

East Gippsland PCP Case study 2019-2020

Establishment of the East Gippsland Mental Wellbeing Network

Name of PCP	East Gippsland Primary Care Partnership
Case Study Title	Establishment of the East Gippsland Mental Wellbeing Network
Which PCP domain does your case study relate to?	Prevention
What was the need?	<p>East Gippsland Primary Care Partnership (EGPCP) staff identified a unique opportunity to partner with other agencies in East Gippsland to develop a Prevention network that focused on long term prevention issues regarding the mental wellbeing of our community.</p> <p>East Gippsland encompasses one of the largest geographical areas in Victoria, with a widespread population, including some of the most remote pockets in Victoria which border NSW. Within the catchment there is a high Indigenous population (3.8% compared with Vic average 0.8%) - with over 40% under 17. The catchment also ranks in some of the highest/lowest statistics in the state in critical domains including housing, employment, rate of disability, school readiness, heart disease, family violence, bullying, amongst others. The natural ecosystem also experienced four years of drought leading into the most severe bushfires in recent history followed by covid-19. All of which have influence on several health and wellbeing factors for mental wellbeing in the region.</p> <p>Systems thinking training and approaches have been applied within the PCP over the last several years to other prevention priority areas including healthy eating and active living, alcohol, and drug use. This has established a reasonable level of familiarity and interest in the approach. It was identified that a systems approach to mental health in East Gippsland had the potential to offer a strategic and meaningful way to engage our collaborative partners across the catchment in identifying and prototyping responses to this complex, cross-cutting issue. Additionally, a systems approach can be particularly useful in a catchment such as East Gippsland because it encourages the distribution of activity and engagement across multiple organisations, recognising the important need for, and role of multiple and diverse organisations to collaborate and participate in creative responses to complex issues in mental wellbeing.</p>
What was the aim of the initiative/action?	<p>The purpose of establishing the Network was to improve mental wellbeing in East Gippsland and identify what needs to change and how it will change.</p> <p>The aim of the work was to gather key agencies that would explore and define the root causes that challenge mental wellbeing in the East Gippsland community. By doing so we sort to explore their relationships between the identified risk factors negatively impacting on the mental wellbeing of the community and create opportunities for long term prevention activities through a whole community approach.</p> <p>The design incorporated five workshops and subsequent zoom summary sessions using systems thinking concepts to refine direction and lead change. Using the learnings and tools developed through these workshops the network it was envisioned that the group would develop a change</p>

	framework to assist to develop prevention interventions that would address change in identified areas.
Who was the target group?	Local health agencies, service providers, Local Government agencies and department representative from DHHS and DET
What was the setting?	Facilitated workshops and Zoom recorded summary sessions
Who did you work with?	<p>The Network comprises of some 17 agencies that will work collaboratively to implement the project with EGPCP as the lead agency. Members include but are not restricted to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - East Gippsland Primary Care Partnership - East Gippsland Shire Council - Gippsland Lakes Complete Health - Department of Education and Training - Department of Health and Human Services - Orbost Regional Health - Omeo District Health - Mallacoota District Health Service - Save the Children - Uniting - Latrobe Regional Hospital - Vic Police - Headspace Bairnsdale - Lakes Entrance Aboriginal Health Association - Quantum Support Services - Gippsland Primary Health Network - Gippsland and East Gippsland Aboriginal Co-operative
How did you do it?	<p>A series of 5 workshops facilitated by Dr. Seanna Davidson, Director at The Systems School, to support a systems thinking approach to mental wellbeing in East Gippsland were conducted.</p> <p>Over this period five complex problems were identified that underpin mental wellbeing in East Gippsland. These were prioritised, highlighting the two most important problems at this time. These were:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reaching those who are not accessing service before they reach crisis point; 2. Short term and limited funding impede sustainable outcomes; 3. High levels of gender inequality negatively influencing the mental wellbeing of women; 4. There are socially isolated children and families in East Gippsland; and 5. East Gippsland are focused on reactive measures rather than early intervention and prevention. <p>From these, the following two were prioritised by the network:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. There are socially isolated children and families in East Gippsland (now Social connectedness for children and young people); and 2. East Gippsland are focused on reactive measures rather than early intervention and prevention (now Prioritising prevention in leadership and decision making). <p>Through this process a change measurement framework was developed to identify shorter term changes, measures, and possible action to address each of the two prioritised problems.</p> <p>Ongoing support for the network included online follow up Zoom summary sessions which were recorded to allow for greater participation and the use of Basecamp as an online platform for storage and access for the network to all documentation developed.</p>

<p>What was achieved? (Consider whether results were benefits for clients and/or for service providers and/or for the system)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Formation of an ongoing sustainable network in East Gippsland focused on prevention activities relevant to the mental wellbeing of East Gippsland communities. - Shared insight and understanding amongst project partners about the current mental health and wellbeing system in East Gippsland and documented in systems thinking workshop outcomes reports. - Increased systems thinking capacity amongst EGPCP staff and partner agencies. - Shifting organisational cultures towards reflective, learning, and adaptive approaches. - Development of a theory of change and change framework for improving systemic challenges for mental wellbeing in East Gippsland. - Opportunities to prototype, and measure change in, response to leverage points identified in systems thinking activities to improve mental health outcomes for East Gippsland communities.
<p>What is the status and sustainability?</p>	<p>The group continues to meet regularly utilising online platforms and there is strong participation from all partner agencies. The group utilises Basecamp as an online repository for all documentation including meeting agendas and minutes with access given to all participating agencies.</p> <p>The network is currently focused on a project relating to priority area 1 ‘<i>Social connectedness for children and young people</i>’. This project is a scoping piece focused on “<i>Hearing the voices of Children and Young People</i>” and has been approved by the network and the EGPCP Governance Group. It is currently finalising funding arrangements and is set for implementation in 2021.</p> <p>The change framework developed through this system approach is being incorporated into other networks that EGPCP either facilitate or participate in.</p>
<p>What was the specific role of the PCP?</p>	<p>PCPs are uniquely positioned to establish and facilitate networks such as this. They are largely neutral and EGPCP has strong and well-established relationships with most local health agencies, service providers, local Government, and State Government departments.</p> <p>Through the development period of this network EGPCP provided a co-facilitation and coordination role. Its staff have strong partnership and community development skills and used its existing relationships and networks to maximum benefit.</p> <p>Moving forward EGPCP continues to provide the secretariat for this network and is the lead agency in the recently developed “<i>Hearing the Voices of Children and Young People</i>” project.</p>
<p>What lessons have you learnt?</p>	<p>New networks take time to establish. Leveraging off existing relationships is hugely beneficial, but care needs to be taken regarding providing clarity around the intent and identified outcome areas.</p> <p>Though a period of drought followed by bushfire and then Covid-19 agencies in the East Gippsland region are experiencing high levels of fatigue, constant staff changes and challenges with resourcing. These are considerations in establishing and maintaining organisational participation.</p> <p>Several new networks have emerged over the last two years. Work needs to be done to ensure these networks leverage off existing work and avoid duplication and competition for resources.</p>
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<p>Position/Title</p>	<p>Partnership Facilitator</p>