

NEMHSCA

NORTH EAST MENTAL HEALTH SERVICE COORDINATION ALLIANCE

ANNUAL REPORT 2020-2021

Report Provided by Sarah Officer NEMHSCA Project Coordinator



Background-

The NEMHSCA project sought to build on the work of the North East Mental Health Alliance (NEMHA), a longstanding mental health alliance in the North East region led by Banyule Community Health (BCH). In recognition of significant and continued sector reform in the Alcohol and Other Drug (AOD) and Mental Health sectors, BCH sought resources to continue and expand the Alliance to reflect current need for integration and collaboration across the multiple sectors who are involved in service delivery for this most vulnerable of client groups. Having secured funding from the Eastern Melbourne Primary Health Network (EMPHN), BCH and St Vincent's Hospital Melbourne (SVHM) sought partnership to renew and reinvigorate the Alliance, to be called the North East Mental Health Service Coordination Alliance (NEMHSCA).

The Role of NEMHSCA-

Is to promote the development, implementation and monitoring of an integrated multi sector service coordination framework that harnesses the knowledge, experience and practice wisdom of representatives from across the North East metropolitan region. NEMHSCA aims to provide a platform to better enhance service integration and communication so consumers, carers and the community can access responsive, appropriate and integrated Mental Health and wellbeing support.

NEMHSCA Strategic Direction 2019-2021

Vision-For consumers, carers and the communities we serve to receive person centred, timely, flexible and appropriate mental health and wellbeing support from services who coordinate, communicate and integrate through a regional service coordination platform.

Function- The North East Mental Health Service Coordination Alliance is an inter-organisational collaborative platform that advocates, plans and shapes better health and wellbeing service delivery; including improving and enhancing service coordination and integration in the North East metropolitan region of Victoria.

NEMHSCA Priority Areas-

Mental Health and AOD System Reform

Objective- To improve consumer and carer access to person centered, timely, flexible, culturally safe, appropriate and integrated support.

Safe and Quality Care

Objective- Shared understanding of key quality and safety issues and agreed application of service coordination and care pathways between partner agencies.

Collaborative and Shared Care Planning

Objective- Shared understanding of key issues and agreed application of service collaboration and shared care pathways between partner agencies.

Workforce Expansion, Retention and Development

Objective- Maintain and further develop a skilled workforce in the region.

NEMHSCA Project June 2020- June 2021

2020- By mid 2020 NEMHSCA and its members had completely re-invented the way they provided services and faced many challenges due to the Coronavirus pandemic. NEMHSCA and its services found themselves navigating a “new normal” of online service delivery and communication. The alliance moved swiftly to online using Zoom to conduct its alliance meetings. The alliance became a place to navigate themes, challenges and successes relating to the mental health and wellbeing of consumers, carers, staff and the community. It became a platform for members to share new programs and updates, stayed informed to changes and connected as a community. As NEMHSCA entered into a world of COVID-19 and lockdown it suspended its original agenda and often focussed primarily on service updates and changes. It shortened our meeting to 90 minutes to prevent the serious Zoom fatigue and meeting burnout that many people were experiencing. NEMHSCA cancelled the workshops that were in their planning stages and had to rethink how to deliver the workforce development and capacity building funding. The staff Regional Service Navigation Forum and many of the project deliverables were put on hold. Now NEMHSCA had to learn how to create and deliver online events from home and did so successfully in 2020 and it delivered 3 live and interactive online events.

The themes of the events came from the North East workforce themes survey and to the best of its reach the workforce told NEMHSCA they wanted to learn more about Trauma Informed Care and Dual Diagnosis. During the pandemic NEMHSCA also realised there was a need for good planning with consumers who spent less time face to face with workers so it created a webinar to show people how to simply and effectively make a relapse prevention plan that could be shared by care teams, carers and support people. Even though services were at their busiest the NEMHSCA alliance maintained its membership despite the disruption of the pandemic in fact it grew slightly. New and existing partnerships within the alliance were strengthened, they connected and collaborated more. By the end of 2020 NEMHSCA had become a fully online entity reaching to the wider community and workforce.

2021- Despite entering 2021 and facing another year of pandemic related disruptions. NEMHSCA strengthened its identity and increased its commitment within the alliance. The alliance meetings continued to meet online in which it saw greater attendance, participation, enthusiasm, and overall support for the project. The alliance meetings focused on local and meaningful subject matter and moved slightly from information sharing to discussion and planning. The alliance focused on subjects such as the RCVMHS and the regional shared care strategy. In comparison to 2020, which saw a great deal of online workforce events and webinars. NEMHSCA entered 2021 with a hope to deliver a hybrid model of online and in person events. Unfortunately, further lockdowns put live events on hold and NEMHSCA postponed its Regional Service Navigation event for the second time. However, NEMHSCA maintained its online presence and continued to support the alliance and workforce throughout another challenging year of lockdowns. NEMHSCA continued to deliver its fortnightly MH and AOD workforce connection sessions and presented on the success of this initiative at the 2021 TheMHS conference.

