Health Matters

Health Consumers' Council (WA) Inc. Magazine

July 2020

Navigating WA's health system

Page 6

Coping, connection and support

Page 14

Experts by experience

Page 16

How peak bodies pivoted during COVID-19

Page 11

Self-Advocacy & Peer Suport

HEALTH CONSUMERS' COUNCIL

Contents

HEALTH CONSUMERS' COUNCIL

Health Consumers' Council

GPO Box C134, Perth WA 6839

Phone (08) 9221 3422 Fax (08) 9221 5435 **Country Freecall** 1800 620 780

Email info@hconc.org.au **Web** www.hconc.org.au

ABN 87 841 350 116

Cover image: Stock

As WA cautiously relaxes restrictions and people venture back out into the world, we welcome you to our July edition of Health Matters.

There have been a lot of big changes in WA and around the world since our last magazine came out, and we recognise that for many it has been an incredibly challenging time (and will continue to be so, as the risks of COVID remain and the country slowly recovers). It's very likely that the 'normal' we are returning to will look very different for many of us, and that the impacts of Coronavirus will continue to be felt for a long time. Recent outbreaks in Victoria and New South Wales highlight this all too well.

Many people have begun taking a more active role in their health and wellbeing in recent months, and we hope the resources in this edition will help to empower you to make informed decisions around your own health.

It feels like the right time to be releasing our Self-Advocacy and Peer Support edition of Health Matters into the world now. We've put an emphasis on mental health in this edition, including proactive ways to look after your mental wellbeing. The pandemic has been challenging on many levels and has abruptly changed what day-to-day life looks like for most of us. More than ever it's important to stay connected with friends, family and community, and take steps to prioritise safely doing things that bring us joy, and nourish our bodies and souls, to help cope with all the changes.

For us at HCC, it's all about moving forward, rather than returning to 'normal'. We're looking at what we've learned over the last few months and will be working out how we can include some of the new ways of working and engaging we've invested in during recent times. We don't know exactly how this will look just yet, but it's exciting to think of a more flexible but more connected workplace and community.

We've seen a lot of value and opportunity come from hosting online events in the last couple of months, so this is something we want to continue to do. What we're hoping for is a good mix of ways to engage and connect so that our activities remain accessible to consumers all across WA.

As we continue to forge a path forward we will keep you updated on our work surrounding COVID-19 through our website at **www.hconc.org.au/issues/covid-19**

PIP BRENNAN

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

HEALTH CONSUMERS' COUNCIL

> *Communities have grown through the wisdom of lived experience, embraced opportunities to better understand others, and to demonstrate resilience in trying times.*

With every challenge comes an opportunity

Consumer perspectives, involvement and advocacy in the time of COVID-19

THE CONSUMER AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT PROGRAM (PART OF THE WESTERN AUSTRALIAN HEALTH TRANSLATION NETWORK)

WAHTN
Western Australian Health Translation Network

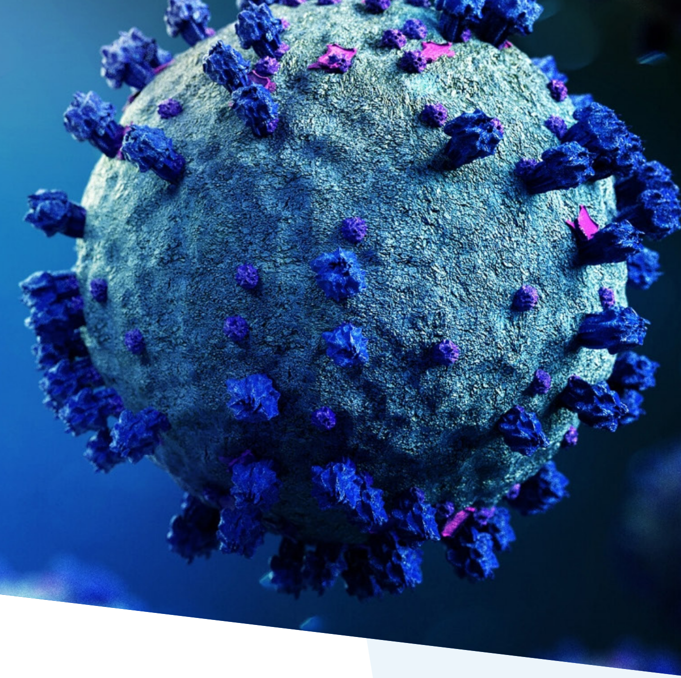
Consumer and Community Involvement Program
Your Voice in Health Research

It's no surprise life in the time of COVID-19 has brought new and previously unforeseen challenges. However, with every challenge comes potential opportunities – opportunities to embrace change, to find new and more efficient ways of doing things, to advocate for ourselves and those around us, and to build greater resilience as individuals and as a community.

The Consumer and Community Involvement Program (previously known as the Consumer and Community Health Research Network) has embraced the challenges and opportunities of COVID-19 in order to continue working to serve and support health consumers and the research community during this time. At CCI Program we:

- Bring together consumers, community members and researchers to make decisions about health research priorities, policy and practice,
- Support consumer and community involvement to become standard practice in health research, and
- Promote the community voice in health research through our services, resources, events and training programs.

Our support for the health and safety of our communities has seen us take a broad approach to delivering our services during this time. To make sure consumer and community voices are heard in COVID-19 research, we put out a call to establish a COVID-19 *Consumer Representative Pool*. The response from consumers wishing to contribute to this important research was heartening. Consumers indicated a desire to advocate for their own health as well as make a meaningful impact on the Western Australian community through their contribution to the research process. Through the COVID-19 *Consumer Representative Pool* we've linked consumers with researchers across numerous



COVID-19

projects. This ensures consumers have their voices heard, their experience and perspectives are taken into consideration in the development of research, and that they can advocate on behalf of their community.

In addition to the COVID-19 *Consumer Representative Pool*, we conducted a survey to assess community perspectives and values in relation to COVID-19 research. Over 200 respondents completed the survey. People were asked about the importance and their involvement in COVID-19 research, together with suggestions about the best ways to be invited to join research projects and clinical trials. This information was not available to emergency staff, researchers and health workers prior to the COVID-19 pandemic so it's an exciting next step to ensure the best services can be provided to consumers. It was exciting to see nearly all of those surveyed agreed that COVID-19 research was important and valuable, with many expressing having a voice on the ethics and the process of research was essential.

COVID-19 has also presented a chance for our communities to understand more about what it means to be 'well' and to advocate for our health and the health of others. A publication on the mental health impacts of COVID-19 suggests there are challenges. With people experiencing anxiety or fear for their own health or the health of others, this can impact on normal routine and functioning because of social isolation. COVID-19 is providing a chance to talk more about social isolation and the effect of not being able to meet or get together with others, as well as a fear of being 'vulnerable' to COVID-19. It's good that health researchers are wanting to know more about the effects of COVID-19 on our mental health and 'connectedness' with our community. We look forward to hearing more about this in the future.

We may be able to look back and see the 'all in this together' thinking may have sparked a new form of advocacy and care for ourselves and others because we've had to change the way we act in order to look after the health of our communities.

CCI Program has been pleased to see consumer and community involvement being a 'must have' component of COVID-19 research projects and we are hopeful this will highlight the immense value of having consumers contribute their lived experience to research and priority setting in health care.

