

mental health bulletin

No 3/03 May



Sharing Knowledge through the Web

The Directorate of Mental Health (DMH) is keen to maximise the potential of our web page for the sharing of ideas and experiences. An important part of this depends on the contributions from the personnel at the 'coalface'. What seems like common every day events in one region may be rare in another. In earlier bulletins, we featured the activities of some commanders, to highlight enterprising ways to promote good mental health and well being.

Regional Mental Health Teams (RMHT) may intend to support their commanders in running similar events in their region and therefore would be interested in the lessons learnt from organising such events. Another area of importance is the lessons learnt when setting up RMHT. Access to the experiences of others helps the learner to prepare and ask the right questions.

Compiling this information into an accessible and useful resource may be termed 'knowledge management'. This term is receiving significant attention in literature but there is still a large gap in its application. One way that DMH can apply 'knowledge management', is to compile information that outlines the processes and lessons learnt from RMHT activities. This can then be readily available on the web page to provide information on such things as planning, administration, marketing, finance and logistics.

DMH would like Commanders, Regional Mental Health Teams, mental health professionals and others with a mental health interest to capture these important experiences in writing and send them to DMH for sharing through the web site. So take some time to record the experiences and capture the lessons learnt.

Please forward your articles to LCDR John Ashley on fax 02 62663784 or John.Ashley@cbr.defence.gov.au

Initiatives Updates

Improved Mental Health Literacy in the ADF

SERIES TWO FACT SHEETS

Yes these will soon be a reality! DMH has been working on the following fact sheets and they will soon be at the printers. The series one Fact Sheets are still current and should still be given out. The new series presents the following topics:

- **depression,**
- **anxiety,**
- **party drugs**

- steroid use
- drink spiking, and
- homecoming issues

If you have counted the number of fact sheets we are compiling you will notice that there are six in total, yet the fact sheet holder only takes five – be inventive! We felt that the new series needed to cover these topics and so have decided to extend the range.

ADF Suicide Prevention Program

NEW DMH STAFF MEMBER

Welcome to Lisa Congdon our much-valued DCO representative. Lisa arrived a few weeks ago and has certainly hit the ground running. She is taking over the suicide prevention program and is presently compiling a scoping document regarding ‘off the shelf’ prevention programs. DMH looks forward to providing you all with some further advice about the shape of the intended ADF suicide education and prevention program in the not too distant future.

ALL HOURS SUPPORT LINE (ASL)

This initiative has been held up yet again. This time it is due to having to request a rollover of the funds needed to run the project. DMH is optimistic that the rollover will be approved and we hope to be able to announce the successful provider in the not too distant future.

POLICY MATTERS

Policy sure does matter. DMH currently has the following draft policy documents in circulation:

- Regional Mental Health Teams – this goes to Steering Committee in June
- CMS
- Mental Health Support to Operationally Deployed Forces
- Treatment and Management Guidelines for PTSD
- Treatment and Management Guidelines for Depressed Mood
- An Introduction to the Management of Mental Health Problems in the ADF
- Use of the AUDIT

We have been busy trying to develop policy that will help people at the coal face do their work.

Integration of Mental Health Services in Defence

The Draft policy on ADF Regional Mental Health Teams has been removed temporarily from the web page as it is being amended following feed back from stakeholders. The draft will soon be circulated to the DHS Steering Committee as preparation for the next Steering Committee meeting.

Enhanced Mental Health Service Delivery

DI(G) draft The Provision of Mental Health Services in the ADF is available on this web page for comment. Please direct any constructive feed back and proposed amendments to LCDR John Ashley. Proposed amendments have been received and the amended version will be launched on this web page following approval.

PSYCHIATRIC CONSULTANCY FOR MEDICAL OFFICERS

WGCDR Len Lambeth continues to volunteer his knowledge as a Consultant Psychiatrist through access to a 24-hour contact mobile number for Defence medical officers (+61) 0416 265 635. WGCDR Lambeth reported to DMH that calls are coming in to discuss clinical problems.

ADF Drug and Alcohol Program

Alcohol and Other Drug Professional

Ms Glenda McCarthy will be commencing with the ADF Drug & Alcohol Program on 22 May 03. Ms McCarthy is employed to fill the role of AOD Professional, providing specialist services in the Canberra region. Ms McCarthy's recruitment was secured before the Defence recruitment freeze.

Evaluation of Alcohol Rehabilitation & Education Program (AREP)

Ms Donna Bull (National Coordinator ADF Drug and Alcohol Program) is currently facilitating an evaluation of AREP, following a national tender process. In line with the ADF Mental Health Strategy, a comprehensive and independent evaluation of AREP's effectiveness and consistency with contemporary knowledge and industry best practice commences in May 2003.

The Australian Centre for Post-traumatic Mental Health (ACPMH) is the successful tender agency selected to conduct the evaluation of AREP. The evaluation commences in May and will continue over an 18-week period. The evaluation will have particular emphasis on:

- effectiveness of the Program;
- consistency with contemporary knowledge in the Australian Alcohol and Other Drug (AOD) sector;
- issues unique to the military environment; and
- industry best practice.

The evaluation of AREP is in line with the evidence-based focus of Defence Health, and is expected to deliver valuable, objective information to guide the future development of this key treatment facility.

Any questions about the evaluation of AREP should be directed to Donna Bull on 02 6266 3230 or Donna.Bull@defence.gov.au.

Enhanced Resilience and Well Being in the ADF

DMH has contracted Dr Bruce A. Stevens PhD FACCP, MAPS (Forensic) to develop a professional self-care package. Dr Stevens has been facilitating professional self-care focus groups at Defence Health Service conference room. He has a special interest in hearing from personnel with operational experience to identify coping strategies.

The initial outcome will be information and knowledge resources for use in producing a Self-Care package for defence health professionals. The concept for the final production is a Manual, and a complementary audio tape/CD.

DMH Team

- Director Mental Health (COL) in DHSB
– COL Anthony Cotton
- SO1 Psychiatry – WGCDCR Len Lambeth
- SO1 Mental Health – MAJ Patricia (Trish) Vincent
- SO2 Mental Health Nurse – LCDR John Ashley
- SO2 Mental Health Psychologist
– Vacant
- SO2 Mental Health Defence Social Worker
– Ms Lisa Congdon
- National Coordinator - ADF Drug & Alcohol Program – Ms Donna Bull
- Researcher – Dr Leanne Currie
- Research Assistant – Mrs Kate Lloyd
- Administrative Assistant – Mrs Faye Schulz