NEMHSCA Activities 2020

Workforce Development and Capacity Building Funding – EMPHN

Workshop 1- Workshop 1 was already well into its planning stages was turned into a Webinar in July 2020. NEMHSCA invited Phoenix Australia the National Centre of excellence for Post-Traumatic Stress and the Northern Centre Against Sexual Assault along to deliver a 2 hour webinar called Trauma Informed Care and Responding to sexual abuse disclose (Trauma Informed Care focus) – 498 viewers

Webinar 1 - Harm Reduction and empowering person-centred approach to Mental Health and Substance Use. NEMHSCA teamed up with Nexus Dual Diagnosis Service, Harm Reduction Victoria and staff from Mind Australia, Wellways, St Vincent's Hospital with support from the Yarra Mental Health Alliance and the Yarra Drug and Health Forum to create a 90 minutes webinar on Harm Reduction (Dual Diagnosis focus). 370 viewers

Webinar 2- Relapse Prevention- how to explore the early warning signs of psychosis. NEMHSCA teamed up with Monash University, Nexus Dual Diagnosis Service and the great skills of Simon Laxton who had been trained in the BITS model to create a Relapse Prevention webinar. 240 viewers

Outcomes of online events-

The NEMHSCA webinars reached 1108 members of the workforce (event bright registered) Harm Reduction is now being explored by Mind Australia in their staff induction training Launch Housing, EACH, Austin Health, Youth Projects are also exploring Harm Reduction Training Austin Health used the Trauma Informed Care webinar as an inhouse workshop.

Branding Package Completion-

In 2020 NEMHSCA voted on its favourite NEMHSCA branding logo and the winning logo can be seen below. The colours represent the diverse landscape of the NEMHSCA region. The NEMHSCA region covers a large area of Victoria including the Shires of Mitchell, Murrindindi and Nillumbik and the Cities of Banyule and Whittlesea.



The strengths of NEMHSCA in 2020

The NEMHSCA alliance maintained its membership despite the disruption of the pandemic in fact it grew slightly. New and existing partnerships within the alliance were strengthened, they connected and collaborated more. The alliance were able to share service changes and ideas within the space. NEMHSCA has become a sounding board for larger projects in the community and our input is contributing to change.

Highlights for 2020

- NEMHSCA held 4 Zoom alliance meetings online
- NEMHSCA completed its branding package
- NEMHSCA created 3 online live events
- NEMHSCA and Mind Australia collaborated to create a lived experience story in the form of an animation
- 3 Service Providers joined the NEMHSCA membership, IMHA, WHIN and DPV Health.
- NEMHSCA gained a space on the EMPHN website and will continue to develop links to services and resources.
- NEMHSCA held presentations from LIFT stepped care model for mental health, Uniting ReGen, IMHA, EMPHN referral and access team and Neami National.
- NEMHSCA partnered with Nexus Dual Diagnosis service to provide 39 COVID-19 related online sessions throughout 2020
- NEMHSCA concluded the year with a celebration and entertainment event put on by Multicultural Arts Victoria

NEMHSCA Activities 2021

Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System

NEMHSCA played a vital role in disseminating information and responding to the 2021 Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System report and recommendations. In early 2021 NEMHSCA invited MHRV to present at a NEMHSCA alliance meeting, giving the alliance an early insight into some of the recommendations from the much anticipated report. After the release of the report, NEMHSCA held an alliance meeting to unpack some of the recommendations and highlight some areas for NEMHSCA to focus on as an alliance. The top 5 priority areas from the report were-

- 1.The workforce planning, strategies, and recruitment
- 2.The regional Mental Health and Wellbeing services
- 3.The expansion of the Lived Experience workforce
- 4.Integrated Care (MH and AOD)
- 5.Helping people access care, treatment and support (navigation)

NEMHSCA used its collaborative online platform "Tuesdays with Nexus" to turn to these topics and gather leaders and expert speakers to unpack them. These included presentations by Phoenix Australia- National Centre of Excellence in posttraumatic mental health, the Victorian Dual Diagnosis

Initiative, Turning Point, SHARC, Mind Australia, St Vincent’s Hospital, Melbourne. Vaada, Tandam, YSAS, YACVIC, Family Drug Help and Monash University.

In late 2021 NEMHSCA were informed that one of the first Local Adult Mental Health and Wellbeing Services would be trailed in Whittlesea. Many local NEMHSCA organisations would be bidding for the opportunity to pilot this site and many were expressing interest in partnering with and advocating on behalf of the community with the organisations that were successful. So in a separate forum NEMHSCA gathered its alliance members to have an open and transparent conversation about the new tender and talked about ways in which NEMHSCA services could contribute, support or partner with each other to create a truly integrated community based mental health and wellbeing service.