Debra Langridge is the Head of the CCI Program and is responsible for implementing a state-wide consumer and community involvement program across the WA Health Translation Network's partner organisations

There's much to listen to and gain from the past months where life has been so very different. Communities have grown through the wisdom of lived experience, embraced opportunities to better understand others, and to demonstrate resilience in trying times. We're optimistic consumer and community involvement in research, within the CCI Program and across WA, will emerge stronger after the COVID-19 crisis to a place where broader and more accessible advocacy and involvement is the norm. We look forward to keeping you up to date with research opportunities and developments.

CHECK OUT OUR WEBSITE FOR MORE INFORMATION:

www.cciprogram.org

Navigating WA's health system

Information and tools for self-advocacy

Self-advocacy is the ability to speak-up for yourself and the things that are important to you. For many people, seeking health care can be an unfamiliar or daunting experience, especially after a new diagnosis, becoming pregnant, or encountering a short-term injury requiring new tests and treatments. Being able to advocate for yourself begins with seeking information and asking questions so you can make decisions with your healthcare team. But it's a foreign world, and we don't know what we don't know. The Five questions to ask your doctor can help you get started when you are in the very early stages – simply asking "do I need this text/treatment?" and "what happens if I do nothing?" can be very enlightening.

We've put together a full list of resources to help you advocate for your own health on our website at www.hconc.org.au/consumer/being-involved-in-your-own-health/self-advocacy-resources

We also have a selection of resources to help newly arrived migrants, people who are unfamiliar with the WA health system, and/or those who do not have English as a first language, to understand the WA health system. You can find these resources at www.hconc.org.au/information-about-the-wa-health-system-2

We acknowledge that those with chronic conditions or long-standing illnesses will be veterans of the system, but it is still very important to be able to ask for what you need and want, share your thoughts, feelings and experiences, and be involved in your treatment decisions to get the best health outcomes.

Informed consent to treatment

Informed consent in healthcare means you have been given understandable and clear information so you can make the right decisions about your healthcare.

Consent is your agreement for a healthcare professional to provide you with treatment and care, including any tests, medicines, treatments or procedures you agree to.

Before you give your consent, make sure:

- your doctor has explained all of the options available to you
- that any risks, and the likelihood of those risks, are explained
- you understand the benefits
- you understand the costs involved
- you understand the purpose of the action you are consenting to
- you understand any ongoing change you'll need to make to your lifestyle

If you are not sure at any stage, be sure to ask your doctor.

It's OK to ask your doctor for additional help to make an informed decision. You can ask for:

- an interpreter for the language you feel most confident speaking
- information to be provided in different formats (such as in plain English writing, with pictures or through video)
- a friend, family member, or support person to discuss your options with
- a second opinion or time to do further research

You can find out more about informed consent at www.healthdirect.gov.au/informed-consent

More about questions to ask

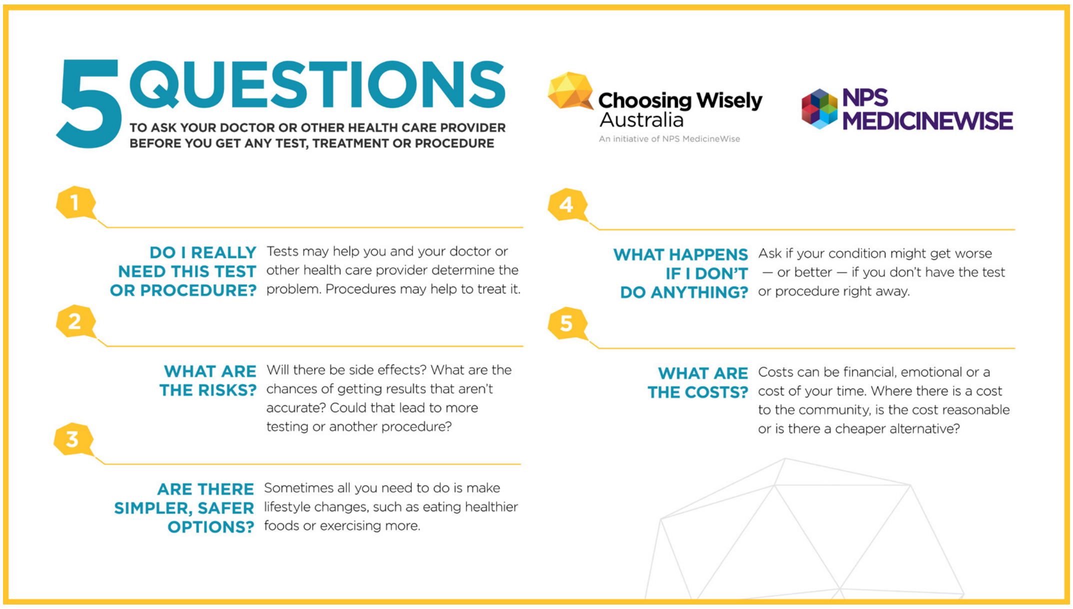
Health Direct has a Question Builder tool to help you prepare for medical appointments by creating a list of questions to ask your doctor. You can then print or email the list so that so you have it with you at your appointment with your GP or specialist.

Thinking about what you want to ask beforehand will help you get more out of the time with your doctor and help you to remember everything you want to ask.

You can use the question builder tool at www.healthdirect.gov.au/question-builder

Choosing Wisely recommends asking your doctor 5 questions before you agree to any test or treatment. Some tests, treatments, and procedures provide little benefit. And in some cases, they may even cause harm. Asking these 5 questions can help ensure you end up with the right amount of care – not too much and not too little.

These questions are available in a range of languages at www.hconc.org.au/five-questions-to-ask-your-doctor-before-you-get-any-test-or-treatment-languages-other-than-english/



5 QUESTIONS

TO ASK YOUR DOCTOR OR OTHER HEALTH CARE PROVIDER BEFORE YOU GET ANY TEST, TREATMENT OR PROCEDURE

Choosing Wisely Australia
An initiative of NPS MedicineWise

NPS MEDICINEWISE

1 **DO I REALLY NEED THIS TEST OR PROCEDURE?** Tests may help you and your doctor or other health care provider determine the problem. Procedures may help to treat it.

2 **WHAT ARE THE RISKS?** Will there be side effects? What are the chances of getting results that aren't accurate? Could that lead to more testing or another procedure?

3 **ARE THERE SIMPLER, SAFER OPTIONS?** Sometimes all you need to do is make lifestyle changes, such as eating healthier foods or exercising more.

4 **WHAT HAPPENS IF I DON'T DO ANYTHING?** Ask if your condition might get worse — or better — if you don't have the test or procedure right away.

5 **WHAT ARE THE COSTS?** Costs can be financial, emotional or a cost of your time. Where there is a cost to the community, is the cost reasonable or is there a cheaper alternative?

All about pathology tests

Lab Tests Online, at www.labtestsonline.org.au, has lots of resources to help you better understand any pathology tests you may need to have such as blood tests or urine tests.

In the search field you can look up a test or a condition to find out what it is, why it is tested, and how the sample will be collected. There are videos to watch to help explain this, as well as answers to common questions.

Procedure Specific Information Sheets

On our website we have a collection of Procedure Specific Information Sheets Lite. They provide written information about your treatment from qualified and practicing consultant surgeons and physicians, with input from other relevant health professionals.

You can view the sheets at www.hconc.org.au/procedure-specific-information-sheets

Your doctor can provide you with the full sheets, which are usually four pages long. You can ask for these when you attend your appointment.

