

WAGGA WAGGA BAPTIST CHURCH

MENTAL ILLNESS RESOURCES AND SERVICES BOOKLET

Wagga Wagga, NSW and Australia

This is a collection of mental health resources and services that exist around Wagga, NSW and Australia that you can utilise if you or someone you know is suffering with mental illness and requires information, needs to talk or is experiencing a crisis.

RESOURCES AND SERVICES IN THE LOCAL WAGGA AREA

YOUR LOCAL GP

If you are feeling depressed or anxious your first port of call should be your local GP. They are qualified to counsel and guide you about what approach to take, whether medication is necessary or whether a referral to a more qualified clinician such as a counsellor, psychologist or psychiatrist is warranted. Having said that, there are some GPs who are more knowledgeable about mental illness than others and finding the right GP to meet your needs might take a few tries. Word of mouth is a good way to find a GP who is particularly sensitive towards those who suffer from mental illness.

THE MEDICARE BETTER ACCESS INITIATIVE

This is available to patients with a diagnosed mental disorder whose GP feels that they would benefit from a 'structured' approach to their mental health management. If you fit the criteria for this plan your GP will write up a 'Mental Health Treatment Plan', which allows you to access six individual or six group allied mental health services and receive a Medicare rebate for them. (This service is usually provided by a psychologist.) Following these six sessions and depending on your clinical need an additional four sessions can be provided with the writing of an additional referral. (Note: the health professional may charge an additional fee on top of the rebate. Whether this happens and how much extra they might charge is highly dependent on the actual clinician you see.)

ACCESSLINE: 1800 800 944

This service has mainly been set up to cater for people who are in acute distress. For example, those who are severely depressed, suffering a manic or psychotic episode or are at risk of harming themselves or others. *Generally you don't call this number if you only want to talk.* The phone operators will assess the seriousness of the situation and if necessary arrange for an ambulance to be sent out to your home to take you to Wagga Wagga Rural Referral Hospital. However they may also liaise with The Community Mental Health Centre in O'Reilly Street and will arrange an urgent appointment with a staff member there or arrange an appointment with your GP. AccessLine will ask you to register some personal details with them the first time you call so that they know who they're talking to each time you call them and have a history that they can refer to in order to help guide them in their provision of service to you.

If you don't want to call AccessLine and you feel at risk of harming yourself, someone else or your mental illness has become severe you can also go up to the Emergency Department at Wagga Wagga Rural Referral Hospital yourself

where you will be assessed by members of the Mental Health Emergency Consultation Staff. These clinicians work collaboratively with staff from the Emergency Department, Community and Inpatient Mental Health Services, GPs or Psychiatric Visiting Medical Officers. Following your assessment a provisional diagnosis will be made and a management plan and treatment options will be discussed with both the relevant staff and yourself before making a decision about where you should go once discharged from the Emergency Department. You might be admitted to the new Mental Health Unit on the grounds of Wagga Wagga Referral Hospital, referred to The Community Mental Health Centre or your GP.

THE COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH AND DRUG AND ALCOHOL SERVICES CENTRE: 6923 5700

This is a public mental health service that provides a wide range of services to children, adolescents, adults and the aged who are experiencing mental health issues or require drug and alcohol treatment. They can provide initial assessment, treatment, consultancy, support, continued care, counselling and case management. It is a family-focused service and also provides services such as health promotion, prevention and early intervention to clients. Referrals are directed through AccessLine (1800 800 944).

WAGGA WAGGA RURAL REFERRAL INPATIENT UNIT: 6938 6235 (WARD) 6938 6666 (HOSPITAL)

Wagga has a 22-bed Mental Health Acute Inpatient Unit and an 8-bed High Dependency Unit. Consumers are eligible for admission to the inpatient facility if they are experiencing acute, severe clinical symptoms that represent a risk of serious harm to themselves or others, if they require involuntary admission under the NSW Mental Health Act 2007 or if they cannot be managed in a less restrictive setting. The unit is targeted at adults however those younger than 18 may be admitted under certain circumstances.

MENTAL HEALTH SUB-ACUTE INPATIENT SERVICE

The Mental Health Sub-Acute Unit is a 20-bed unit. It functions as a step-down interface from acute care so is designed for people no longer requiring acute inpatient care but those who would potentially benefit from short-term intensive care and support prior to returning home. The average length of stay at this unit is 6–8 weeks. Participation in the program is not mandatory. It provides the same therapies and is in the same facility as the Mental Health Recovery Program (see below).

