

Darayiga Guya Mapu (Come here: talk feeling)

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A pilot project is being conducted in Crescent Head NSW over a twelve-month period starting April 2007 and will conclude in March 2008. The women in outlying communities and villages of Kempsey Shire council were identified in the Vinson report (Dropping off the Edge) as needing emotional support to deal with social issues. The lack of promotion of mental health was highlighted in NSW Health Department. *Caring for mental health: a framework for mental health care in NSW*. Sydney: NSW Health Department, 1998 and in Commonwealth Department of Health and Aged Care. *Mental Health Promotion and Prevention National Action Plan*. Canberra: Department of Health and Aged Care, 1999.

For the purpose of the pilot project the Crescent Head community was chosen because of its geographic close proximity to Durri Aboriginal Medical Service.; thus making service delivery to that community beneficial.

The project

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Intent

- Awareness:
 - of their mental health
 - the effects of psych medicines
 - what is wellbeing
 - the effects of alcohol and other drugs
 - child development milestones
 - effects of domestic violence
 - self
- Provide information on all aspects of healthy lifestyles for women
- Opportunity for network creation, building and maintenance

Target group

- Women
- Women referred from psychiatrist Dr O'Brien and psychologist Sue Baughman; referral is at the discretion of the treating professional
- Women with substance use/abuse/misuse issues
- Dual-diagnosis women
- Women experiencing domestic and/or family violence
- Women with young children

Proposed methodology

- Through one-on-one counselling
- Through case management
- Group work
- Appropriate referral service
- Minimal work with the partners

This project would utilise the skills of the women facilitating programs at Durri ACMS, therefore minimising the need or requirement to outsource. The programs that engage women facilitators include:

- female social emotional and wellbeing officer

- sexual health
- chronic disease
- female alcohol and other drugs worker
- female families first officer
- midwife
- nutritionist (from MNC Area Health Service)
- also available and committed to this project is female case manager from Many Rivers Violence Prevention Service.

The principle idea is to introduce our women to all of these concepts and to show examples of possibilities and consequences if they were to continue on with their current lifestyles.

This is an innovative strategy being developed to work with women who are mentally unwell or at risk of becoming unwell; women who have substance abuse/misuse issues; women who have experienced domestic violence and women with young children.

The next stage of this pilot was to introduce the women to a fitness regime and a nutritionist.