Patient First – before, during and after a hospital stay

The Patient First program helps you to understand important aspects of your health care, before, during and after your hospital stay. It includes information topics like your rights and responsibilities, making the right decisions for you, the safe use of medicines, recovering well, and preparing to go home.

You can find these resources at www.hconc.org.au/resources/patient-first including information in multiple languages.

Empowering health consumers with disability

In partnership with People With disabilities WA, we produced a series of booklets and videos exploring topics including health rights, ideas for getting better care, where to go for help, medical records and information sharing, and navigating the health system.

We held nine sessions on Disability Health Rights for people with disabilities, and their carers, family and support people, and used what was learned and asked about during these sessions to create the resources.

The booklets are available in plain English, easy read English, and plain text (screen reader compatible), and the videos are in Auslan with English sub-titles.

You can take a look at these at www.hconc.org.au/issues/empowering-consumers-with-a-disability

Feedback and complaints

How and why you should share your experiences

Feedback is a good way of gaining information on areas of strength and areas that need to be improved. In healthcare, feedback can be a key way to improve patient safety and ensure ongoing quality improvement.

Whether your experience was good or bad, sharing your feedback could help raise awareness and lead to improvements.

But we know giving feedback or making a complaint isn't always easy. In late 2019 we were commissioned by the Department of Health to support them in seeking consumer input about the process of making a complaint and giving feedback. Many people commented on how difficult it can be to find out how to give feedback or make a complaint.

Many people also responded that a prominent reason for not giving feedback was simply that they were not asked, saying there was an opportunity to increase ways to give feedback "in the moment". People noted that in hospitality, you are asked for feedback at various stages in the process, and that this gave people an opportunity to address any issues when they arise. Ways of making it simpler to give feedback were discussed, including looking at how to use technology to encourage feedback from a wide range of people – for example, kiosks where people can quickly note ☺ or ☹ could help a service get a quick idea of how it's doing, as well as making it easier for consumers for whom English may not be a first language to give feedback. We really encourage consumers to give feedback even when it's not asked for, because feedback is the backbone of safety and quality improvements.

You can also keep an eye out for feedback forms that you may be given if you go to hospital (they may be in a folder near the bed) and speak to the person providing your care about how you can give feedback. By taking a look at our self-advocacy resources you can prepare for your doctor's visit or hospital stay, which may help you feel more confident to ask questions and provide feedback.

You can give feedback verbally, in writing, by speaking directly to health service staff, to consumer or patient liaison staff, to Aboriginal Liaison Officers, or if given a follow up call after discharge from hospital. Many people commented that making a complaint, or sharing some positive feedback, can feel like an extra thing to do after you've finished at a health service. One way that many people felt was a relatively easy way to give feedback was via Care Opinion Australia (previously known as Patient Opinion – see page 9).

While many people highlighted barriers to giving feedback that were discussed in these sessions, in the workshop with Aboriginal people, we heard how their experiences of racism in the health system impacted on the likelihood and way they give feedback or make a complaint. We heard strongly there is much that needs to be done to ensure feedback mechanisms are accessible and culturally safe for Aboriginal people and will continue to advocate for this.

Many people spoke of how valuable it can be for people to have access to independent support to make complaints to health services. Health Consumers' Council provides an individual advocacy service, as do a number of organisations like People With disability WA and Carers WA, but we know there are more people who could benefit from this support than are able to access it currently. Again, increasing access to advocacy support is something we will continue to argue for.

We've gathered some resources to help guide you on where and how you can give feedback. You can also call us on 9221 3422 or 1800 620 780 (country freecall) for advice on the best way to make a complaint, or for support in making a complaint.

Care Opinion Australia

Care Opinion Australia, previously known as Patient Opinion Australia, is an independent online platform for people to provide feedback on services.

At www.careopinion.org.au anyone can share their stories about their experience of care. The site covers health and aged care, and community services in Australia, giving service users, their families and carers the opportunity to publish their personal experiences, good or bad, of the care system.

Care Opinion works so well because it gives you a public, but anonymous, way to voice your experience about the services you use. The right people at the service or provider will see your experience and have the chance to respond.

Care Opinion is safe, confidential and independent of services and authorities. Additionally, reading the stories that other people share on Care Opinion may help you choose the best care providers.

If you are unable to write your story on the website, you can speak to Care Opinion in confidence on the phone by calling 1300 662 996 (mobiles may pay charges).

"I have shared your feedback with all of the staff mentioned in your story. It is always nice to receive positive comments but especially at this challenging time."
- Neil Doverty
Executive Director,
Fiona Stanley Fremantle Hospitals Group,
South Metropolitan Health Service

we
CARE
about your
OPINION

"Positive feedback is valuable to us as it lets us know where our care meets the needs of our community and it is very appreciated by the staff."
-Liz Kelly
A/Coordinator Executive Services,
WA Country Health Service Midwest

We welcome your story at:
careopinion.org.au

> “A couple of years ago my daughter was admitted to hospital. Unfortunately there were some issues that arose during her stay and treatment, systemic issues that meant I didn’t really know who to address the feedback to. I had known about Care Opinion, that her experience would be public and that the hospital would be required to respond publicly. It seemed like a good way of raising the issues that we had, and it was. We received responses from the EDs of the services involved, which meant that the people at the top were aware of what had happened and were willing to make changes. Care Opinion gave us the chance to tell our story, for it to be read by people who have the power to make changes and for us to feel like we were heard.”

How to make a complaint

Feedback can be a powerful way of improving the health system for yourself and others, however we recognise it can sometimes be a difficult or emotional path to travel. Health Consumers’ Council can support you through this process.

We have a step-by-step guide to making a complaint that you can find here www.hconc.org.au/services/how-to-make-a-complaint

Our page on self-advocacy resources, at www.hconc.org.au/consumer/being-involved-in-your-own-health/self-advocacy-resources, also includes a sample complaint letter that you can download, a template for a Freedom of Information Request, and contacts for Freedom of Information requests.

The first step in making a complaint is to be clear about what the problem is and what exactly you are making the complaint about. This is sometimes called identifying the key issue.

You may then want to call the health service to ask about their complaint process (how you would go about making a complaint). Avoid going into details of the complaint unless you are sure the person you are speaking to is the one who receives complaints.

In some cases, we recommend making your complaint in writing. That way, someone becomes responsible for writing back to you, and your complaint is more likely to find its way to the right person or place for action. Always phone the service first to find out the name and title of the person you should write to. When submitting a complaint in writing, be firm but polite and keep your message to the point. If you do not have access to a computer, do not be put off – handwritten letters are fine.

Most, if not all, complaint agencies will allow you to have an advocate (someone who can act on your behalf) to help you put your complaint into writing if you are not confident about doing so yourself.

Health Consumers’ Council provides an advocacy service to assist health consumers in making complaints. We are an independent consumer advocate organisation and are able to support you through the process.

Free, independent legal support

Help to share your story with the Disability Royal Commission

The Disability Royal Commission was established in April 2019 in response to community concern about widespread reports of violence against, and the neglect, abuse and exploitation of, people with disability. These incidents might have happened recently or a long time ago. The Disability Royal Commission will investigate:

- preventing and better protecting people with disability from experiencing violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation
- achieving best practice in reporting, investigating and responding to violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation of people with disability
- promoting a more inclusive society that supports people with disability to be independent and live free from violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation.

Your Story Disability Legal Support (YSDLS) is a free, independent legal support to help you share your story with the Disability Royal Commission.

