

**Broadening and deepening
mental health promotion:
the importance of coalition
building**

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- * Why is coalition building important?
- * Building coalitions - the VicHealth experience
- * Success factors for successful coalition building

Why is coalition building important?

- * Coalitions and partnerships increasingly essential for dealing with complex problems which traverse sectoral and disciplinary boundaries
- * Coalitions and partnerships particularly important in mental health promotion because **key drivers of mental health lie outside the health system**

Key determinants of mental health and community wellbeing

Social Inclusion

- Socially isolated people have between 2 and 5 times the risk of dying from all causes compared to those who maintain strong ties with family, friends & community. (*Berkman & Glass 2000*)

Discrimination

- Racism undermines mental health and wellbeing through increasing stress, reducing self esteem and reducing access to secure employment. (*Mackenzie 2003*). Suicide rates for Australian indigenous population almost double non indigenous population.

Violence

- Intimate partner violence is the leading contributor to death, disability and illness in Victorian women aged 15-44. It is responsible for more than other well known risk factors such as high blood pressure, smoking and obesity. (*VicHealth 2004*)

Access to economic resources

- Higher rates of mortality, disability and chronic illness are consistently reported in people of lower socioeconomic status. (*Australian Institute of Health & Welfare 2000*)

VicHealth Framework for Action

Key Social & Economic Determinants of Mental Health and Wellbeing

Social inclusion

- *Supportive relationships
- *Involvement in group activities
- *Civic engagement

Freedom from discrimination & violence

- *Valuing of diversity
- *Physical security
- *Self determination and control

Economic participation and security

- *Education
- *Work and income
- *Housing

Population groups

Children, young people, women and men, older people, indigenous communities, culturally diverse communities, rural communities

Health promotion methodologies

Community programs, organisational development, workforce development, community strengthening, communication and marketing, advocacy, legislative and policy reform, research and evaluation

Sectors for Action

HOUSING
TRANSPORT

COMMUNITY
CORPORATE

EDUCATION
PUBLIC

WORKPLACE
ARTS

SPORT &
RECREATION

HEALTH
JUSTICE

ACADEMIC
GOVERNMENT

Key partners to influence determinants of mental health and wellbeing

Social inclusion and connectedness

Freedom from discrimination

Freedom from violence

Economic participation and security

- * Cwlth and State Governments (eg. Education, Arts, Sport)
- * NGOs
- * Schools
- * Sporting clubs
- * Community Arts Centres
- * Community Festivals
- * Public transport companies
- * Research fellows and organisations

- * Dept of Multicultural Affairs
- * Equal Opportunity Commission
- * Indigenous organisations
- * Migrany and refugee communities
- * Churches
- * Australian Football League
- * Research fellows and organisations

- * Department of Justice
- * Police
- * Women's Services
- * Childrens Court
- * Family Court
- * Aboriginal Womens organisations
- * Australian Football League
- * Research fellows and organisations

- * Dept. of Education
- * Dept of Employment and Industrial Relation
- * Employers
- * Trade unions
- * Schools
- * Refugee resettlement initiatives
- * Research Fellows and organisations

VicHealth work flow

- combining art & science

- * Issue identification
- * Scoping of existing research and best practice
- * Consultation with research, policy and practice experts - via Stakeholder Roundtable
- * Identify preferred intervention
- * Establish policy, research and practice partnerships
- * Design and implement intervention, research/evaluation
- * Disseminate learnings
- * Advocacy to create policy reform
- * Sustainability of intervention
- * Transfer/replicate and scale up intervention

Reducing racial discrimination through 'Building Bridges'

Aim

To improve mental health and wellbeing by promoting positive contact and cooperation between people from migrant and refugee backgrounds and others in the community.



'Building Bridges'

Theory

Inter-group contact (Allport 1954).
Increased intercultural/inter racial mixing
leads to increased trust and reduced
discrimination - under four conditions.

People brought together...

- to engage in a cooperative activity;
- to work on a shared goal;
- on equal terms;
- with organizational support for contact and tension reduction.

Evidence: Recent intervention studies
(eg. Pettigrew 2001)

Building Bridges: Method

- * Initiatives that bring migrant and refugee groups affected by discrimination and social exclusion together to work on cooperative activities with members of the wider community (40 initial grants x \$A20,000)
- * Work places, schools, local government and community settings
- * Focus on
 - Initiatives involving children and young people
 - Regional and rural Victoria
 - Areas affected by social and economic disadvantage
- * To be scaled up following evaluation and ongoing program of action research

Building Bridges: Practice Partners

- * **Recipe for Success:** Booroondara Kindergarten and Australian Vietnamese Women's Welfare
- * **Envirolink:** Adult Multicultural Education Services; Horn of Africa Communities Network; Bass Coast and Echuca Landcare groups
- * **Kar Kulture:** Migrant Resource Centre, Victoria Police, Mission Australia. Nuer Youth Association
- * **Broadmeadows Tapestry Project:** Meadowbank Primary School, Turkish Women's Voice, Women's Neighbourhood House; University of Melbourne

Building Bridges: Policy and research partners

- * Government, non government and private sector partners
- * University research partners

...leading to learning,
dissemination, scaling up and
sustainability..

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Goal: To create and share knowledge which strengthens the foundations of healthy, just and resilient communities - leading to improved mental health and community wellbeing

Focus

- Freedom from violence
- Freedom from discrimination
- Social inclusion and connectedness
- Economic participation and security

Actions

- Collecting and publishing evidence about community wellbeing trends
- Identifying and assessing most promising policy ideas and initiatives
- Designing and implementing policy impact research projects
- Building knowledge, skills, capacity of communities and policy makers


Success factors for coalition building

- Shared framework and understanding about key determinants of health and wellbeing
- Mutual benefit
- Shared goals and language
- Clarity about partner roles and contributions
- Clear communication
- Appropriate resources
- Clear accountability and effective co-ordination
- Building capacity, knowledge and skills of all partners

Future challenges...

- Increasing pressures of globalisation - and fragmentation
- Impact on mental health and wellbeing of individuals, families and communities
- Increasingly complex, multi dimensional problems
- Cross disciplinary and cross sectoral partnerships key to broadening and deepening strategies for the promotion of mental health and wellbeing





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