(MARATHON HEALTH) STRONG MINDS: 6937 2000 (GENERAL INQUIRIES)

This is a service that provides free counselling for children and adults who live in the Murrumbidgee region and who suffer from a mental illness. They are supported by trained and experienced clinicians who will provide psychological assistance to help with a wide variety of mental health issues. If you think this is a service you would like to access talk to your doctor, psychologist or health professional and they can refer you to the program. After the referral is assessed and accepted a Strong Minds staff member will arrange an appointment for you. Referral forms can be downloaded from the Marathon Health website (www.marathonhealth.com.au) and then faxed to: 02 6921 9911 or emailed to: centralintake@mphn.org.au The service is focused on working towards recovery and wellness and has been designed to meet the needs and goals of the client. It is important to note that this is not a crisis service and is not designed for those people who are in the acute phase of illness. If you have an inquiry about the referral call the Central Intake Office on 6923 3195.

HEADSPACE: 6923 3170

This is an organisation that provides mental health services for young people between the ages of 12 and 25. It provides support from a range of professionals that include case managers, psychologists, social workers, a dietician or a GP. Appointments are bulk billed. You can self refer or ask your GP to refer you. They are located at 180 Morgan St. Check out: <https://headspace.org.au/headspace-centres/wagga-wagga/> for more information.

CONNECT: 6923 3104

This is a service that provides psychological intervention and counselling over the phone. In order to access this service your GP needs to complete a Mental Health Treatment Plan. This needs to be faxed to (02) 6921 9911. Once Connect receives this they will arrange a suitable appointment time with you. The Connect clinicians provide information to your GP about your progress and in this way ensure a continuity of care. For questions about this program contact Daniel Hayes on the number above.

ONE DOOR MENTAL HEALTH CARER SERVICES: 6925 9399

This agency provides a range of services to help the families of people suffering from mental illness. They offer services to families such as respite, advocacy and education. Their goal is to help support the carers of those with mental illness because living with a family member who suffers a mental health condition can take a considerable toll on the carer's health, wellbeing and life goals. They are located at 47–49 Gurwood Street and can be contacted by emailing: maggie.morris@onedoor.org.au

The following programs are run by 'One Door Mental Health Carer Services' and for further information about each of them (except for Sunflower House) call the ONE DOOR phone number or contact Maggie Morris on the email address above.

—Recovery and Resource Services Program (RRSP)

This program provides support to individuals who are in recovery but need some extra assistance in meeting their needs and goals. It works to increase confidence, self-esteem and connection. The program aims to build social interaction, encourage leisure, recreation, education and employment. Clients have a support facilitator who will work with them individually as well as with other local providers in order to help you achieve your goals.

—Personal Helpers and Mentors Program (PHaMs)

This is a program where staff provide case management support to participants who are over the age of 16 and are identified as suffering from a severe and persistent mental illness that is impacting on their quality of life. The program seeks to provide personally tailored and structured care that supports the client's individual needs.

—PHaMs Employment Services

This is a program which has been designed to support people with mental illness meet their employment and study goals. It is a structured program that builds the capacity in people for re-engaging in the social areas of work or study. The focus is on developing day-to-day living skills and building resilience and balance.

—Respite Services

These offer social, educational and emotional support options to meet the needs of families and friends caring for a person with mental illness. They aim to develop the skills and capabilities of carers as well. The program works with other carer-based support programs and consumer services to access financial resources in order to keep offering care to consumers.

—The Schizophrenia Fellowship—Sunflower House: 6931 8770

This provides a 'Wellness and Recovery Hub' for those living with moderate to severe chronic mental illness. It is targeted towards recovery and clients attend daily structured activities (as few or as many as they choose) created in a 'clubhouse' model. If you or someone you know think you might be eligible for this service you can be self-referred or referred by your GP. Some of the activities run by Sunflower House include creative writing, yoga, cooking, attending a gym one morning a week, special visitors teaching new skills for clients such as cake decorating or making mosaics. For more information contact: mary.mckenzie@onedoor.org.au

—Carer Assist

This is a program that provides information, education, advocacy and support for families and carers of a person with a mental illness.

