



Rocky Bay

HEALTH + COMMUNITY

Mental Health Project

Abstract

Understand the prevalence of mental health needs amongst the Rocky Bay customer and carer community.

Pat Hayes

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Research Objectives

The purpose of this research project was to understand the prevalence of mental health needs amongst the Rocky Bay customer and carer community, and how their mental health and wellbeing impacts daily life. Outcomes from this project have been used to inform capacity building initiatives that close this knowledge gap in both service delivery and Rocky Bay staff training needs.

Approach

The purpose of this research project was to understand the prevalence of mental health needs amongst the Rocky Bay customer and carer community, and how their mental health and wellbeing impacts daily life. Outcomes from this project have been used to inform capacity building initiatives that close this knowledge gap in both service delivery and Rocky Bay staff training needs.

Results or Expected Outcomes

The data identified the most common mental health diagnosis or concerns experienced by Rocky Bay customers reflect anxiety and depression related symptomology and/or disorders. A common correlation was found between a primary diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder and a diagnosis of anxiety, of the total surveyed participants, 4.5% identified suicidal thinking as a daily experience. It should also be noted that Rocky Bay customers were more willing to report higher incidences of daily mental wellbeing experiences, than what carers would report as experiences of the person they support. The reason for this reporting could be multifaceted, and may reflect communication difficulties, the stigma that comes with talking about mental health and wellbeing, and/or differences in the understanding of individual experiences.

The experiences of support persons, or carers, echoed a broad response when asked to reflect on their on mental wellbeing over the past three months, with 18.9% reporting feeling positive, calm, engaged and happy, whilst a further 17% reported feeling very anxious, extremely low, exhausted and detached. The experiences of support persons saw a direct correlation with primary diagnosis type of the person they support. Carers who identified as positive, calm, engaged and happy were found to support Rocky Bay customers with a primary diagnosis of a chromosomal or neurological disorders, whereas carers supporting Rocky Bay customers with neurodevelopmental disorders were more likely to report feeling very anxious, extremely low, exhausted and detached.

Impact

This survey has confirmed the experience of Rocky Bay staff, that many Rocky Bay customers also experience either a diagnosed mental illness, or they have concerns regarding their mental health that requires further support. The health support needs of Rocky Bay customers are broad when it comes to mental health and wellbeing and its symptomology, which introduces a complexity to the care Rocky Bay staff provide where a primary diagnosis may also reflect behavioural concerns, movement disorders, sensory needs, functional impairment and communication disorders.

The findings of this survey support the need to close this gap in knowledge and service delivery. This can be achieved through the implementation of changes to the organisation's response to the mental health and wellbeing needs of its customers and support persons through increased capacity initiatives and recourses, improved data and information collection processes, and also including enhanced skills and training options offered to Rocky Bay staff.

Key Contacts

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