

Minds Together summary

July – December 2022

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 ill-health or suicidal distress.

Three programs have been developed, specifically tailored to the experience of providing care and support in a range of settings and relationships. These programs include information resources and tools, activities, lived experience videos, podcasts and peer-to-peer support.

Building capability

Minds Together for family and friends supporting someone with their mental health



- A pilot study found that the study design was feasible and the *Minds Together* program was acceptable to participants.
- Completed the evaluation of a trial with results to be published and disseminated in the next reporting period.

Minds Together for family and friends supporting someone who has attempted suicide



- Developed the new *Minds Together* online program for family and friends supporting someone who has attempted suicide.
- Began a trial in October 2022 evaluating the feasibility and acceptability of this new online program.
- Partnered with Wesley Lifeforce Aftercare to conduct a group program in October 2022 for family and friends supporting someone who has attempted suicide.

Minds Together for family and friends supporting the mental health of paramedics



- Consulted with 72 family members and friends supporting a currently or previously employed paramedic experiencing symptoms of mental ill-health or suicidal distress.

Family and friends told us:

- 50% of paramedics were diagnosed with a mental illness
- 42% of paramedics had experienced suicidal distress
- 68% of caregivers were experiencing a moderate to very high level of psychological distress.

92%

of caregivers were experiencing moderate to severe levels of strain relating to their caregiver role.

- Developed the new *Minds Together* online program for family and friends supporting the mental health of paramedics – including producing videos with paramedics and their family and friends discussing their lived experience.
- Commenced a trial in November 2022 evaluating the effectiveness of the new online program.

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As a support person there is only so much I can do. Seeing someone you love go through things that you can't help with is painful. I may be able to listen, manage the day to day family needs or just be there for him, but trying to do this and support him at the same time can be draining and hard.

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- Partner of a paramedic



Community engagement and knowledge sharing

- Developed the *Minds Together* website as the central portal for programs specifically for people who are supporting a family member or friend with mental ill-health or suicidal distress.
- Delivered presentations and workshops at four conferences, forums, webinars and meetings to share knowledge and findings from our consultation study, to promote the new online programs and to engage with others in the sector.
- Presentations and workshops included the International Mental Health Conference, Carer Expo Melbourne, Council of Ambulance Authorities webinar, and the NSW Response Agency Staff Support Alliance.
- Promoted the program at the NSW Mental Health Parliamentary Showcase.
- Took part in four radio interviews, collaborated on an episode on the Paramedic Podcast, and published articles in the National Rural Health Alliance's Partyline magazine, Council of Ambulance Authorities FIRST magazine, and NSW Ambulance's Sirens Magazine.
- *Minds Together* programs were also promoted widely in stakeholder communications, including by *Roses in the Ocean*, Carers Australia, Northern Territory Mental Health Coalition, Queensland Mental Health Commission, Hunter Medical Research Institute, The Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists, and more.



Collaborative partnerships and stakeholder engagement

- Collaborated with 22 community members (people with lived and living experience of mental ill-health or suicidal distress, as well as experts in the field) to take part in our Family and Friends Reference Group, Expert Advisory Group, and Steering Group.

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Thank you for the work you and the team do. It saves lives, it will save lives.

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- Family and Friends Reference Group member

- Partnered with Suicide Prevention Australia, University of Newcastle, NSW Ambulance, FORTEM Australia, and Movember to develop and deliver new *Minds Together* online programs.
- Partnered with SANE to provide an online social support platform for *Minds Together* program participants.
- Contributed to a total of 14 collaborative meetings to disseminate information about the program trials within the industry and community.
- Collaborated with Associate Professor Penny Reeves, from HMRI, on a research impact study/publication.

Research and evaluation



- Published *Supports and Interventions for Carers of a Person with Depressive or Anxiety Symptomology: A Systematic Review* in Europe's Journal of Psychology.
- Utilised the Bennetts Hierarchy to develop and implement a Theory of Change for every *Minds Together* program.
- Partnered with the University of Canberra as an external evaluator of the *Minds Together* online program for family and friends supporting the mental health of paramedics.
- Ongoing trials of *Minds Together* online programs to measure feasibility, acceptability and efficacy.

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Overall, I think the program is brilliant. It's engaging and easy to navigate and provides some really essential information and tips.

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- Expert Advisory Group Member