MOVEMBER FUNDED MEN’S HEALTH INFORMATION RESOURCES

EVALUATION BRIEF
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1. **Purpose**

*beyondblue* is seeking proposals to undertake research and evaluation into the effectiveness and impact of its men’s mental health information resources.

The outcomes of this research and evaluation of the current suite of resources will feed into development and provision of men’s mental health information resources in the future.

2. **Background**

Around one million Australian adults live with depression and over two million have an anxiety disorder. Mental illness is Australia’s leading cause of non-fatal disability, with depression and anxiety accounting for over half of this burden. Besides health costs for an individual with these conditions, the mental health of carers’ can suffer from increased pressure and stress. It’s estimated that the economic cost reaches around $12.3 billion over one year. This cost is not only borne by the individual with the condition, and it is often their carers who experience financial hardship due to lost earnings, as well as increased living and medical expenses.

Currently, one in eight men will experience depression in their lifetime. One in five will experience some type of anxiety disorder; unfortunately, these can often be experienced together. Evidence clearly highlights that the longer depression and anxiety is untreated, the more severely it impacts on the individual’s health.

One key factor that is contributing to the significant disability associated with depression and anxiety is the low level of help seeking behaviour associated with both conditions. The approach to seeking help varies between women and men, highlighted through their health service usage and preferences in obtaining information.

Men demonstrate a lower level of engagement with mental health professionals, accounting for 36 per cent of primary and psychological counselling services. This equates to one male health visit for every three females.

A noticeable difference in terms of seeking help is the proactive approach taken by women, compared to the reactive approach of men. Women will discuss issues with family and friends, taking a proactive approach and seeking help from medical professionals before the condition further deteriorates. Men withhold discussing their emotions and will often reactively seek professional help when they can no longer function and can engage with physical symptoms.

In 2012, *beyondblue* commissioned a qualitative research study into men’s help seeking behaviour. As a result, the following key themes emerged:

- A desire to maintain control (depression / anxiety = losing control)
- A preference for action rather than talking
- A propensity or preference to engage with physical symptoms and tangible ‘facts’
- Men are unlikely to explore nature of depression and anxiety, or paths to treatment, unless directly impacted, or at crisis point
- An expressed sense that they lack the tools to talk about, act upon depression / anxiety
- Men are more comfortable or more likely to look out for a mate than themselves.
Amongst men, depression and anxiety is framed in many ways, such as

- “It’s not on my radar / don’t want to think about it”
- “Depression/anxiety only happens to weak “flawed” people”
- “Depression/anxiety is woolly and unknown. It is a black hole”
- “You don’t dwell on these things and you don’t talk about it, you just cope”
- “Help seeking is a sign of weakness and failure”
- “Help seeking/intervention takes place at crisis point”
- “Drugs are the only treatment”
- Stigma has also been identified by men as a major barrier to seeking help.

When depression and anxiety is framed as above, it can make it difficult for men to disclose and discuss their mental wellbeing without experiencing stigma that is associated with depression and anxiety.

Evidence from beyondblue’s recent National Depression Monitor survey also indicate that:

- more men are seeking information from the internet, and moving away from their GP
- more men are seeking information from family and friends.

3. beyondblue, the national depression and anxiety initiative

beyondblue, the national depression and anxiety initiative, is an independent, not-for-profit organisation working to reduce the impact of depression and anxiety in Australia. beyondblue is a bipartisan initiative of the Australian, State and Territory Governments. beyondblue’s key funding sources are the Australian, State and Territory Governments, the Movember Foundation and private donors.

beyondblue’s vision

beyondblue’s vision is an Australian community that understands depression and anxiety, empowers people to seek help, and supports recovery, management and resilience. Within the men’s team, this has been further refined to specifically focus on Australian men.

beyondblue’s mission

beyondblue’s mission is to provide national leadership to reduce the impact of depression and anxiety in the Australian community.

Key Result Areas

beyondblue Key Result Areas (KRAs) are:

1. Increase awareness of depression and anxiety
2. Reduce stigma and discrimination
3. Improve help-seeking
4. Reduce impact and disability
5. Facilitate learning, collaboration, innovation and research.

