

# Minds Together summary

July – December 2023

*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.*

## Impact of *Minds Together* for family and friends supporting someone experiencing mental health concerns or suicidal distress

### New partnership with the Tasmanian Department of Health

Work has begun to integrate the *Minds Together* programs into Tasmanian aftercare and other services. This will include consulting with organisations, government and those with lived and living experience on how to successfully implement the programs.

### Finalised a pilot trial - *Minds Together* for family and friends supporting someone who has attempted suicide



- The program was found to be feasible, acceptable and safe to use.
- 80% of family and friends found activities and content summaries practical and would recommend the program to others.

#### What family and friends had to say

*“Giving myself permission to take time to do what I need/want to do - improved communication with the person I care for and helped us consider each other’s perspectives.”*

- Parent of someone who has attempted suicide.

*“I have been able to refer to some of the ideas and experiences shared in the materials provided in the program. Especially around prioritising self-care.”*

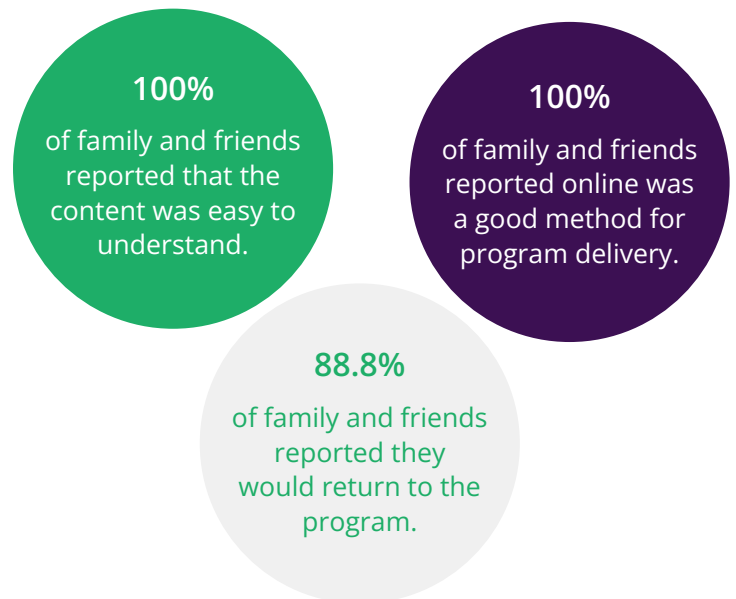
- Parent of someone who has attempted suicide.



### Research trial progress - *Minds Together* for family and friends supporting the mental health of a paramedic



#### Key learnings



### Published journal article – ‘Research Translation and Impact of a Program of Work to Support Carers of a Person with Depressive or Anxiety Symptoms’

The purpose of this study was to retrospectively assess the benefits, costs and lessons learned from the *Minds Together* research by examining program documentation. The study found that the *Minds Together* research had:

- Widespread benefits, particularly in capacity building
- A return on investment of **over \$80,000** in 2022
- Led to improvements in recruitment and trial processes, collaboration and research funding opportunities
- Contributed to program improvements and long-term business developments through embedding carer feedback into research and practice, such as the adoption of language for internal and external communications within Everymind.

## Compassionate connections: Peer support for family and friends supporting someone experiencing suicidal distress

Supported by the Hunter Medical Research Institute's Healthy Minds program, this project involved consulting with representatives who have lived and living experience as support people, individuals who had experienced mental health concerns and suicidal distress, and service providers for families and friends in supportive roles. The aim was to understand how to best support family and friends who are providing care to someone experiencing mental health concerns and suicidal distress.

The project examined preferred terminology and communication styles for programs and resources, as well as options for peer support. Project activities included a systematic review to explore the effectiveness of peer support for family and friends, analysis of data from a Roses in The Ocean workshop held in 2023, and a local sector/community consultation.

### Project outcomes



The most preferred term to describe someone in a support role was 'family and friends', while 'carer' was the least preferred term.



It's crucial to use diverse, simple and safe language that is person-centred.



Peer support options may alleviate challenges when navigating health systems and can foster a sense of connectedness.



Although peer support is valued, its efficacy needs further exploration.



## Collaborative partnerships and stakeholder engagement

### Partnerships and collaborations

- Facilitated a workshop with the Hunter New England Local Health District (HNELHD) Mental Health Family and Carers program on how to include family and friends in clinical care - HNELHD Psychology conference, November 2023.
- Established a collaborative relationship with Mates in Mining to provide Everymind and *Minds Together* resources for their new online hub, improving the wellbeing of fly-in fly-out workers.

### Connecting with community, government and stakeholders

- Research findings from the *Minds Together* programs were promoted and presented at local, national and international conferences.
- The *Minds Together* programs were promoted through various Primary Health Networks and Local Health Districts, Northern Territory Mental Health, Beyond Blue, South Australia Ambulance, NSW Ambulance Family Support Service, Tasmanian Department of Health, federal, state and territory governments, and more.
- Discussions were held with the Australian Catholic University, Central QLD University and the University of Southern QLD to embed the *Minds Together* for family and friends supporting the mental health of a paramedic program into paramedic university training.

Over 1,107,216  
Australians  
were reached by  
*Minds Together*  
promotions.

### Key learnings

- The *Minds Together* programs have been found to be safe, easy to use and acceptable to participants.
- Relying solely on mass media and stakeholder referrals is not enough to engage family and friends in supporting individuals with mental health concerns or suicidal distress.
- Interventions must be embedded into the spaces where we live, work and play to ensure people receive timely information and support.

### Future focus

Extend the reach of *Minds Together* by working closely with communities, stakeholders and governments.