Anybody can make a submission – by phone, email or through the Royal Commission's website. Submissions can be made in different ways such as in writing, in pictures, as a video or an audio recording.

WA-based YSDLS offers legal information and advice to people about safely sharing their story with the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability.

YSDLS is independent from the Disability Royal Commission. Their service is delivered by National Legal Aid and the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Services. They support people with a disability, their families, carers, supporters and advocates.

In WA, there are lawyers based at both Legal Aid and ALS, offering a state-wide legal service for all people with disabilities, with ALS focussing on First Nations peoples.

This service aims to increase engagement through community legal education as well as supporting individuals to make submissions to the Disability Royal Commission through the provision of legal advice, referral to advocates and counsellors regarding their story.

The latest issues paper released by the Royal Commission in June seeks information about the experiences of First Nations people with disability.

Commissioner Andrea Mason OAM is inviting First Nations people with disability, their families, communities and organisations to respond to the issues paper, and YSDLS can help you to do so.

"This is an opportunity for First Nations people to share their insights and expertise with the Royal Commission," Commissioner Mason said.

"We want to hear about what changes are needed to support First Nations people with disability across the course of their lives and ensure they are able to live a life free from violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation.

"We know that First Nations people with disability face particular challenges in their daily lives across many settings.

"These challenges can be further compounded by multiple layers of discrimination, based on race and disability."

On the Your Story website at yourstorydisabilitylegal.org.au there are resources, an Easy English fact sheet for people with disabilities, and an animation explaining how four different people with disabilities have shared their story.

There are also other funded services to specifically support people to safely tell their story to the Royal Commission. These services include disability advocates and counselling services.

For advocate support:

- Advocacy WA (South West)
- EDAC (state-wide for Culturally and Linguistically Diverse clients; First Nations only in Kimberley)
- MIDLAS (northwest metro)
- PWD WA (state-wide)
- Sussex St CLC (Perth metro, Mid-West, Great Southern, Goldfields, Esperance)

For counselling:

- Kimberley Stolen Generation Aboriginal Corporation (First Nations only in Kimberley)
- Relationships Australia (state-wide)
- Yorgum Healing Services (stat wide First Nations, not Kimberley)

All services are free.

Community and connection

How peak bodies pivoted during COVID-19

When COVID-19 hit the headlines early in 2020, there were big concerns around how people would be able to maintain strong connections with their peers and communities, while self-isolating, working from home, and spending more time on their own.

It was fascinating to see how organisations around WA pivoted their activities to make sure people could still connect and get the support they needed. We take a look at how that unfolded for several key consumer organisations, and the lessons learned about community during a global crisis.

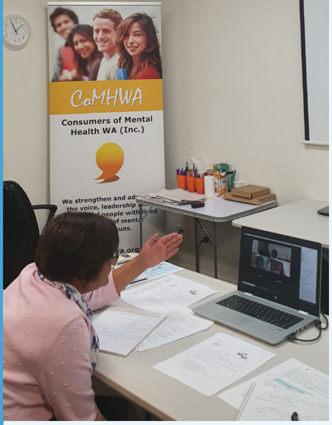
People With disabilities WA

People With disabilities WA have always done a lot of work through phone and email so the biggest shift was ensuring that these things could still happen while staff have been working from home. We were aiming for as little disruption for consumers as possible and the biggest issue was that some of our group meetings for projects had to move from face-to-face to an online Zoom or other format.

What we found was that for most of the people with disabilities that were part of these groups, doing a meeting via Zoom was a lot easier and made them more able to attend and participate. This was the same for some of our individual advocacy work where people with physical disabilities in particular and disabilities which made it difficult to access transport were much more comfortable using tele or videoconferencing. However, for others with different disabilities, Zoom meetings were and are more difficult.

We found that there was very little change in the amount of interaction and communication that we have been getting from consumers. Certainly there has been no decrease in the need for advocacy whether things were COVID related or not.

For our individual advocates and our project staff we will be continuing to use Zoom and Microsoft Teams as a way to connect with each other and with people coming to us for support. Our staff are seeking more flexible arrangements with their work, and our technology and understanding of technology has increased to allow that flexibility to happen both for our staff, and the way we interact with consumers. These are absolutely things that we need to keep in place and will be keeping in place into the future.



CoMHWA

Consumers of Mental Health WA (Inc)

Consumers of Mental Health WA

Consumers of Mental Health WA (CoMHWA) created and maintained a central hub of resources for consumers and provided education and upskilling to peer support workers working through these changing times.

They increased their social media presence and encouraged ongoing engagement with members through online means. To support this, they recorded video messages from staff and produced resources for how to use online video conferencing.

CoMHWA provided a continuity of support through transition to phone and online meetings where appropriate. They ensured phone and in-person support resources were mailed to members, to ensure that members without technology or internet access where still able to reach needed supports.

CoMHWA found many people responded positively to these changes, stating that the information being made available was useful and a welcome distraction. Importantly, they noted it was great to still be able to connect with others.

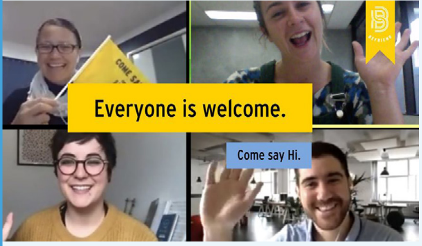
However, some consumers found the technology difficult to navigate or did not have access to technology. Others found it hard to engage with others effectively in this way, with one consumer saying it was "harder to stay focused in online meetings due to the lack of active engagement activities and interaction".

On the whole, many consumers want the provision of education and groups to continue online as the accessibility and flexibility is more suitable to their needs, with one consumer saying "thank you so much for this series, it has been very helpful".

While reliance on technology solely reduces access for some of the population, peer support can be useful to assist people to overcome some technology barriers.

Engaging via video conferencing increases accessibility for some of the population, and a key factor to successful engagement is regular, short sessions.

Online delivery of webinars/meetings/groups will continue as an option to allow access as CoMHWA works towards a 'new normal'. The lessons learnt from this period will be used to ensure the broadest access and distribution of information, resources and supports.



Befriend

**Befriend is a West Australian community development organisation sparking inclusive, connected communities. They operate community building and consulting services, developing the capabilities of local residents and community organisations to nurture connection and belonging for all people – and have a unique perspective on community connection.*

Some of the most adverse effects of COVID-19 on West Australians were the social effects. Physical distancing precipitated social disconnection from each other, at a time when we needed our relationships more than ever. As an organisation that fundamentally exists to nurture connection, we invested to pivot and scale our operations in response to the rapidly elevated community need for social connectedness.

Our community builders pivoted our work in supporting inclusive social networks from place-based to digital, supporting local residents to host online social gatherings that offered a relevant alternative to help people stay socially connected. Our consultants acted in an advisory capacity to support a number of community organisations and local government authorities with designing contemporary service models that would support social and community connectedness within the constraints of physical distancing. For the Befriend Team, it was not a matter of ensuring continued support; it was a time to step up to the call of our purpose.

It was affirming to have so many other people realising what we've known all along, what we advocate for at the heart of our work at Befriend – that connection and community are at the heart of community wellbeing, and are essential in sustaining a thriving society. Services can only do so much; it is the strength of our relationships with each other in community that are fundamental to our collective wellbeing.

It's been a time for community members to realise the value and importance of all members of society – of our elders, of people with diverse abilities, of people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

It's been a time to learn about and reflect on the power of technology in sustaining our connectedness, and to work on our relationship with technology, finding new and different ways to use it whilst managing the ways that it can constrain our connectedness and wellbeing.