Key Result Areas are interrelated, build on one another, and will help beyondblue achieve its vision and mission.
beyondblue has continued to undertake the development of men’s specific resources as part of enabling men to acquire the ‘facts’ and other information relevant to them, prior to talking to a medical professional. This approach aligns with what it understands through past and present research, about men’s health seeking behaviours. At an organisation level, the resources form part of addressing its objectives within the key result areas of:

- Increase awareness of depression and anxiety in the community
- Improve help seeking behaviour.

Increasing community awareness

beyondblue’s strategy to increase awareness of depression and anxiety is supported by the following objectives:

- People understand that depression and anxiety are common
- People understand that depression and anxiety are treatable
- People recognise the signs and symptoms of depression and anxiety
- People understand the impact of depression and anxiety – for individuals, families, in the workplace and community
- People understand that there are risk and proactive factors that may contribute to depression and anxiety, and promote positive mental health.

Improving help-seeking

beyondblue’s strategy to improve help-seeking is supported by the following objectives:

- People know where to get help for depression and anxiety
- People seek help for depression and anxiety
- The amenable barriers to get help seeking are identified and targeted through beyondblue programs, campaigns, policies and advocacy
- People identify depression and anxiety, talk about their concerns, and support people to seek help – among friends and family, workplaces, educational settings and in the community.

4. Men’s mental health information resources

beyondblue has produced a suite of depression and anxiety related information resources specifically targeted to Australian men. The objectives of the resources are to:

- Provide information on depression and anxiety to men, their family and friends, so they have a better understanding of depression and anxiety before, during and after taking action
- Encourage men to take action.

These resources represent a core part of beyondblue’s objective to raise awareness of depression and anxiety in the Australian community, and remain an important source of information for men, and people enquiring about men.

All Australian residents, regardless of location, can access beyondblue publications and resources free-of-charge by downloading or ordering materials online at www.beyondblue.org.au/resources or by calling the beyondblue Info line on 1300 22 4636.
Funding has been dedicated to the development, print and distribution of these resources. While the number of men’s specific resources is proportionately small, they represent a significant percentage of all resources distributed. In the last financial year, beyondblue dispatched over 1.1 million men’s specific resources.

Men’s mental health information resources are developed in various formats, and targeted at men from various life stages. beyondblue has specifically adapted this approach to ensure that information is relevant and therefore more readily absorbed by readers. Research clearly indicates that unless messages are targeted, they will fail to resonate with men.

5. Evaluation proposal

a) Background

beyondblue knows that there is a demand for resources, based on data collected through the ordering process and findings from studies around male help seeking behaviour. The information unable to be obtained so far is what happens after the individual/organisation receives the resources.

As previously highlighted, men have demonstrated a preference for online information and are moving away from traditional custodians of information such as medical professionals to intimate family and friends. This trend places an impetus on keeping not only men informed, but also close family and friends who may be sought for assistance.

In addition, there are differences in relation to communicating with particular age groups. Young men prefer, and are more efficient, in disseminating information through digital/social media platforms. While there is an indication that men in general are moving towards online information, older men still prefer more traditional methods such as printed material.

The minimal cost associated with social media means that its use as a delivery platform is continuing to expand in more creative and effective ways than ever before. This increase in information creates a more competitive environment in which to convey a particular message, particularly to younger males.

Since the initial development of men’s mental health information resources, no evaluation has been undertaken.

As beyondblue moves forward, the need exists to evaluate beyondblue’s suite of men’s mental health information resources. The evaluation will inform beyondblue on the future development and delivery of resources, as well as provide a measure of the program’s performance.

There are three areas of interest:

1. Audience and reach
2. Effectiveness
3. Impact.

Audience and reach

While Men’s Mental Health Information Resources are specifically written for men, they can be accessed by anybody through the Info line or online. As a result, audience characteristics and the resource’s reach can be quite varied, such as resources being used for themselves or others, and in regional or remote areas.
An in-depth understanding of the audience and reach is required to enhance *beyondblue’s* ability to refine and shape messages effectively.

