Peer workers are acknowledged by both providers and consumers as important supports for people with severe mental health needs, however the present workforce is small
- It is important for consumers to feel empowered to be involved in decision-making about their care and providers have a key role to act as facilitators to enable this
- General Practice is a key point of contact for people with mental health needs, however many GPs feel they do not have the information and resources required to assist patients with severe mental illness to access psychosocial supports

## Prevalence, service usage and other data

The total number of people with severe mental health issues in the Gold Coast region is around 20,000 People. The potential cohort of Gold Coast residents who may be eligible for the National Psychosocial Support measure is estimated to be approximately 4,900.

Please refer to Severe and Complex needs assessment for further information.

## Service System

Non-clinical psychosocial services	Number in GCPHN Region	Distribution	Capacity Discussion
Employment and volunteering	A number of federally-funded employment providers support clients with a disability and these providers also support clients whose primary disability is a mental health issue	Office locations are based across the Gold Coast	Mental Health NGOs provider support and programs for individuals to engage with employment and volunteering, however, most do not have specific programs dedicated to this area.
Social life/company	9 services (8 are NGO providers, 1 is an Aboriginal Medical Service, 1 is an Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander service, 1 is a culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) service, 2 are peer- based providers, A number employ peer workers).	Programs are a combination of outreach and centre-based activities.  3 in Southport, 1 in Arundel, 1 in Mermaid Beach, 1 in Varsity Lakes, 1 in Miami, 2 in Robina, 1 in Oxenford, 1 in Bilinga (11 listed due to multiple locations).	Education programs and groups are run by various NGOs aimed at supporting consumers and carers.
Physical health (non-clinical)	8 (7 NGO providers and 1 community-based program, "Active and Healthy," funded by City of Gold Coast with 15 providers available)	Activities funded by City of Gold Coast are located across the entire region.	Active and Healthy Providers who have undertaken Mental Health First Aid Training are noted in the listing on City of Gold Coast website.
Daytime activities	5 providers (3 NGO providers, 1 private provider, 1 community-based program funded by City of Gold Coast with 15 providers available)	Distribution is predominately in Palm Beach, Southport and Currumbin.  Activities funded by City of Gold Coast are located across the entire region.	

## Consultation

A consultation session regarding potential non-clinical psychosocial services was held in August 2018 and included contributions from twenty-one attendees from the Gold Coast Primary Health Network (GCPHN), the GCPHN Consumer and Carer Advisory and Multidisciplinary Advisory Committees and representatives from Primary and Community Care Services.

The top three ideas from the consultation have been included for four of the five most common unmet needs identified by over 700 local service users who experience severe mental health issues. Psychological distress was identified within the top five unmet need however support for this issue is not considered to be of a psychosocial nature.

Potential psychosocial services to address the need for employment and volunteering opportunities include:

- linking people into a Sheila Shack/Men's Shed
- establishing a work experience program with local employers
- the provision of info/support to connect with local volunteering organisations/businesses that already provide vocational skills that lead to a qualification/certification.

A fulfilling social life is an unmet need frequently identified by local service users. The consultation group suggested several options including:

- social groups (art, games, sports, board games and/or social media-based groups
- teatime/meal sharing (preparation, serving, eating together)
- men's shed.

Psychosocial support to assist people with severe mental illness to manage physical health issues could include:

- yoga, meditation and/or tai chi classes
- walking/active groups (beach walks, dog walks, hill walks, adventure activities)
- nutrition education facilitated by a registered dietician and including diet plans and cooking groups.

Participation in meaningful daytime activities has also been raised an unmet need. The consultation group has suggested the possibility of:

- establishing meal preparation service
- self-care and daily living education/programs/workshops that focus of wellbeing including sleep, nutrition and exercise
- mentors/coaches to assist and set daily achievable tasks/schedules.

### **Service Provider Feedback**

- No point of entry for self-referrals- referrals via GP/Psychiatrist or Hospital and Health Services

Gold Coast Primary Health Network  
Primary Care Gold Coast (ABN 47152953092), trading as the Gold Coast Primary Health Network.

Level 1, 14 Edgewater Court, Robina 4226 | PO Box 3576 Robina Town Centre QLD 4230  
P: 07 5635 2455 | F: 07 5635 2466 | E: [info@gcphn.com.au](mailto:info@gcphn.com.au) | [www.gcphn.org.au](http://www.gcphn.org.au)

“Building one world class health system for the Gold Coast.”  
Gold Coast Primary Health Network gratefully acknowledges the financial and other support  
from the Australian Government Department of Health

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