As we move beyond the turbulence of recent months, one of our primary objectives at Befriend is to capitalise on the increased awareness of the importance of social connectedness and the increased motivation for community contribution, furthering our community building work to mobilise and support more citizens to become active in nurturing connected communities.

Health Consumers' Council

Our biggest priority over the last few months has been to mitigate the risks to our staff and community, while maintaining a focus on connection. Like many around the country we took our work online, connecting with our own team, consumers and WA Health through Zoom, Microsoft Teams, Scopia, and other online platforms.

As everyone began to adapt to a new way of doing things, our engagement team began to upskill in hosting engaging, interactive online events, and we hosted introductory sessions to help consumers navigate Zoom.

We heard that opportunities for health consumer, carer, community and family representatives to connect with each other, with the health system and with organisations like us became even more important, as many in-person opportunities were postponed or cancelled. We quickly convened a COVID-19 community of interest, so that our executive director Pip Brennan could contact a ready source of consumers and carers for surveys, feedback, consumer opportunities and online forums.

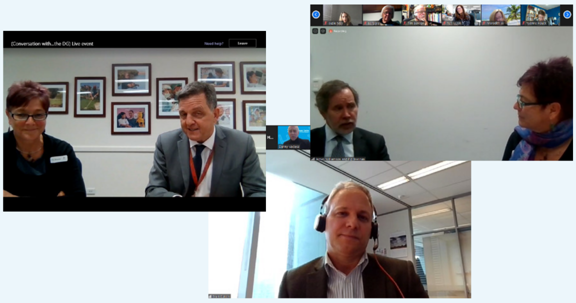
Our fortnightly online drop-in sessions brought a lot a value to the community, providing the space for an informal, online get together with anyone involved or interested in consumer, carer, or community representation. In particular, they gave us a chance to involve people in rural areas who may not otherwise have been able to make it to a consumer event in Perth. Overall, we had about 120 participants across the five fortnightly sessions.

We listened to what we were hearing from consumers and their questions around COVID-19 and got involved in more online events. Our fortnightly Fireside Chats with WA health experts allow for interactive Q&As with the likes of the Director General David Russell-Weisz, and Assistant General of Clinical Health Excellence, James Williamson.

We continued to work closely with health consumer peaks across Australia, partnering with Health Issues Centre for a series of online forums exploring COVID-19 and Australia's recovery from the pandemic. These workshops were attended by several hundred people and featured guests like Victoria's Chief Health Officer, Professor Brett Sutton and Deputy Chief Public Health Officer and Executive Director Health Protection and Licensing Services, Dr Chris Lease.

Throughout it all we used social media and email to keep in regular contact with our community, not just about our own engagement activities but with reliable COVID-19 updates, consumer opportunities, and other ways to stay connected with community during challenging times.

This sense of connection and being able to reach a wider audience has been something we will carry with us as we establish new ways of working in the wake of COVID-19. We're committed to finding a good balance between in-person and online events that removes as many barriers as possible for those wishing to attend, and will continue to look at ways to make our engagement activities more accessible to all.



Carers WA

When Carers WA had to cancel their face-to-face services, they relied on phone, Skype, email and Zoom to stay connected with their community.

While there was a good response to this change, many were keen for specific services, such as social support groups, education and training sessions, to resume in a physical format.

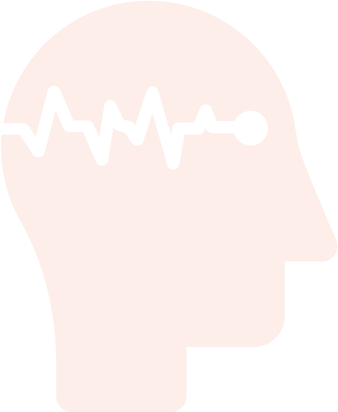
On an organisational level, Carers WA learned that while working from home is technically possible for some roles, it didn't work as well for others. However, the organisation plans to consider more flexible working for the future, mixing office and home working where practical.

Looking to the future, Carers WA note that many of their services are provided remotely as the norm so these will continue. While they don't plan any significant changes in service delivery, they will have more scope to hold meetings with others service providers or interstate people and organisation online through Zoom.

Coping, connection and support

Managing mental health and wellbeing

The COVID-19 pandemic has thrown a lot of challenges our way, and for many it has been a cause of uncertainty, stress, financial concerns, isolation and anxiety. During periods of lockdown and self-isolation there's been a focus on the ways we can manage our own wellbeing, and it's likely that these strategies and resources will remain essential as the world forges a new way forward.



It's normal to feel overwhelmed or stressed by the pandemic, and we encourage you to reach out to your support networks and seek professional help if needed. Self-management and peer support can be important tools for wellbeing, whether you've experienced mental health issues in the past, or just want to stay on top of creeping feelings of stress and anxiety. We've seen a profound impact on all facets of society in the last few months, but there are practical things you can do help to look after your mental health.

Online self-directed resources

BEYOND BLUE

According to **Beyond Blue**, social contact and maintaining routines can be supportive for our mental health and wellbeing. In circumstances where this is not possible, staying connected with friends and family online or by phone may assist.

At **beyondblue.org.au** you can access fact sheets and practical advice, information dedicated to coping during the Coronavirus outbreak, and advice on acknowledging feelings of distress and seeking help if required.

SANE AUSTRALIA

On the **SANE Australia** website at **sane.org** you can access support forums for people living with mental health issues, as well as their family and friends. These forums are moderated by mental health professionals, but the real value comes from connecting with one another. "If you sometimes struggle to say it out loud, or tell someone in person – try reaching out for support [at sane.org]: it's anonymous, safe and supportive."

BLACK DOG INSTITUTE

The resources available from **Black Dog Institute** are research-informed and recommended by professionals. Their website, **blackdoginstitute.org.au** includes personal stories, digital tools and apps, information on support groups, facts sheets and information and support for various mental health diagnoses.

Black Dog Institute has a helpful checklist to support your mental health while working from home, and is hosting a large global study to assess the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on mental health.

HEAD TO HEALTH

The Government website **Head to Health** at **headtohealth.gov.au** can help you find the right digital resources for your needs. If you're trying to improve your own mental health, or support somebody else with mental health issues, Head to Health provides links to trusted online and phone supports, resources and treatment options.

Their section on leading a meaningful life looks at how everything from sleep, physical activity, work and hobbies, to housing, culture and family can have an impact on wellbeing, with information on how to support these areas of your life.

CENTRE FOR CLINICAL INTERVENTIONS

If you experience a condition that is affecting your mental health and are looking for specific information then the workbooks or modules available from **Centre for Clinical Interventions** may be useful - **cci.health.wa.gov.au/Resources/Looking-After-Yourself**

There are also brief information sheets, along with a series of worksheets that you may wish to use, or that your doctor may help you with. You can find resources for helping others living with psychological disorders and problems such as depression, panic, social anxiety, health anxiety, low self-esteem, procrastination, disordered eating, interpersonal problems, and sleep difficulties like insomnia.

MINDSPOT

MindSpot is a free service for Australian adults who are experiencing difficulties with anxiety, stress, depression and low mood. They provide online assessment and treatment courses, or can help you find local services that can help.

