

THREE-YEAR ROAD MAP FOR YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH

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A new youth mental health strategy aims to connect young people in the Midwest with the support they need to improve their mental health and wellbeing.

The three-year Y Connect action plan will make it easier for young people to get help by addressing several barriers highlighted by WA Primary Health Alliance in a 2018 consultation of the Midwest region of the Country WA Primary Health Network (PHN).

Identified barriers to help seeking included stigma, limited youth and culturally friendly services, and a lack of understanding of mental health issues and where to find help.

WA Primary Health Alliance Regional Manager for the Midwest, Amy Perry, said with mental health disorders accounting for 50 per cent of health problems in young people, a timely solution was needed.

“It was clear that this region needed a cohesive service response to youth mental health.

“We galvanised support and started work almost immediately, with the new Y Connect plan the end result,” Ms Perry said.

Federal Member for Durack, The Hon Melissa Price, said the Y Connect action plan was a great example of what can be achieved when the community, health professionals and government agencies came together with a common goal in mind.

“The Country WA PHN has a remit to increase the integration and effectiveness of primary healthcare services for the community. In this case, getting our young people into the right program as soon as possible is key to ensuring they recover quickly and reduce their risk of longer-term mental health issues,” Minister Price said.

The plan was developed in partnership with youth mental health service users, mental health service providers and policy makers. It is focused on four main geographical districts: Geraldton, Gascoyne, Murchison and the Midlands.

It sets out a change journey that includes using a service directory, social media and urban art to inform and engage young people and involve them in service design.

There are also strategies for developing trauma informed and culturally responsive practice among providers and building a shared care model amongst GPs, the NGO health network and government services.

The implementation of the plan will be led by coordination groups in each of the four districts, comprising service providers, education, police, primary health and young people. The coordination groups will be supported by WA Primary Health Alliance to ensure the activities are integrated with other initiatives across the Midwest.

MEDIA RELEASE



“We acknowledge the considerable input of individuals and organisations throughout this process, to whom the content of the plan belongs. We are confident it will guide and support planners, policy makers and the PHN in future decision making,” Ms Perry said.

You can access the full Y Connect plan [here](#).

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About WA Primary Health Alliance: WA Primary Health Alliance oversees the strategic commissioning functions of the Perth North, Perth South and Country WA Primary Health Networks (PHNs). The WA PHNs are three of 31 PHNs established by the Australian Government nationally to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of medical services for the community. We work across the WA healthcare system with doctors, allied health professionals, hospitals and service providers to improve the coordination of care for people who are at risk of poor health outcomes. For more information, visit www.wapha.org.au