MARKET RESEARCH PROJECT BRIEF: MEN'S HELP SEEKING BEHAVIOUR

beyondblue: the national depression and anxiety initiative

1. Purpose

beyondblue is seeking proposals from market research agencies to undertake qualitative market research into men’s help seeking behaviour in relation to depression and anxiety disorders. The outcomes of this research will inform the development of a future multi-platform national campaign to encourage help seeking behaviour in men by increasing calls by men (or about men) to the beyondblue Info Line and through increased visits to the beyondblue website (or associated campaign site).

2. Background

beyondblue has been engaged by the Australian Government’s Department of Health and Ageing to develop and implement national mental health initiatives for men, as part of its Mental Health: taking action to tackle suicide in 2010 election commitment and the Commonwealth response to The Hidden Toll, Suicide in Australia, Report of the Senate Community Affairs Reference Committee.

A key objective is to increase the number of calls to the beyondblue Info Line by and about men and to increase the number of visits to help seeking information on the beyondblue website or an associated campaign site. The Government has set beyondblue a target of 30,000 additional calls by or about men to its Info Line by 30 June 2014. It is currently considering a revision of this target to include visits to the beyondblue website or associated campaign site.

To achieve this increase in calls, the multi-platform campaign will take a phased approach, with Phase 1 comprising ‘quick wins’ from the development of a six month, at least, digital campaign to sustain momentum prior to developing or rolling out a major campaign.

The campaign will be focusing on ten priority sub-groups identified by the Australian Government:

- young men (18-25 years)
- older men (>60 years)
- fathers
- rural men
- unemployed men
- men from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
- men from the GBTI community
- homeless men
- Indigenous men
- men with a co-morbid substance misuse

In addition, beyondblue is interested in identifying issues facing men living in urban growth areas across Australia.
The key drivers underpinning this commitment to encourage men to seek help stems from the fact that men’s health and wellbeing is generally poorer than women’s. Men have a lower life expectancy than women (78.6 years compared to 83.5 years),¹ and experience 70 per cent of the burden of disease for injuries. Many of the risk factors which cause chronic disease are also higher among men than women. These risk factors include tobacco smoking, physical inactivity, poor diet, alcohol misuse, and overweight and obesity.²

The prevalence of depression, anxiety and substance use disorders differ for men and women. Men are less likely to experience a mental disorder than women, across all ages. However, this picture changes when looking at different types of mental disorders. Of major concern is the significantly higher rate of suicide in men compared to women. Men account for approximately 80% of deaths by suicide in Australia.

Over 70% of men with a mental disorder do not access services for their mental health problems and lower rates of men (less than 20%) see their general practitioner for mental health problems compared to women (30%). More generally, men use all services within the health care system to a lesser extent than women.³ More detailed information about men’s mental health can be found at the end of this document.

While the proposed multi-platform national campaign’s main aim is simple – to increase calls to the beyondblue Info Line or web-based activity – there are additional objectives, including:

- increasing awareness of depression and anxiety as common and serious illnesses affecting men in Australia today
- challenging the perception among men that asking for help is a weakness
- educating men on the signs and symptoms of depression and anxiety
- encouraging men who may be experiencing symptoms of depression and anxiety to seek help by calling the beyondblue Info Line, including reinforcing the importance of seeking help early
- informing men that treatment for depression and anxiety is available and that information is available 24/7 via the Info Line and the beyondblue website.

The anticipated measurable outcomes from this campaign include:

- increased calls to the beyondblue Info Line
- increased visits to the beyondblue and associated websites
- increased requests for beyondblue’s information materials for and about men
- increased reported awareness and understanding amongst male target groups in future beyondblue Depression Monitors
- increased help seeking activity.

3. Research Proposal

beyondblue is seeking to build on its knowledge about men’s behaviours and the influences which may cause them to seek or not seek out information and help about depression and anxiety. This knowledge will help shape the proposed national campaign.

The objectives of this research project are to identify, through qualitative means:

- the barriers impacting on men’s help seeking
- the factors which would facilitate men’s help seeking
- specific enabling strategies to men seeking help
- any other information which could help inform the design and approach of a future national campaign.

4. Proposal Requirements

The applicants will provide beyondblue with a detailed market research proposal outlining:

- the range and scope of methodologies proposed
- timetable for the delivery of the research within the specified timeframes
- costing of the research proposal
- overview of the key personnel who would be involved in managing and delivering the research.

