



# CMHDARN

Community Mental Health, Drug & Alcohol  
RESEARCH NETWORK

## CMHDARN CONNECT

*Welcome to the ninth edition of CMHDARN Connect.*

This newsletter is a little less full than normal, just to ease everyone back into the new year. More webinars and training opportunities than articles to read but don't worry, more articles will be coming your way soon!

CMHDARN Connect will continue bi-monthly throughout 2021. Before the next issue, I will send out a call for articles and things you'd like to share with the CMHDARN membership, so please keep thinking of things to send through.

If you're new to the network or missed previous editions of CMHDARN Connect, you can now access them on the CMHDARN website or by following this [LINK](#).

Warm regards,

Jo

CMHDARN Coordinator

## CMHDARN's Community Research Mentoring Program

*"The mentoring program can really assist you in identifying the best research questions and methodology" – Mentee*

Applications are open for the Community Research Mentoring Program.

The program is open to MHCC or NADA members who want to develop and conduct research guided by an expert

mentor. Designed to support practice-based research, the program helps to build the skills of the mentee and to equip them with knowledge about research processes and measuring impact and outcomes.

- Developing research question/s
- Guidance on how to conduct a literature search
- Advice regarding procedures and measures to include in an evaluation of a service
- Statistical advice to assist with the analysis of data collected by a service
- Advice on quantitative and/or qualitative studies within a service

*What mentees have said:*

"The mentoring program has really helped establish our practice-based research and navigating the many options on clear and relevant research methodology"

*The mentor's experience:*

"It has been fantastic being part of the CMHDARN mentoring program and to facilitate the application of research methods to real-world settings. I have thoroughly enjoyed developed relationships with the fabulous front-line workers I have been mentoring"

To apply email [info@cmhdaresearchnetwork.com.au](mailto:info@cmhdaresearchnetwork.com.au)  
or visit the CMHDARN website at [cmhdaresearchnetwork.com.au](http://cmhdaresearchnetwork.com.au)

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## Ethics in Research - some useful resources

Part of the role of CMHDARN is to support and build the capacity of non-government / community managed alcohol and other drugs and mental health services to demonstrate and implement ethical research practices. With this in mind and after the recent CMHDARN webinar focused on ethics (watch it [HERE](#)), below is a collection of resources to support ethical research in these sectors.

- [A guide to ethics in not-for-profit research and evaluation](#)

Research and evaluation has increasingly been undertaken in the not-for-profit (NFP) sector in recent decades. This is mainly due to funding bodies, whether from government or other sources, adopting an 'evidence-based approach' and requiring programs and services to demonstrate outcomes, value and impact as a means of securing ongoing funding (Rogers et al 2017).

As NFP research and evaluation has evolved, practitioners working in the field have found themselves facing a number of challenges. One of these issues is ensuring that their research and evaluation processes are ethical.

While large organisations and institutions outside the NFP sector often have the necessary systems and resources to undertake a robust ethical process for their research and evaluation projects, many organisations in the NFP sector do not.

This is especially true for small NFP organisations. In the absence of formal processes, NFP organisations are often responsible for their own ethical compliance without a high level of external or peer scrutiny and ultimately rely on their staff to accept responsibility and ensure ethical principles are maintained (Kelly 2017).

- The [AIATSIS Code of Ethics for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Research](#) (The AIATSIS Code) ensures that research with and about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples follows a process of meaningful engagement and reciprocity between the researcher and the individuals and/or communities involved in the research.
- [Ethical conduct in research with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and communities: Guidelines for researchers and stakeholders](#) provides a set of principles to ensure research is safe, respectful, responsible, high quality and of benefit to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities.
- Ethical Protocol for evaluation in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander settings. This [Ethical Protocol](#) contains a set of ethical principles to hear and privilege the voice of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in monitoring and evaluation that involves them or impacts on them
- [Research Ethics: a CMHDARN Best Practice Guide](#)

This guide has been written for any community organisation, consumer, peer worker or carer in the mental health and alcohol and other drugs sectors who is considering engaging in research and/or evaluation.