— On Fire (Young Carers Program)

This is a peer-support program for young carers aged 8–17 who live in families affected by mental health issues. The objectives are for children and young people to make friends, experience community involvement and develop understanding about wellbeing. There are camps that run twice a year and a Saturdays' Fun Day from 10am–2pm.

CARER'S COUNSELLING SERVICE: 6932 8300 or 1800 052 222

This service has been developed to provide support and help to carers to help them with the issues and responsibilities that arise from being a carer. It can assist with the management of stress and anxiety, grief and loss, problem solving and emotional support. They are located at 20 Peter Street. For more information contact one of the numbers above.

SUPPORT AFTER SUICIDE SUPPORT GROUP

The aim of this group is to provide and foster mutual support for those bereaved after suicide. This is done through sharing stories about things like the pain of loss and the things that frustrate, annoy or help people cope with living without the person they love. A Care and Support Pack for Families and Friends Bereaved by Suicide is available. Meetings are held monthly alternating between Fridays (2pm) and Wednesdays (6pm). For further information or support phone Nola (Mobile): 0458 224 430 (Home Phone): 6922 4438, David & Sandra on: 6922 3823 or email: wwsasgroup@gmail.com

THE WAGGA WAGGA AND REGION SUICIDE PREVENTION NETWORK INC (SPN)

This is a locally operated group that is committed to informing, educating and empowering our community to prevent suicide. The SPN seeks to improve community understanding and awareness, reduce social stigma and remove barriers to help for those at risk. **safeTALK** Training Sessions are organised regularly and these help ordinary members of our community recognise the signs of suicide and ask directly and clearly questions about suicide. For further information go to their Facebook page or email: wvrsn@gmail.com

THE BIPOLAR SUPPORT GROUP: 6921 7222

Samantha Brunskill runs a Bipolar Support Group on the first Thursday of every month from 6pm –7pm. The group change where they meet from time to time. From last November until recently, for example, they met for a picnic in the park at the Victory Memorial Gardens and from February 2017 the group have started meeting at the Hampden, located in Romano's Hotel, for a meal or at the outside tables at Romano's. This is a peer-run organisation. Sam says the group is designed to empower local residents suffering from the illness both to socialise and share their experiences. They have a Facebook page called 'Embrace Mental Health Meetups'.

FLOURISH AUSTRALIA—HASI (HOUSING AND SUPPORT INITIATIVE):

6921 5269

This organisation provides support to people suffering mental illness, empowering them to make decisions about their lives, helping them to achieve some independence within the community and whilst living in their own homes. It also aims to decrease hospitalisations and advocates for those who experience disadvantage, stigma and discrimination. Flourish is located at Unit 4A, 176 Baylis Street in the D'Hudson Arcade. For information phone Miss Kelly Ross or have a look at the organisation's web page: <https://www.flourishaustralia.org.au/wagga-wagga>

OVERCOMERS OUTREACH: WAGGA WAGGA: 0458 007 529

This is a Christian organisation for those suffering from all types of addictions. It employs the principles of Alcoholics Anonymous but restructures them around the Lordship of Jesus as the source of healing and freedom. It declares that God is the one who can provide us with the healing we need when we are powerless to overcome our addictions. The group has a monthly meeting at Wagga Wagga Baptist Church on the third Tuesday of the month at 7.30pm. For more information contact John B. on 0458 007 529 or email: rjb56@bigpond.com

GROW: 0427 366 564

This is a community-based organisation that runs all over Australia, helping in the prevention and recovery of mental illness through their program of mutual support and personal development. Groups in Wagga meet weekly and can vary in size each week. The group will engage in group discussions, interactions and readings that follow a structure and timetable that ensures all people have the opportunity to participate and that meetings finish on time. GROW is free, there are no assessments, no need for a diagnosis or any eligibility criteria. Wagga's two GROW groups meet in the Meeting Room at the Mental Health Unit at Wagga Wagga Rural Referral Hospital on Mondays at 10.30am and at Sunflower Family Services, 47–49 Gurwood Street on Thursdays at 2pm. (The phone number given above is the general GROW information line.) You can also find details on their website: <https://www.grow.org.au/nsw/website>

WAGGA LITTLE STEPS (POST-NATAL DEPRESSION PLAYGROUP):

