

# AN EXPLORATORY EVALUATION OF THE MY WELLBEING KIT – SUMMARY

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The Clarence City Council, Community Health and Wellbeing Advisory Committee, Health Promotion Working Group developed a project called the 'My Wellbeing Kit'. It was developed in partnership with mental health consumers and a range of community and government partners including Flourish, THS Mental Health Service, Department of Health Public Health Services, Partners in Recovery (Colony 47), Youth Assist and the Mental Health Council of Tasmania.

The Kit is a set of 13 illustrated cards that focus on simple ways to build resilience and improve health and wellbeing when faced with challenging times. The cards are designed to connect with people's emotions through illustrations that identify small but important ways that people can restore balance in their lives and get back on track. The cards explore themes such as: sleeping well, being active, working towards a goal, feeling safe, eating well, having a laugh, spending time with the people you care about and enjoying the outdoors. People are able to write or draw on the back of the cards, the tools or tips they use to keep on track.

An evaluation was undertaken between March and October 2020 and was designed to explore how the Kit was developed, along with views and experiences in using the Kit. Ethics approval was obtained by the University of Tasmania (ID 20462).

A total of 20 people were interviewed. Interviews were audio recorded (with consent) and transcribed for analysis. A coding framework (and code book) was developed and all transcripts coded to capture the range of responses.

## **Key Findings**

### **Development of the Kit**

- The application of a codesign approach to the development of the Kit enabled involvement from a range of people and perspectives, including those with a lived experience of mental ill-health. The group made decisions together on the basis of their own personal and professional experience and the latest and most relevant evidence. No one form of expertise was more important - levelling any actual or perceived power imbalance.
- The codesign process elevated the importance of listening to the views and experiences of each other and allowing time for ideas to take shape amongst the group. Having a tangible product (i.e. the Kit) at the end of the process was also important to those involved.
- The Kit was developed to have broad appeal to anyone in the community to support their mental health and wellbeing. This was reflected in the use of artwork to depict

themes or topics of wellbeing, along with words that could be interpreted in multiple ways. It was designed to be inclusive and non-judgemental.

- The Kit was designed to reinforce resilience by focussing attention on personal strategies people already have and know to keep themselves well. These can be noted on the back of the cards. Also, when used in conversation, they could prompt some simple new strategies as part of broadening a personalised toolkit of strategies to maintain wellbeing.
- Sometimes a conversation prompted by the cards is enough in itself. The evaluation provided examples where people could recall cards without physical prompt.
- The Kit was designed to focus on tools that are accessible to everybody.
- Following the launch of the Kit, the focus shifted to the adaptation of the Kit to an App. A new collaboration was formed with the University of Tasmania. This shift in momentum saw a move away from a codesigned process to a more formal partnership.

### **Views and use of the Kit**

- People came across the Kit in a variety of ways from the council website to community events. They were attracted to the look and feel of the Kit describing it as “beautiful” and “portable”. It was described a “gift”.
- The use of artwork was a unique feature of the Kit and this enabled versatility in how it was used and interpreted. The use of “neutral” creatures devoid of gender or ethnicity also facilitated this broad appeal. Participants believed that the space on the cards to write or draw personal strategies derived from their own “library of experience”, encouraged “self-care” without being prescriptive.
- The adaptive capacity of the Kit to be used in a variety of ways and in a range of contexts was an important feature of the Kits. They could be given to others without obligation or they could form part of a conversation about mental health and wellbeing. Nested in a conversation, the Kits were a helpful tool to remind people what was important to them and how they can keep themselves on track. These conversations took place in workplaces, among school groups and in professional counselling settings.
- The versatility of the Kits was also reflected in the range of themes covered by each of the cards. Some participants were drawn more strongly to some cards over others, reflecting a range of individual preferences.
- The Kits were designed to be personalised and not prescriptive in how they were used and interpreted, and this was reflected in the views and experiences of study participants. However, this also created a tension for people who wanted more guidance in how to use the Kits, personally or professionally. Participants suggested some wrap around resources that could give participants tips and advice in the use of the Kits.
- Improvements for the Kits centred on refreshing the images, adding or refining the card themes, creating additional products such as a colouring in journal, and promoting and distributing the Kits more broadly in the community and through organisational networks.

- While the Kit App was not the focus of this evaluation, participants did express an interest in the App. Most people had not used the App but could see value in its application.

The My Wellbeing Kit is a strength-based resource designed to support self-efficacy (that is, people's belief in their ability to succeed) as people are reminded of the everyday actions that help keep them well. In the context of supportive relationships, the evaluation showed the Kit to be useful in helping guide conversations about mental health and wellbeing. The Kit can support people as one of a suite of resources and has a unique function in its portability, adaptability and use of visual imagery.

As an exploratory evaluation we don't know whether the Kit has had a direct impact on individual health outcomes. This could be investigated in future evaluation work.

### **Recommendations**

That Clarence City Council:

- Continue to embed codesign processes in the development of new initiatives and consider costs for community volunteers.
- Consider refreshing the Kit with revised or additional imagery, card themes and package design.
- Consider exploring with men whether the Kits in their current form are appealing and able to be used to support their mental health and wellbeing, or if an alternative resource is required.
- Embed regular Kit promotion and distribution in existing infrastructure such as Facebook and websites, while also taking advantage of new promotional opportunities.
- Promote that the best use of the Kit is as part of a conversation.
- Consider developing a brief guide to accompany the Kit with tips and advice about how to use the Kits.