- [The CMHDARN Research Ethics Consultation Committee](#) (RECC)

The RECC has been established to provide ethical guidance to researchers and research participants. The RECC provides a researchers' forum for ongoing consultation and guidance in matters of ethics regarding human research enquiries within the mental health and alcohol and other drug communities.

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## CMHDARN RESEARCH ETHICS CONSULTATION COMMITTEE

Would you like to engage in ethical research to improve the delivery of services to consumers / clients in the mental health and alcohol and other drugs sectors?

CMHDARN has a committee to support your research!

For more information, please see '[Information for Applicants](#)' or contact the CMHDARN Coordinator at [info@cmhdaresearchnetwork.com.au](mailto:info@cmhdaresearchnetwork.com.au)

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## CMHDARN Communities of Practice - Bridging the Language Gap across the mental health and AOD research sectors

In a new initiative, CMHDARN is convening a Community of Practice with the aim of exploring how to bridge (and hopefully dismantle) the language gap across the mental health and AOD service and research sectors.

We want approximately 25 people to come together in a zoom event (or two) to hear from some experts in the field and initially discuss:

- How to come to an understanding between the two sectors on language not only in service delivery settings but also in research spaces
- What is the best practice in research writing – how do we make it inclusive and understood across the sectors?
- What is recovery orientated language vs. medical model language?
- What constitutes stigma and discrimination in the sectors with language?
- How to utilise lived experience to shape the language that is used

If this sounds like something you'd be interested in, please email the CMHDARN Coordinator at [info@cmhdaresearchnetwork.com.au](mailto:info@cmhdaresearchnetwork.com.au). You will be added to the Community of Practice membership list and receive updates on coming events and specific resources.

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## CMHDARN RESEARCH SHOWCASE

Have you published recently?

CMHDARN maintains a bibliography of published research by the members of NADA / MHCC / CMHDARN to showcase the important work that is happening in our sectors.

Please email [info@cmhdaresearchnetwork.com.au](mailto:info@cmhdaresearchnetwork.com.au) if you have published recently and would like your work to be included in this great [resource](#).

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## CMHDARN Community of Practice - Getting to know other practice based researchers

Being a practice-based researcher in the mental health and alcohol and other drugs sectors comes with benefits and challenges. This CMHDARN Community of Practice aims to bring together practice/service based researchers in these sectors to discuss topics such as:

- What partnerships are out there?
- What are the benefits / challenges to being a practice-based researcher?
- What is the role of co-design / peer led research in practice-based research?
- What is it like to be a practice-based researcher?
- How to build the skills necessary to be a practice-based researcher
- How to develop as a practice-based researcher
- What to expect as a practice-based researcher
- Road maps – various stages of research in practice
- Building partnerships
- Navigating grants

This Community of Practice will have a membership list, hold events (via zoom initially) and share resources.

If you are interested in joining this CMHDARN Community of Practice or have further questions, please email the CMHDARN Coordinator at [info@cmhdaresearchnetwork.com.au](mailto:info@cmhdaresearchnetwork.com.au).

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### Useful Resources from across the sectors

#### Webinars

*Reducing drug-related harms and improving mental health among people released from incarceration: a case for continuity of care*

Presented by Dr Jesse Young, PhD MPH BSc

View [HERE](#)

Presented by Dr Jesse Young, this seminar will present findings on service use patterns and health outcomes for people with mental health and substance use disorders released from prison generated from several of the largest cohort studies to link routinely collected administrative health and justice data, globally. Implications for policy and practice will be discussed.

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Despite an urgent call to action by the World Health Organisation over a decade ago, mental illness and substance use disorders remain highly prevalent among people in prison, and this prevalence is increasing rapidly in some jurisdictions. Although improving the health of people with mental disorders who experience incarceration is increasingly recognised as a key component of public health, substantial gaps in evidence remain and hinder the capacity of community-based mental healthcare and alcohol and other drug service providers to develop targeted, evidence-informed responses to the health needs of people released from prison. Therefore, true 'through care' is at best aspirational in most jurisdictions and contact with the criminal justice system remains a public health opportunity missed.