1800 171 882

This group is run on a Tuesday morning between 9.30–11am at the Relationships Australia building (34–40 Gurwood Street). Entry is from the Woolworths car park side. Families are able to attend two playground sessions and then need to become a member in order to continue to participate. This group is an excellent way for parents experiencing post-natal depression to talk, make new friends and build social networks to support both them and their children. It also offers children the opportunity to learn through play, develop their own social skills and make new friends. For further information call the number above or email: khardy@playgroupnsw.org.au

RECOVERY PROGRAM—WAGGA WAGGA SUB-ACUTE MENTAL HEALTH UNIT: 5943 1820

The program is run at the Mental Health Unit on level one. It is an 8-week live-in program, which provides participants with information about self-esteem, distress tolerance, behavioural therapy, healthy eating, living skills, assertiveness and several other topics. There is a daily routine, which involves attending daily groups such as including exercise groups, educational groups, one-on-one counselling and relaxation. The accommodation is modern and comfortable and all rooms are single and have ensuites. There is a gym, gardens, basketball court and kitchen. The unit is staffed 24 hours a day. Participants can bring their own belongings to the program including their own phones and linen. You can come and go from the unit as you need to. Visitors are welcome. You can refer yourself to the program or seek assistance from Community Mental Health or your GP. Call the number above for a tour and to obtain the necessary referral forms.

**THE RIVERINA MEDICAL AND DENTAL ABORIGINAL CORPORATION:
6923 5200**

This is an Aboriginal medical service that, amongst other services, provides a Mental Health Team Worker.

ALSO WORTH A LOOK:

THE RIVERINA BLUEBELL WEBSITE: <http://www.riverinabluebell.org.au>

**NSW AND NATIONAL
MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCE AGENCIES**

LIFELINE: 13 11 14

If you need to talk to someone because you are feeling under stress, are unwell or are in distress Lifeline provides 24/7 support. You can also chat with them online in real time between 7pm and 4am but for this particular service you need to complete some pre-survey questions first and provide your name and email address.

BEYOND BLUE: 1300 224 636

This is primarily an advice and support line about anxiety and depression. It is not your first port of call if you are in crisis and needing to talk to someone. They provide information and referrals about anxiety and depression. They will also direct you towards resources that might exist in your area to help you manage what you're struggling with. They will provide brief support (in the order of 10–15 minutes).

SANE AUSTRALIA: 1800 187 263

This organisation is a little like Beyond Blue except it provides information and resources about the more serious end of the mental illness spectrum as well as depression and anxiety. It has a very useful website (www.sane.org) which provides factsheets for sufferers and carers. It also provides a Helpline (see number above) where you can talk to a health professional if you are struggling (9am-5pm weekdays), an online chat service (also staffed 9am-5pm weekdays) and moderated online forums for discussing all sorts of issues related to mental illness.

ARC VIC: (Anxiety Recovery Centre Victoria): 1300 269 438 or 03 9830 0533

This provides a wonderful OCD and Anxiety Helpline. It is located in Victoria but takes calls nationally. They provide phone support, information and resources for people suffering from all types of anxiety disorders. They also have an online chat service.

KIDS HELPLINE: 1800 551 800

This is a fantastic service for kids (5–12) and teens (13–25) and it provides tips and information for their parents and carers as well. It's a 24/7 service and a free call. The organisation provides phone counselling, email counselling and a web chat service as well. The Kids Helpline is designed for children to be able to call and chat about anything, including things they are struggling with.

THE BLACK DOG INSTITUTE

This Sydney-based Institute offers a range of clinic services, including tele-health consultations to rural and regional areas, for people who have either been diagnosed with depression or bipolar and are not responding well to their treatment plan, or who have complex cases where diagnosis is difficult. Your GP will need to fill out a specific referral form and send or fax it to the clinic. The clinic will perform a detailed assessment in order to consider your

diagnosis and offer some suggestions for why you may not have fully responded to treatment. The clinic will act as a consultancy to your GP and provide expert advice but will not take over your management. If you are interested in this service please speak to your GP. It is a very valuable service but may incur a financial cost depending on the assessment and if you need to travel to Sydney. There could also be a lengthy wait for your appointment. The Black Dog Institute website has a wealth of information on mental health and wellness, self-tests, and apps as well as further information on clinic services: www.blackdoginstitute.org.au

THE SUICIDE CALL BACK SERVICE: 1300 659 467

This is a 24-hour, seven days a week nationwide service that provides telephone and online counselling to people who are 15 years and over and are either suicidal, caring for someone who is suicidal, bereaved by suicide or a health professional supporting people affected by suicide. It is especially suited to people who are geographically or emotionally isolated. The service provides immediate telephone counselling and support in a crisis. In addition, the service can provide up to six further telephone counselling sessions with the same counsellor scheduled at times best suited to the person's needs.

