

Beyond Blue's NewAccess program – improve your mental health with a different kind of personal trainer

Queenslanders are being urged to take part in Beyond Blue's NewAccess program, which continues to achieve remarkable success supporting people in managing symptoms of mild to moderate anxiety and/or depression.

The six-session program is the first of its kind in Australia and focuses on early intervention for mental health conditions.

NewAccess coaches deliver practical advice to people about how they can manage the pressures and stresses of everyday life.

The program is free, completely confidential and available in-person or over the phone. It does not require a referral from a doctor.

People in Western Queensland that have participated in the program have seen the benefits first-hand. A striking 63 per cent who have participated recovered, showing a measurable reduction in severity of their symptoms.

NewAccess coaches, trained in Low-intensity Cognitive Behavioural Therapy, provide a great starting point for people feeling stressed, anxious or overwhelmed about everyday life issues.

Warwick-based NewAccess coach, Lindsay McMahan, has seen the program flourish across Western Queensland and compares it to getting a personal trainer.

"What we want is for people to think about their mental health like they would their physical health," said McMahan.

"If you needed help rehabbing an injury or losing some weight, you'd see a PT without thinking twice. People can now look at NewAccess coaches in the same fashion if they're struggling with some of the stresses of life."

Given its accessibility over the phone, without a doctor referral, the free NewAccess program is particularly suited to people in rural and regional areas where mental health support is often limited.

A 2016-17 study showed that 20.5% of people in outer regional, remote or very remote areas of Australia waited longer than they would have liked for an appointment with a GP.

"Given what we're seeing with the drought and the emotional and financial turmoil that it's causing, our work couldn't be more important," said McMahan.

“Early intervention is the key to preventing so many mental health conditions and our team specialises in helping you identify what you’re going through and build resilience and coping mechanisms.”

NewAccess has grown significantly this year –1826 people across Australia participated in the program from January to June, 68 per cent up on the same period last year.

“We’re seeing real traction in the work we do, but there’s a lot of work left to do to break down the stigma and get people to think of their wellbeing from both a physical and mental context.”

NewAccess is funded by the Commonwealth Department of Health via Primary Health Networks (PHNs). Across Australia, the program is currently available via 12 PHNs predominantly in QLD and NSW.

In QLD the following PHNs commission NewAccess: Brisbane North, Gold Coast, Darling Downs and West Moreton, Western QLD.

For more information about NewAccess, visit: <https://www.beyondblue.org.au/get-support/newaccess>

