



## Helping family and friends to support someone with their mental health



Over 100 family and friends who support someone with their mental health took part in the successful research trial of the *Minds Together* program in 2020.

### Key findings

Participants who completed the program had higher levels of coping self-efficacy (one's self-belief that they can cope in their caregiving role) and lower levels of strain. The research found that the program is a feasible and acceptable way to support family and friends, is safe to use, and ready to undergo a full research trial.

### Family and friends told us

- They enjoyed the program content and found it relevant to their experience.
- The language was accessible and easy to understand.
- The case studies and videos of family and friends were relatable.
- The program reinforced how they perceived their support role and the crucial part they play in the life of the family or friends they support.
- The program strengthened their motivation for self-care.

**“What emotionally shifted me was the videos... I just relate to them as real people.”**

### About Minds Together

*Minds Together* is a suite of programs and resources developed to support the mental health and wellbeing of those who care for someone experiencing mental health concerns or suicidal distress. The online programs offer free, self-paced support featuring interactive activities, multimedia content, personal stories of supporting family and friends, and peer support through a moderated social forum.

*Minds Together* was informed by a 2019 consultation with people with lived and living experience. Key learnings from this consultation showed that many people who provide support identify as female, experience high levels of psychological distress, and are very invested in the wellbeing of the person they support.

## Who are supporting their family and friends with their mental health?

- 108 people over 16 years old participated in this research trial
- 89% were female
- The average age was 50 years old
- 84% were born in Australia
- 5% were Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander
- 34% supported their child, 31% supported their partner and 22% supported their parent. Others supported friends, siblings or other family members.
- 80% supported a person experiencing both depression and anxiety symptoms, 15% supported someone only experiencing anxiety symptoms and 5.6% supported someone experiencing only depression symptoms.



**“Answering questions about being a carer has made me actively think about the importance of my role and the need for self-care.”**

## Future directions

Following this successful research trial, Everymind held a randomised control trial of the *Minds Together* program in 2022. These research findings also informed the adaptation of the program for other communities including:

- Family and friends supporting someone who has attempted suicide
- Family and friends supporting the mental health of paramedics.

We intend to continue expanding the *Minds Together* program for different support contexts. Our consultations also suggest that those with lived and living experience want more peer support options. Our future research will also include understanding how best to embed additional peer support options in our online programs.

*Minds Together* for family and friends supporting someone with their mental health is being updated based on the research findings and will be available in the future at [mindstogether.org.au](https://mindstogether.org.au)