Mental Health and AOD Workforce Online Sessions

Tuesdays with Nexus a collaborative venture with NEMHSCA is an interactive online session that was established in March 2020 in response to the COVID-19 Global Pandemic. As sector connectors and leaders NEMHSCA and Nexus invited the broader community to join together to explore new ways of working and supporting each other. The particular focus was to assist the workforce in supporting people who experience co-occurring substance use/addiction and mental health issues. The sessions were developed as a space to draw on the collective wisdom and creativity of others facing similar challenges in unprecedented times. Sessions ran every Tuesday fortnightly at the same time using the online platform Zoom.

In 2021 sessions continued to run on a fortnightly basis (16 in total) with the focus being on the Royal Commission into Victoria’s Mental Health Service (RCVMHS) recommendations and the implications of these on the broader service sector. Overall NEMHSCA and Nexus welcomed 28 presenters, with 544 participants, making an average of 34 people per session.

The sessions have evolved into an innovative, responsive platform for disseminating information regarding changes to the mental health, alcohol and other drugs and other health and welfare services. It has opened up opportunities for workers from all of these sectors to share information, receive sector updates, share resources, be informed about different sector challenges and successes. The sessions have enabled the workforce to share, connect and learn. It has been a powerful tool to enhance workforce connection, share successes, provide a space for workers to reflect, and the voice of lived and living experience people to share, in an easily accessible, welcoming and supportive manner. In late 2021 NEMHSCA presented on its work with Tuesdays with Nexus at the 2021 TheMHS conference “Hope into Action” highlighting the value and contribution to the workforce.

Shared Care Strategy

In 2021 the NEMHSCA alliance started a series of conversations around creating a Shared Care Strategy for the North East region. Late in 2021 the alliance invited EMHSCA project coordinator Bronwyn Williams to present on the Shared Care protocol in the East. NEMHSCA agreed that a Shared Care Strategy for the North East will be a valuable addition to the NEMHSCA project and will continue creating its own strategy in 2022.

Support Connect (EMPHN)

NEMHSCA was also a key contributor to the development of the Eastern Melbourne PHNs “Support Connect” service navigation website and resource. NEMHSCA members were consulted on the website in varying stages of development.

Highlights for 2021

- NEMHSCA held a membership forum for the Whittlesea MH&WB service
- NEMHSCA attending the Themhs conference
- NEMHSCA planning a shared care strategy
- NEMHSCA and the professional develop working party developing a regional service navigation online event for 2022
- Supporting the development of EMPHNs Support Connect Project
- NEMHSCA producing 16 MH&AOD workforce online sessions

Unspent funding in the 2020-2021 financial year.

The Regional Forum and Workshop 2 were scheduled for early 2021, however due to the NEMHSCA project coordinator taking Maternity Leave and pandemic related restrictions the events were postponed for late 2021 and 2022.

What’s in store for 2022.

- 1 Regional NE Service Navigation Online Event
- Sustaining and building relationships and partnerships within the NEMHSCA alliance.
- New membership to consider Housing, CALD and Aboriginal Health Services.
- Inviting Lived and Living representation on the alliance.
- Reinvigorating the Expert/Lived Experience Advisory Group
- A focus on the Victorian Mental Health System transformation
- A focus on the new Adult Mental Health and Wellbeing service in Whittlesea

Governance Committee-

The Governance Committee of NEMHSCA.

A Memorandum of Understanding exists between Banyule Community Health and St Vincent's Hospital Melbourne.

NEMHSCA Governance Committee- Larissa Seymour (EMPHN- 2020-21), Liz Hodgkinson (EMPHN- Oct 21) Lara Jackson (BCH), Chris Hynan (SVHM), Sarah Officer (NEMHSCA Project Coordinator).

The Alliance.

NEMHSCA Project Coordinator- Sarah Officer

NEMHSCA Co-chairs: Lara Jackson (BCH) and Chris Hynan (SVHM)

Membership of NEMHSCA-

	Mind Australia
Austin Health	Northern Area Mental Health NAMHS
Banyule Community Health	Neami National
Brotherhood of St Laurence	Nexus Dual Diagnosis Consultation Service
CarerLinks North	Nexus Primary Health
Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS)	Orange Door
DPV Health	Odyssey House
Eastern Melbourne Primary Health Network	Services Australia
Headspace	Uniting ReGen
health Ability/Carrington Health	Wellways
Hume/Whittlesea PCP	Whittlesea Council
IMHA	WHIN

NEMHSCA website

To find all the resources, events and reports for NEMHSCA follow the weblink below.

<https://www.emphn.org.au/what-we-do/mental-health/north-east-mental-health-service-coordination-alliance-nemhsca>



The Role of NEMHSCA 2020

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Download

- [NEMHSCA Terms Of Reference](#) ↓
- [NEMHSCA Strategic Direction](#) ↓
- [NEMHSCA an Overview 2019](#) ↓
- [NEMHSCA Annual Report](#) ↓
- [NEMHSCA Commitment To Communities](#) ↓

NEMHSCA

- [NEMHSCA Events and Webinars](#)