The MindSpot team comprises experienced and AHPRA-registered mental health professionals including psychologists, clinical psychologists and psychiatrists who are passionate about providing a free and effective service to people all over Australia. MindSpot is based at Macquarie University, Sydney and is funded by the Australian Government and contracted by the Department of Health as a regulated clinical service.

At **mindspot.org.au** you can also access resources to help you stay resilient during Coronavirus.

THINK MENTAL HEALTH WA

A campaign to help Western Australians manage their mental health and wellbeing, **Think Mental Health Be Positive. Be Connected. Be Active.** is focused on self-care and wellbeing strategies that people can use to support themselves and each other.

The campaign encourages Western Australians to be positive, connected and active to protect their mental health and wellbeing, by linking them to support services and providing online resources. The website **www.thinkmentalhealthwa.com.au/mental-health-and-covid-19** has resources to help you cope with stress and anxiety, return to work, cope with financial worry, talk to kids about COVID-19, and tips for those who must stay at home.

YOU CAN FIND A FULL LIST OF MENTAL HEALTH AND ALCOHOL AND OTHER DRUG SUPPORT SERVICES AT

myservices.org.au

IF YOU NEED URGENT SUPPORT YOU CAN CONTACT LIFELINE ON **13 11 14** OR BEYOND BLUE ON **1300 22 4636** FOR 24/7 CRISIS SUPPORT.

Experts by experience

Mental health peer support

In our previous Health Matters focused on self-advocacy and peer support, Rhianwen Beresford, Convenor of the WA Peer Supporters' Network, spoke about a vision for peer support where every Western Australian knows what peer support is and can access it if they want to.

Peer support happens across all sectors and walks of life. If you're using your own experience to help someone through a similar experience, that's peer support. In the area of mental health, peer support offers a whole range of benefits – friendship, empowerment, lessening of stigma, increased acceptance, and shared insights about life with mental health experiences.

On a larger scale, mental health peer support can have a positive impact on the way society views and treats mental health, leading to improvements in service and more person-centred, trauma-informed responses.

Carli Sheers is an active consumer representative and mental health advocate, and we spoke to her about the importance of peer support.

Carli Sheers, Consumer Representative

Why is mental health important to you and what made you want to become active in this space?

I recovered from mental health issues through accessing peer support many years ago, and have worked in the mental health sector in various roles for 13 years. My experience and skills as a Consumer Consultant have grown through active participation in the sector and Membership of Mental Health Australia's National Register. With intention, I developed an extensive network of mutually beneficial collegial relationships and can speak from beyond my own personal experience with their consent. I am lucky to have access to a peer mentor who I admire, respect and value. I became active in the mental health sector to raise the expectation of recovery, reduce stigma and discrimination, and increase my employability as employment is an indicator of health. I also invested in my education and founded a mental health education and training consultancy business last year.

What are the major benefits of mental health peer support, and why does it play such an important role alongside clinical treatment options?

Peer workers undertake a variety of functions in diverse settings, from service delivery to policy making to funding of services. Personal lived experience is an essential job criterion, and other competencies include a person's overall life experience, employment and education history, emotional maturity and ability to engage and communicate. Peer workers provide an effective and high-quality intervention that can be either complementary to clinical service or, in some situations, effective as a stand-alone intervention. They see challenges as growth and learning opportunities, not as crises.

Mental health peer support workers are experts by experience and provide a specialist knowledge base that can transform individual lives and systems of care. They are recognised for using their insights and expertise from their personal expertise to inform their work, and can walk alongside people who have experienced similar distress and support them without trying to 'fix' their situation. It is about engaging people with mental health issues as the central actors in their management of their mental wellbeing, helping them to find meaning in their life experiences, and guiding people's journeys towards a contributing life. This was my experience when I accessed Grow*, a national consumer mental health organisation.

Major benefits of mental health peer support include helping people to believe in themselves and re-build their lives, discover their own solutions and develop a sense of control, master their emotional strengths, work towards self-agency and self-advocacy, enhance the quality of lifestyle and personal choices, and finding their strengths, capabilities and possibilities. Peer workers influence much needed cultural change in services and workplaces, decrease people's need for costly acute services, and are effective in engaging people who have been difficult to reach and not benefited from traditional services.

(Source: Peer Work in Australia. A New Future for Mental Health. 2018)

In the wake of COVID-19, many people are finding themselves on a new mental health journey. As someone who advocates in this space, what advice would you give?

Navigating the mental health system can be complex, as there are many pathways for care and support. It is important to ask for help, and I encourage people to see their GP (or access a Telehealth appointment) if they are not coping due to COVID-19.

I also refer people to the WA Mental Health Commission's website as a reliable source of information about supports and services. Consider joining a support group via ConnectGroups (connectgroups.org.au), who are the peak body for support groups in WA.

Do you have any advice for those interested in becoming a mental health consumer advocate?

Life-long learning is important to being an effective mental health consumer advocate. I encourage people to access Consumer Representative training via Health Consumers' Council (www.hconc.org.au/consumer-representative-introductory-skills) and Consumers of Mental Health WA+

*GROW IS A COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANISATION THAT HAS HELPED TENS OF THOUSANDS OF AUSTRALIANS RECOVER FROM MENTAL ILLNESS THROUGH A UNIQUE PROGRAM OF MUTUAL SUPPORT AND PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT. TO FIND OUT MORE, VISIT WWW.GROW.ORG.AU

+COMHWA CURRENTLY HOSTS THE WA PEER SUPPORTERS' NETWORK (WAPSN), A NETWORK FOR AND BY PEER SUPPORTERS IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA. YOU CAN JOIN OR FIND OUT MORE BY CONTACTING INFO@PEERSUPPORTWA.ORG.AU OR CONTACT (08) 9258 8911.

In the next edition of Health Matters, we look forward to speaking to Phoebe Kingston about consumer engagement in relation to mental health and peer support. Phoebe is a Lived Experience Speaker/Trainer/Consultant and you can find out more about her mental health advocacy and education work at www.thrutherabbithole.com.au

Is telehealth the future for WA?

Opportunities for innovation

PIP BRENNAN, HEALTH CONSUMERS' COUNCIL EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

It took a pandemic for the health system to finally pivot away from face to face consultations to telehealth. The current COVID-19 context is helping to break down resistance to telehealth and there are great opportunities for consumers to partner with their health professionals differently using remote access options.

Adoption of telehealth at a vastly increased rate has caused much discussion and consultation in recent weeks. For example, Health Issues Centre Victoria ran an online forum entitled “Will Technology Save Us?” which focused on the COVIDSafe App and telehealth. Work by WA Health has been progressing on a survey of cancer patients to track their experience of telehealth during COVID-19. And currently the Innovation Hub, a WA government initiative, is partnering with WA Health to explore the outpatient e-Health experience of the future – looking ahead thirty years. This is considering not just telehealth but artificial intelligence technologies and other innovative ways to track a patient’s vital signs through wearable technology, allowing them to stay home.

But no matter how fancy the technology gets, a key thing to remember is that telehealth needs to start with patient preference. All options should be offered to a consumer when making an appointment – face to face, phone call or video. Noting that not all appointments can be done via telehealth, so a call to your doctor to discuss the type of appointment may be needed.

While there are legitimate concerns about the digital divide (see Australia digitalinclusionindex.org.au/the-index-report/report), and some people not having access to data and a reliable bandwidth for telehealth consultations, consumers generally have been able to make the switch to telehealth consultations. It can be clinicians who are slow to uptake technology in the patient/clinician partnership and clinician training and support needs to be considered in the mix. It’s not as simple as moving “in real life” interactions into a “virtual” setting – attention needs to be paid to helping health professionals learn how to adapt their services to a virtual setting. There are health professionals who are already doing this, including for services that might seem difficult to deliver remotely including physiotherapy and speech therapy.

