

## Case Study

*Cultura's Healthy Minds Program – improving mental health and wellbeing for multicultural youth*

### Overview

Barwon Health's small grants program aims to promote mental wellbeing in the Geelong community. The innovative submission for Cultura's Healthy Minds Program was one of the successful applicants.



Healthy Minds is a mental health education program for multicultural youth that combines mental health literacy, wellbeing activities and leadership skills. The program was delivered in partnership with Headspace, Northern Bay College and the Queenscliff Uniting Church.

### Approach

Twelve female students from Year 9 and 10 participated in the program. Ten of the group were from a Karen background and two were Afghani. The program mixed education sessions with recreation/wellbeing activities and included a visit to Headspace and a two day camp at Queenscliff to conclude the program.

A total of ten mental health education sessions were led by the Cultura Multicultural Mental Health Worker and supported by the CALD Engagement Worker at Northern Bay College. Topics included:

- What is mental health and why is it important?
- Physical health versus mental health
- Common mental health issues among multicultural youth
- Stigma and how to help to break it
- Mental health services accessible to youth
- Visit to Headspace in Geelong
- Selfcare
- How to talk about mental health with family and friends
- Social media and mental health
- Time management

Recreation and wellbeing activities included:

- Badminton
- Bowling
- Art therapy and water painting class
- Volleyball
- Rock climbing
- Dancing class
- Games day
- Visit to aged care craft group
- Two day camp at Queenscliff

### What participants said

"I learnt that if we have mental health problems it's ok because many people do, like if you get injured or sick you can seek help, get a treatment and feel better again."

"I enjoyed the exercise we did during the camp where we discussed different [mental health] cases because I know now how I can start a conversation with a friend who might have mental health issues, before I'd afraid to ask and won't say anything."

"I feel more confident to talk with my family and friends about mental health. I don't need to be an expert or solve their problems, I can tell them how to find help."

# Results



**Pre-survey:** a pre-survey was completed during the first session.

In this survey it became evident that most girls had limited understanding of concepts such as mental health and wellbeing, and had some negative perceptions of people with mental ill-health.

**Post-survey:** a post-survey was completed at the end of the camp using the same questions.

Results showed improved knowledge around basic notions of mental health and how to deal with mental health issues – both for themselves and others. It was also noticeable that participants were more confident to talk openly about mental health and more knowledgeable about signs and symptoms of mental ill health.

Following the conclusion of the program a discussion group was facilitated with the participants and their parents. This was an opportunity to share some of the most significant insights they had about the program and why they believe mental health is important.

The parents (five in total) were very receptive and expressed they would be keen to participate in a mental health education program for themselves.



## What families said

"We all need a program like this to help us feel better ourselves and help others."

"I want to learn more and help my children and family to have a healthy mind."

## Conclusion

The Healthy Minds Program provided a setting for participants to:

- Improve their mental health literacy
- More readily identify signs and symptoms of mental ill-health
- Feel more confident in help-seeking for themselves and for their family and friends



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