Professional counsellors, social workers and psychologists with specialist skills in working with suicide-related issues can assist you in working through difficult emotions. The counsellor can help with goal planning, ensuring your own safety as well as helping to link you to other services in the community.

MENSLINE AUSTRALIA: 1300 789 978

This service provides 24-hour, seven days a week counselling and is the national telephone, online support, information and referral service for men with family, relationship and mental health concerns. The service is available from anywhere in Australia and is staffed by professional counsellors, experienced in men's issues. The MensLine counselling service provides counseling to men on issues such as emotional wellbeing and anger management. In addition, anyone who is worried about a male family member or friend may call. MensLine Australia provides a safe environment for men to talk about their worries and problems. When faced with a problem, men are often more focused on outcomes and practical solutions than women. MensLine Australia counsellors understand this and offer a practical approach to counselling as well as encouraging men to deal with significant emotional issues in an effective way. Although relationship, family problems and mental health issues can be traumatic for everyone concerned, it can be particularly difficult for men whose coping strategies are often limited. MensLine Australia's counsellors can offer referrals to men's services at any time and from anywhere in the country. The service is committed to supporting men in rural and regional Australia with their new modes of service delivery. They have a video counselling service, which provides crucial professional support for men across Australia, many of whom would not otherwise be able access face-to-face counselling because of geographical or social isolation.

CARELINE: (03) 9583 2273

The Light FM 89.9 radio station in Melbourne provides a wonderful service called Careline, which you can call nationally for prayer support and a listening ear. You can call them between 9am–11pm, 7 days a week, and they will listen to what's on your heart and pray for you over the phone. They also offer to pray for you every day for the following month after your call (though you can call back as often as you like). They are generally not trained mental health professionals but they are available to provide you with prayer when you don't feel like you can pray for yourself and need someone to talk to.

THE RIPPLE EFFECT (03) 5551 8587

The Ripple Effect is an online research project that has been designed to reduce the stigma associated with an experience of suicide. The research specifically invites participation from rural males, aged 30–64 years who have been bereaved by suicide, attempted suicide, cared for someone who attempted suicide, have had thought of committing suicide themselves or been touched by suicide in some other way. However, all adult members of the rural community are very welcome to participate. The Ripple Effect has been designed to provide an opportunity for farmers and rural community members to share their insights and experiences in an anonymous and peer-supported environment, increase their knowledge and literacy about the lived experience of suicide and reduce the stigma of suicide in this particular community. The Ripple Effect has been initiated by the National Centre for Farmer Health and is funded by *beyondblue* with donations from the Movember Foundation. For further information about the Ripple Effect, please contact Alison Kennedy on the number above or at alison.kennedy@wdhs.net. They also have a website at: www.therippleeffect.com.au

ALSO WORTH A LOOK:

THE WAY AHEAD DIRECTORY:

<https://directory.wayahead.org.au/>

This site provides fact sheets on mental health, how to access mental health services, an interpretation of the jargon that is used in mental health, information on mental health legislation, and a wealth of information on mental illness issues and education. They are supported by the Mental Health Commission of New South Wales.

THE MIND/HEALTH/CONNECT WEBSITE: <https://www.mindhealthconnect.org.au/>

This website is funded by the Australian Government and provides all kinds of links, resources, information and a directory relating to issues regarding mental health. It links you up to Australia's leading mental health providers.

THE MY AGED CARE WEBSITE:

<http://www.myagedcare.gov.au/getting-started/health-conditions/mental-health>

This is an excellent portal to resources that are available for those in the population who are growing older and experiencing mental illness. It is supported by the Australian Government.

AT EASE:

<http://at-ease.dva.gov.au/>

This website has been put together by the Department of Veterans' Affairs. It provides information to Veterans and their families about mental illness and potential signs of mental illness in this population, resources and factsheets and how to seek help for you or someone you are concerned about

CONTACTING STAFF AT WAGGA WAGGA BAPTIST CHURCH: 9631 7322

If you need to contact a staff member because you are unwell with mental illness, suffering a crisis or someone you care for is in this situation the pastors and elders can be reached via the church's office number.

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