This seminar will present findings on service use patterns and health outcomes for people with mental health and substance use disorders released from prison generated from several of the largest cohort studies to link routinely collected administrative health and justice data, globally. Implications for policy and practice will be discussed.

### [AP SAD Webinar Series](#)

Through November in place of the annual conference APSAD held a series of webinars. The Webinar Series was convened by Prof Leanne Hides with input from APSAD members through subcommittees and special interest groups. The Webinar Series included the annual APSAD Awards presentation ceremony, with APSAD Early Career Awardee Cheneal Puljevic presenting on Missed opportunities to reduce tobacco smoking among people who experience incarceration or homelessness.

### *NCCRED - Introductory webinars for clinicians interested in research*

Are you a clinician who is interested in research but aren't sure where to start? NCCRED is hosting a series of three introductory webinars to for clinicians interested in Clinical Research

Webinar 1: Introduction to Evidence-Based Practice for clinicians in the AOD sector - Tuesday 2nd February 2021 2pm - REGISTER [HERE](#)

The module discusses the concept of 'evidence-based practice', which is the process of 'integrating the best available research evidence with clinical expertise and the patient's unique values and circumstances'. This may include identifying, searching, retrieving, and appraising information from a range of diverse resources, and applying this into practice.

Webinar 2: Introduction to Clinical Research for clinicians in the AOD sector - Tuesday 9th February 2pm - REGISTER [HERE](#)

This module gives an overview of the basic concepts of clinical research, focusing on the main areas of why and how clinical research is carried out, the importance of ethics in research, and an outline of the five main clinical study designs.

Webinar 3: Introduction to Good Clinical Practice in Clinical Research (ICH-GCP E6 R(2)) for clinicians working in the AOD sector - Tuesday 16th February 1pm - REGISTER [HERE](#)

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The workshop contains five sessions of guidance, education, activities and interactive learning that cover all components of Good Clinical Practice relevant to staff working on research and clinical trials that involve humans . The course will be specifically focused on clinical research within the Alcohol and other Drug sector.

Participants who complete the post-training quiz with a score of 80% or above will be awarded Transcelerate-accredited Good Clinical Practice (GCP) certification, valid for 3 years.

## Useful websites / resources

### *[A Guide to Build Co-design Capacity](#)*

This is a [GUIDE](#) that is designed to support local health districts and specialty health networks partner with people with lived experience of a health condition to make healthcare improvements using co-design processes. It has been developed by working with peer workers, clinicians, managers and executives from local health districts, peak organisations, the ministry of health, health and pillar organisations. It involved facilitating workshops where participants identified and co-produced core content of the guide, conducting interviews with staff that have had experience of co-design and presenting at workshops with people with lived experience of mental health issues to seek recommendations about successful co-design practices.

### *[NSW Ministry of Health Strategic Prioritisation Framework for Alcohol and other Drugs Research and Evaluation: 2020-2024](#)*

The Framework reflects the NSW Ministry of Health's commitment to supporting high-quality research and evaluation that drives innovation and improves health outcomes.

### *[AODConnect](#)*

*AODconnect* is an app which provides a national listing of alcohol and other drug treatment services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. The app is intended for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander alcohol and other drug (AOD) workers, community members or any health professional working in the AOD sector looking for a culturally appropriate service.

The app allows you to find a service by region or postcode through an interactive map of Australia. You can toggle between an alphabetical listing or see the service visually displayed on the map of Australia.

Service information can also be filtered by the type of treatment they provide:

- counselling and referral
- harm reduction and support groups
- outreach
- mobile patrols and sobering up shelters

- residential rehab
- withdrawal management
- young people.

## *Social Impact Toolbox*

When it comes to evaluating social impact only a minority of organisations in Australia are currently equipped to meet the expectations of funders and other stakeholders. We aim to build the capacity of the not-for-profit sector by making accessible the tools and methodologies needed to evaluate and communicate social impact.

When we don't evaluate the impact of our programs, we have no way of measuring whether or not the program achieved what it set out to do. We need a clear way of knowing when we have reached the finish line – because if we don't know what we are measuring, we can't measure it!