GPs

For GPs, the unleashing of Medicare Benefit Schedule (MBS) numbers for telehealth has been decades in the making, but it took a pandemic for it to be unleashed. While consumers are excited that getting a repeat script may be as simple as a phone call, it is not always the best option. A reminder of the first principle above – give patients choice. GP practices offering telehealth only, which have sprung up since the MBS changes, are not good news and need to be stopped or at the very least closely monitored. Thirdly, GP practices calling you and then charging for a consultation are also not ok.

Outpatients

As noted above, the Innovation Hub, WA Health and EY have partnered to bring together a series of events to develop a vision of the outpatient experience, 30 years into the future. At the face to face forum held in June 2020, Paul Forden from South Metropolitan Health Service noted the outpatient experience has changed little in 70 years. He has been spearheading the work on outpatient reform since the Sustainable Health Review and this has had a massive boost during COVID-19. But there are concerns that this may backslide, with clinicians already wanting their patients back in the waiting room.

Allied and other

There have been exciting innovations with allied health consultations with patients, keeping up the access to key programs during COVID-19. As noted above, this area of clinical care has shown great pockets of innovation.

> *“I manage multiple chronic illnesses which usually require regular visits to the GP for scripts. Being able to talk to my GP via telehealth, and having my regular scripts sent directly to the chemist, has had a huge impact in terms of time and cost. It also reduces the amount of time I have to spend in the doctor’s waiting room during cold and flu season. I really hope this is something that continues long after the threat of COVID-19.”*
>
> WA HEALTH CONSUMER

We're listening to what you want

At Health Consumers' Council, we engage with people in our community in a variety of ways, from emails to social media and community events. To help us meet the varied needs of our audience when it comes to sharing information, events and opportunities, we held a survey from March-May 2020 to find out more about our audience and what's important to them.

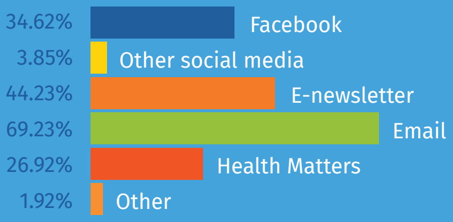
We'd like to extend a big thank you to everyone who took the survey, as your input will help us shape the way we communicate with you.

We were happy to see many responses indicating that HCC is a trusted source of health information, and will be working hard to ensure we can get this information to you in the best ways possible.

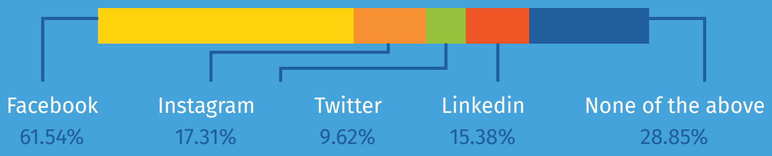
A huge 70% of respondents told us they prefer to hear from us via email, and 44% said they prefer e-news, so we'll be dedicating time to tidying up our mailing lists, simplifying our e-news templates, and ensuring they look just as good on mobile phones so no one misses out on important information. Facebook was the third most popular option for staying up-to-date with HCC news, so we'll be focusing our social media efforts there.

You let us know what issues are most important to you and your family, so we'll make sure these stay top of mind for us in our communications and engagement.

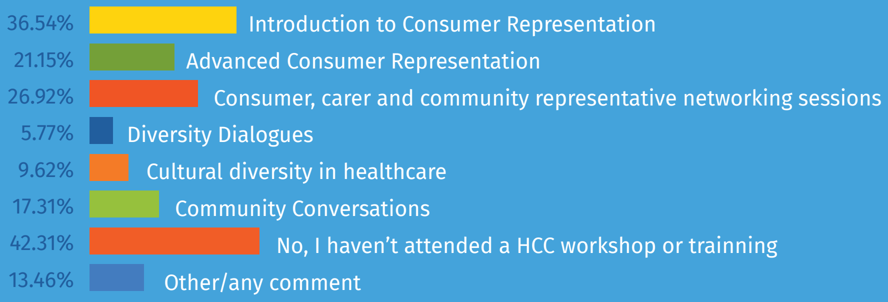
HOW DO YOU PREFER TO HEAR FROM AND STAY UP TO DATE WITH GCC?



DO YOU FOLLOW HCC ON SOCIAL MEDIA?



HAVE YOU ATTENDED ANY HCC WORKSHOPS OR TRAINING?



Share your story in Health Matters

We want Health Matters to have a focus on consumer experiences, and so do you, with the survey telling us you want to read about real people and real stories. You told us you'd like to hear about positive experiences, self-health strategies, lived experience, connection, and engaging with the health system – so we'd like to hear from you.

The next edition of Health Matters will focus on engagement, so if you'd like to share your experiences please send an email to info@hconc.org.au with "Health Matters" in the title.

Supporting Cultural Diversity in Healthcare Workshop

Western Australia enjoys one of the most culturally diverse populations in Australia. To assist healthcare workers and providers to deliver services that are equitable, the Health Consumers' Council has developed this workshop to enable health workers to provide culturally inclusive services that support patient-centred care.

The workshop will provide participants with the opportunity to:

- **Recognise potential barriers people may have in accessing health services**
- **Increase understanding of cultural competency**
- **Awareness of own culture and attitude towards cultural difference**
- **Knowledge and sensitivity of different cultural practices**
- **Ability to use cross-cultural skills**
- **Develop strategies to deliver a culturally competent service**

Date Thursday 3 December 2020, 10.30am – 1.30pm (WA Health staff prioritised)

Location TBC

EMAIL NADEEN@HCONC.ORG.AU TO EXPRESS YOUR INTEREST

WE CAN ALSO RUN THIS WORKSHOP AT YOUR SERVICE ON A FEE FOR SERVICE BASIS. TO TALK TO US ABOUT RUNNING A SESSION AT YOUR SITE OR FOR ANY QUESTIONS ABOUT THESE SESSIONS SEND NADEEN AN EMAIL.

Updates

COVID-19

Early on in the pandemic we launched our COVID-19 Community of Interest, a state-wide network of consumers and carers interested in being involved in COVID-19 responses. To date, these have involved surveys, feedback and events. Our current survey is available at www.surveymonkey.com/r/COVIDClinicalSenate

You can keep up to date with all of our COVID-19 activities, including the consumer forum series with Health Issues Centre and our Fireside Chat sessions, at www.hconc.org.au/issues/covid-19/

WA Healthy Weight Action Plan – Translating the plan into action

Since the Plan was launched late last year, Clare and Pip from Health Consumers' Council have met with the team at the Department of Health and the WA Primary Health Alliance (WAPHA).

We've received funding from the WA Department of Health to recruit a dedicated project officer who will focus on making sure consumers and community members are actively involved in discussions and activities relating to how this plan will be implemented. A priority for that person will be establishing a consumer and community reference group aiming to involve people with a range of perspectives. They will also connect with the hundreds of people who've signed up to receive information about this project by meeting in person, sending out regular emails, and staying in touch through social media. Work will include representing the feedback we've already received from consumers and community members, as well as creating opportunities for people to identify what consumers and community members see as priorities in this area.