Applicants should provide the beyondblue Liaison Officer with one (1) electronic copy and five (5) hardcopies of the proposal by 5 pm AEST Monday 21 May 2012.

5. Selection Criteria

The successful agency will be selected on the basis of:

- the range and scope of methodologies proposed
- experience in conducting similar market research
- capacity to meet the timetable
- referee reports
- value for money

6. Project Management

The successful agency will be required to enter into a standard beyondblue Independent Contractor Agreement.

Any variations to the final budget allocation must be negotiated with and agreed by beyondblue.

Payments will be made in equal instalments with final payment following completion of project deliverables outlined in Section 7.

7. Project Deliverables

The successful agency will be expected to:

- engage with key beyondblue staff during the project
- prepare a detailed work plan in consultation with beyondblue
- provide a mid-project Project Report on activity and findings
- make presentations to beyondblue as required
- prepare a detailed Final Report outlining objectives, methodology, findings, analysis and recommendations
- prepare an Executive Summary Report suitable for broader dissemination.
8. Timeframes

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<tr>
<th>Element</th>
<th>Timeframe</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tender Issued</td>
<td>Monday 7 May 2012</td>
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<tr>
<td>Briefing Session</td>
<td>Monday 14 May 2012, 2 pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tender Response Deadline</td>
<td>Monday 21 May 2012, 5 pm</td>
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<td>beyondblue selection process</td>
<td>May – June 2012</td>
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<td>Discussion with preferred tenderer</td>
<td>early June</td>
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<td>Board Approval</td>
<td>early June</td>
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<td>Progress Report</td>
<td>6 weeks after contract signed</td>
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<td>Executive Summary &amp; Final Report</td>
<td>3 months after contract signed</td>
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9. beyondblue Liaison Officer

Andrew Thorp, Men’s Project Manager
03 9810 6182 or andrew.thorp@beyondblue.org.au

10. Attachments

1. overview of Men’s Mental Health
2. beyondblue Independent Contractor Agreement
Attachment 1  Overview of Men’s Mental Health

Men’s health and wellbeing is generally poorer than women’s. Men have a lower life expectancy than women (78.6 years compared to 83.5 years), and experience 70 per cent of the burden of disease for injuries, including 78 per cent of the burden for suicide, 73 per cent for road accidents and 71 per cent for homicides and violence. Many of the risk factors which cause chronic disease are also higher among men than women. These risk factors include tobacco smoking, physical inactivity, poor diet, alcohol misuse, and overweight and obesity.

The prevalence of depression, anxiety and substance use disorders differ for men and women. Men are less likely to experience a mental disorder than women, across all ages, however, this picture changes when looking at different types of mental disorders. Figure 1 below shows the proportion of men with anxiety, depression and substance use disorders by age group.

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![Figure 1: Proportion of men with mental disorder by age group](image)

When compared to women, men have:

- higher levels of substance use disorders, across all age groups. The prevalence of substance use disorders decreases with age;
- lower levels of anxiety disorders, across all age groups. However, anxiety disorders are still a major concern, with 15% of men aged 35-44 years experiencing an anxiety disorder;
- lower levels of affective disorders (i.e. depression) across age groups, however within the 35-44 year age group the levels are almost equal (8.3% for men; 8.4% for women).

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Of major concern is the significantly higher rate of suicide in men compared to women. Men account for approximately 80% of deaths by suicide in Australia. In 2007, 1,454 men (15.7 per 100,000) and 427 women (4.2 per 100,000) died by suicide. As outlined in Figure 1 (above), men in the middle years have higher rates of depression and anxiety disorders. Figure 2 (below) shows the corresponding greater risk of dying by suicide in this age group.

![Graph showing age-specific suicide rates for males and females (2007), by age group](attachment:image)

Figure 2: Age-specific suicide rates for males and females (2007), by age group

Over 70% of men with a mental disorder do not access services for their mental health problems and lower rates of men (less than 20%) see their general practitioner for mental health problems compared to women (30%). More generally, men use all services within the health care system to a lesser extent than women, and women have a greater acceptance of, and corresponding use of, the range of health care services available. This indicates that there are significant opportunities to improve the attitudes of men toward their mental health, wellbeing, behaviours (e.g. risky drinking), and their subsequent attitude to help-seeking regarding these issues.

![Graph showing services used for mental health problems by sex](attachment:image)

Figure 3: Services used for mental health problems by sex

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