**Effectiveness**

There are many variables to consider when attempting to effectively convey a message in written form. One example is having information that is useful and relevant. Once the information has been created, it has to be easily accessible and deliverable. Effectiveness is particularly important as written resources have a limited window in which to hold a reader’s attention.

**Impact**

Ultimately, the aim of the resources is to make an impact on men, through improving their understanding, changing attitudes and promoting positive changes in behaviour. A measure of their impact is required in order to examine if the aim is being reached.

*b) Evaluation outcomes*

Using an appropriate methodology, the selected evaluator may seek to address questions within the following areas of interest. These include, but are not limited to:

1. **Audience and reach**
   a. Who receives the information?
   b. How were they received? (ordered themselves or through someone else)
   c. How are these resources used?
   d. Are resources for SELF, to provide to OTHERS, or BOTH?
   e. Is the tone, language, style and delivery method adequate?
   f. Are these resources kept for future reference?

2. **Effectiveness**
   a. Are the resources HELPFUL and USEFUL?
   b. Do they provide the right or adequate information?
   c. What are the best ways of ACCESSING and DELIVERING these resources?
   d. Are there any gaps in the information we currently provide?
   e. What else would HELP with the provision of information?

3. **Impact**
   a. Do the resources improve UNDERSTANDING of mental health?
   b. Do the resources promote changes to ATTITUDE?
   c. Do the resources promote changes in BEHAVIOUR?
   d. Did anyone do anything different as a result of obtaining the resources?
   e. Do these resources meet their objectives and that of *beyondblue* as a whole?

**Recommendations**

Based on evaluation of research undertaken with key groups and an analysis of the effectiveness and impact of the men’s mental health information resources, *beyondblue* is seeking recommendations for the future provision of information resources including identification of gaps, delivery platforms and any other matters arising from the analysis.
c) **Available data**

*beyondblue* has a large data set of information captured from the information resource ordering process. This information includes:

- demographic data
- whether the order is placed by *beyondblue* staff, an individual, an organisation or via the *beyondblue* Info line
- order contents
- order quantities.

Some of this data may be useful in answering the queries above, however further data collection and analysis is also required.

On 26 March 2012, *beyondblue* changed distribution providers and implemented a new organisation registration process that captures additional information about the organisation. Users who place orders for certain materials, and agree to participate in market research, can also be profiled by the type of organisation and the contact person’s occupation/profession. This information will be provided in data collected since 26 March 2012.

d) **Proposal requirements**

The applicants will provide *beyondblue* with a detailed:

- evaluation 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) hard copies of the proposal by <insert date>.

e) **Selection criteria**

The successful agency will be selected on the basis of:

- the range and scope of methodologies proposed
- experience in conducting similar evaluations
- capacity to meet the project timeframes
- referee reports
- value for money.
f) Project management

The successful agency will be required to enter into a standard beyondblue Independent Contractor Agreement. A copy of the standard agreement is attached to the project brief.

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

Payments will be made in equal instalments and attached to specific project milestones as outlined below:

- delivery of detailed work plan in consultation with beyondblue
- delivery of mid-project Project Report
- delivery of short Summary Report (suitable for broader dissemination)
- delivery of detailed Final Report.

g) Project outcomes

The successful agency will be expected to:

- engage with key beyondblue staff during the project
- liaise with stakeholders relevant to this 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 a short Summary Report suitable for broader dissemination.

h) Budget

Applicants are asked to cost the proposal based on the outlined requirements of the evaluation and provide a written quote (GST exclusive). Quotes are to be GST exclusive.

i) Timeframes

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<td>Request for Quotation issued</td>
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<td>Discussion with preferred provider</td>
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<td>Progress Report</td>
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<td>Executive Summary</td>
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4. **beyondblue Liaison Officer**

Gerard Fox, Men’s Health Project Manager

(03) 9810 6144 or gerard.fox@beyondblue.org.au
5. **Attachments**

a) *beyondblue* Independent Contractor Agreement