We think it's great that the importance of consumer and community involvement has been recognised in this project. We're looking forward to hosting discussions with consumers, community members and people working in the health system that can help make a positive impact on the health of people in the WA community.

My Baby WA app

The My Baby WA app is for all WA women and families, and has been developed in partnership with the WA Country Health Service. It can help you find WA-specific information on pregnancy, birth and early parenting; maternity service provision including finding services close to you; a pregnancy timeline of recommended appointments, screening and reminders; and a baby bump photo gallery.

The app is currently being fine-tuned, and we are reviewing the feedback from the Women's Experience of Maternity Services survey which is helping to inform the app. We hope to announce a launch date soon.

Identifying gaps in CaLD health literacy

Health literacy is the ability of a person to obtain, understand, process and use health information to influence decisions about services or treatment. It has come to our attention that there may be possible gaps in the resources available for people from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse backgrounds. We would like your opinion on this matter so that if a gap exists, we can potentially help to fill it. You can provide your input via this survey: www.surveymonkey.com/r/CaLDhealthlit

The survey should only take 10 minutes and we thank you in advance for your time.

Jamboard

Sharing docs doesn't seem as scary as I first thought!

New things I can use to engage people

Interesting stuff to play with!

someone is making it tidy

Something I learnt

so cool

love this tool for brainstorming

so many tools

There are plenty of supporting tools to make online meetings more interactive and interesting

annotate, jamboards, breakout rooms... Its amazing - I feel like a kid in a new sandbox!

that setting up a control centre is important

jam boards

Jamboard

That I can use google sheets/docs in breakout groups

Annotations! Simple but effective

I really put my hands to my face a lot which is a) not Covid friendly and b) does not look good on Zoom!

great stuff

Lots

All the new tools

sticky notes

Some great tools to share with my team

Something I am excited by?

Jamboard - looks simple-ish...

so many new toys to play with! thank you! annotate, jamboard, breakout rooms.

New tools!

jamboard

Jamboards

Can't wait to use these

All the cool tools to play with and add to my facilitation online

How I can take this into my meetings next week - timely!

Health Engagement Network

In June Joel Levin from Aha! Consulting ran a session for HEN members on online engagement. This fantastic session looked at tools and tips for making online events more interactive and engaging, and we have already put some of what we learned to use in team meetings and the recent consumer networking session.

We would like to explore using the online Health Engagement Network platform as a way of providing an online space for consumer, carer, community and family representatives to meet and connect online. If you're interested in this you can sign up at www.healthengagement.org.au

Black lives matter solidarity statement

National NAIDOC Week 2020 has been moved to November – but we have chosen July, the traditional time to hold NAIDOC – to launch the Health Consumers' Council Black Lives Matter Solidarity Statement.

We, the Health Consumers' Council (WA) Inc., acknowledge the reality and impact of systemic racism that Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and other People of Colour have experienced, and continue to experience. We know this to be a reality in our health services, and this is noted on our state's Aboriginal Health and Wellbeing Framework 2015-2020 which states "Racism and discrimination experienced by Aboriginal people in the delivery of health services contributes to low levels of access, engagement and compliance with treatment" (Awofeso, 2011).

Numerous other scientific and peer-reviewed research studies identify the impact of structural and individual racism and systemic oppression ingrained and evidenced in Australian society and the wider global community.

The Health Consumers' Council avows the inherent value of all human life. Our solidarity with the Black Lives Matter Movement is an acknowledgement that until Black Lives Matter, equality and inclusivity is not possible. Ethnicity, religion, culture, gender, orientation, disability, age, or status does not negate that accessible and culturally safe health care is a basic human right.

The Health Consumers' Council stands firm in its vision of equitable, person-centred, culturally responsive quality health care for all Western Australians. We understand that in order to be an ally to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, we have to move towards anti-racism, which includes initiatives such as developing a Solidarity Statement.

We operate by these principles and encourage members of the community to contact us if you are not receiving the high-quality health care that you deserve.

We stand in solidarity with the Black Lives Matter movement.

PIP BRENNAN - EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

MALLIKA MACLEOD - CHAIR

Dates for the Diary

Keep up to date with HCC workshops and events at

www.hconc.org.au/what-we-do/workshops

For upcoming COVID-19 related events visit

www.hconc.org.au/issues/covid-19

Consumer representative networking event

Wednesday 23 September, 1:30pm-3:30pm

Our next networking session for consumer, community and carer representatives will focus on consumer feedback, including different ways to provide feedback and how it can make a difference in the health system.

These consumer, family, carer and community representative networking events are a mix of informal and structured elements, with time for networking, interactive working sessions and facilitated learning around good practice in consumer, carer, family and community engagement.

Find out more and register at www.eventbrite.com.au/e/consumer-representative-networking-sept-2020-tickets-111589952552

Introduction to Consumer Representation

Wednesday 14 October, 10:15am-2:15pm

Would you like to use your experience as a patient or carer to create a better health system? We know that pro-active and skilled Consumer Representatives can do just that, and this introductory course will help you get started.

Consumer Representatives play an integral role in the Australian health care system. They provide vital information and ideas from a service user's perspective, to health services and government committees.

This highly interactive workshop will give you the opportunity to hear, learn and think about important information for consumer representatives.

Register at www.eventbrite.com.au/e/introduction-to-consumer-representation-training-october-tickets-79486340785

Advanced Consumer Representation

Thursday 22 October, 10:15am-2:15pm

This session is recommended for consumer reps with at least 6 months experience on a working group, committee or board. This workshop will take your consumer representation skills to the next level. Keeping your skills honed and your knowledge current plays a key role of being an effective consumer representative.

On completion of this interactive workshop you will have an increased understanding of the current international, national and local safety and quality focus in health care and how to integrate these concepts into effective representation. The session will also cover topics raised by participants, including meeting effectiveness, productive conversations and self-care.

Register at www.eventbrite.com.au/e/advanced-consumer-representation-training-october-tickets-79486659739

Supporting Cultural Diversity in Healthcare Workshop

Thursday 3 December, 10.30am-1.30pm

Location TBC

To assist healthcare workers and providers to deliver services that are equitable, the Health Consumers' Council has developed this workshop to enable health workers to provide culturally inclusive services that support patient-centred care.

Find out more at www.hconc.org.au/what-we-do/diversity-culture/supporting-cultural-diversity-ffs/

Email Nadeen@hconc.org.au to register your interest (WA Health staff prioritised)

Diversity Dialogue – Culturally and Linguistically Diverse communities and Telehealth

Thursday 3 September 2020, 11-12.30pm

The Diversity Dialogues series has been developed for consumers and health service providers to explore ways to develop health services and patient care strategies that respond to cultural diversity.

Panellists from a range of cultural backgrounds will share their knowledge and experiences around culturally aware practice, building culturally inclusive services and discussing the importance of cultural awareness in best practice.

The theme for this event is Telehealth, and it is being held in partnership with Digital Health CRC to explore the complexities of navigating telehealth with hard to reach populations, through the pandemic and beyond.

Details are TBC, please check www.hconc.org.au/what-we-do/upcoming-events for updates

Unit 6 Wellington Fair
40 Lord Street, EAST PERTH WA 6004
GPO Box C134, PERTH WA 6839
Phone: (08) 9221 3422
Country freecall: 1800 620 780
Email: info@hconc.org.au
www.hconc.org.au

Opening hours

Monday - Friday 9.00am - 4.30pm
Closed Public Holidays

Health Consumers' Council