By building the capacity of the sector we can develop a common language, empower small to medium organisations, and take the anxiety and expense out of mastering the practice of evaluation. Use this toolbox to map to standardised frameworks, including the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

## *NSW Government Program Evaluation Guidelines*

The NSW Government is committed to increasing transparency of expenditure on programs and providing a better understanding of their outcomes. One of the reforms to achieve this is the [NSW Government Program Evaluation Guidelines](#), which recognises program evaluation as a key tool to support evidence-based policy and decision making in government.

The guidelines are a guide for consistency in evaluation across the sector and sets out:

- different types of evaluation and how they might be used
- a strategic approach to evaluation that prioritises evaluation, and scales evaluations based on the characteristics of different types of programs
- key principles of good evaluation practice
- how findings generated by evaluation can be used for learning and better decision making.

The guidelines also explain how evaluation will be integrated into budget and performance management processes.

## *Aboriginal Participatory action research: An Indigenous research methodology strengthening decolonisation and social and emotional wellbeing*

Focusing on key Indigenous wellbeing paradigms, discourses, and disciplines this discussion paper presents a distinctive Aboriginal Participatory Action Research (APAR) approach as a transformative Indigenous Research Methodology.



It also explores Indigenous Standpoint Theory, Indigenous Knowledge Systems, Indigenous Research Methods and Methodologies as key elements in decolonising research, building self-determination in communities, and contributing to Indigenous social and emotional wellbeing (SEWB) and Indigenous Psychology.

Drawing on three community projects — the Kimberley Empowerment, Healing and Leadership Program, the National Empowerment Project and the Cultural, Social and Emotional Wellbeing Program — this paper demonstrates how APAR contributes to Indigenous SEWB and Indigenous Psychology. Finally, it examines the interrelationship of core components of APAR articulating an Indigenous epistemology, ontology, axiology (Indigenous ways of knowing, being and doing) and methodology covering Indigenous specific methods, guiding principles, research protocols and ethical guidelines.

## Other publications you might want to check out

### *MHCC - View from the Peak*

Published throughout the year, View from the Peak is the Mental Health Coordinating Council's publication about all things mental health. Click [HERE](#) for the latest issue.

### *NADA - Advocate*

Published quarterly, the Advocate raises significant issues relating to the non government AOD sector in NSW. Subscribe to develop your knowledge about and be connected to, the sector. Click [HERE](#) for the latest issue.

### *Newsletter from the Mental Health Commission of NSW*

Updates from the Mental Health Commission. Click [HERE](#) for the latest issue.

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## Events

### *theMHS Perth Virtual Conference*

9-12 February 2021

Register [HERE](#)

The Mental Health Services (TheMHS) Conference is Australasia's leading and most diverse mental health conference – and we will be holding our annual conference online in February 2021.

The theme for the conference is 'Balancing the System'.

There is widespread acknowledgement that in order to address the increasing pressures on mental health services across Australia and New Zealand to improve quality of life, we need to balance the mental health system through investment in prevention and community support.

To achieve this, we need to bring the clinical and the community together in a more substantive and coherent way.

Public mental health systems are experiencing significant and ever-increasing demands on acute and clinical bed-based services.

This not only represents challenges to outcomes for individuals but also brings into question to sustainability of the current model.

This conference will explore how communities can come together and make a balanced system a reality.

## *NADA Conference 2021: Enhancing Connections*

22-23 April 2021

This conference will attract delegates from across NSW, the broader Australian alcohol and other drug (AOD) treatment sector and other health and human services. Showcasing interventions designed to improve outcomes for clients, this event will inform with new ideas, engage with the evidence base and provide networking opportunities.

**REGISTRATIONS** are now open

Earlybird ends 5pm 11 February 2021



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The Community Mental Health Drug and Alcohol Research Network (CMHDARN) is a collaborative project between Network of Alcohol and Other Drugs Agencies (NADA), Mental Health Coordinating Council (MHCC) and the Mental Health Commission of NSW.

[Visit the CMHDARN website here](#)

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