



MENTAL HEALTH MONTH^{ACT}

Media release

Awards recognise those who boost our community's wellbeing

14 October 2022

The annual ACT Mental Health Month Awards and scholarships will be presented to 14 outstanding award recipients on Friday 14 October, from 4:30pm.

"These awards recognise the many exceptional people, organisations and initiatives working to promote and improve mental health understanding, awareness, service provision and wellbeing in the Canberra community," said Mental Health Community Coalition ACT (MHCC ACT) Acting CEO Corinne Dobson.

"Especially after the last few years, we want to recognise the special members of our community who devote their lives to building positive mental wellbeing in our community every day, whether in the course of paid employment in the community sector, as a researcher, an individual with lived experience of mental ill-health or a carer of someone who is."

The Mental Health Month Awards are a sector-wide initiative coordinated by the Mental Health Community Coalition ACT, in partnership with the ACT Mental Health Consumer Network, and implemented by the ACT Mental Health Month Advisory Committee.

The Awards ceremony was officiated by Genevieve Jacobs and included speeches by Minister for Mental Health Emma Davidson and Mental Health Month Community Ambassador Yenn Purkis.

"We all want to live well in our community, to do the things we love and feel as though we belong. For people with mental health challenges, it can be hard to access the right support and care to keep you well. Today we celebrate those individuals and organisations who have been passionate advocates, carers and provided critical support for people in need," said ACT Minister for Mental Health, Emma Davidson.

"Congratulations to all the winners and nominees for this year's Mental Health Month Awards. You have all made a significant difference to make Canberra a more kind, caring and connected place."

Mental Health Month is an opportunity to raise community awareness and understanding of mental health, reduce the stigma and discrimination associated with mental health conditions, and promote positive mental health and wellbeing.

The list of award recipients is provided below.

A full list of the nominees is available at: <https://www.mentalhealthmonthact.org/awards>

For full details about Mental Health Month ACT, visit www.mentalhealthmonthact.org

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Images: Official logos, photos and other resources are available at www.mentalhealthmonthact.org/resources

Mental Health Month ACT is coordinated by the Mental Health Community Coalition ACT in partnership with ACT Health and the Mental Health Month ACT Advisory Committee.



2022 Mental Health Month Award winners

Mentally Healthy Community Award

This award category recognises individuals, groups or organisations who have made a significant contribution using preventative approaches to improving the mental health and wellbeing of our community.

Individual: Matt Breen

Three years ago, Matt started to save lives from suicide after he lost his dad to suicide 10 years prior. Although he also lost his mum recently to cancer, Matt remains a positive and optimistic bloke who always makes time to help others.

Running 4 Resilience has over 100 runners and walkers every Wednesday, and over 40 each Friday. CEO of Mental Illness Education ACT, Heidi Prowse, recently said that the group had saved the lives of people she knows.

Organisation: Wellcare

Wellcare is an outstanding provider of residential supports for people with mental health disabilities. They are creative, innovative and flexible in the person-centred, skills-focused supports they offer to achieve exceptional outcomes for participants.

Building on their success with residential care and in response to community need, Wellcare established an outreach service for people outside of residential care and a nursing service.

Wellcare staff are generous and proactive in promoting the interests of participants. They go out of their way to encourage and balance residents' choices and dignity.

Innovated Person-centred Supports Award

This award recognises individuals, groups or organisations who have made a significant contribution to the delivery of innovative person-centred supports to people who experience mental health concerns.

Lisa Anderson

Lisa is a private practice counsellor and tirelessly passionate supporter of women in need.

She has created groups to connect allied health and support practices supporting women in Canberra and to give professional mothers opportunities to network with their peers.

In 2022, Lisa identified a dire need for psychosocial and counselling support for women in Canberra struggling through divorce and separation. She developed an innovative program that combines supportive group work and one-on-one counselling.

Lisa also sits on the board of Mothercraft ACT and works with women-centric legal services to provide greater awareness around critical community issues, including domestic violence.

Research Evaluation Award

This award category recognises an individual researcher, piece of research or project that has advanced and/or is working towards improvements, innovation and evidence-informed practice in mental health.

OzHelp Foundation Health in Gear Program



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Health in Gear (HiG) is a health and wellness initiative for people working in transport and logistics.

Truck drivers are the second-highest occupational group at risk of suicide. Risk factors include long and irregular hours, poor diet, lack of exercise, fatigue, relationship pressures, isolation, regulatory burdens and tight deadlines, as well as additional pressures from COVID-19.

HiG supports workers in transport and logistics to achieve optimal wellness through access to information and support. It includes a roadside early intervention/prevention health check, 24/7 telephone support and counselling, website resources, a podcast series and ambassadors who promote the program.

Mental Health Carer Award

This award category recognises unpaid carers (family or friends) of people who experience mental health concerns. It is designed to show appreciation for the contribution carers can make to the wellbeing of consumers, advocating on their behalf and often being the primary or only support person.

Marie Johnson

Marie has been the primary carer, emotional support, and advocate for her daughter, Belinda, for 20 years.

Marie's unwavering support, constant care, belief and encouragement have been critical to Belinda's recovery journey, helping her live a meaningful and rewarding life.

Marie and Belinda's father, Allan, have tirelessly fought for justice for their daughter. Their advocacy was instrumental in Belinda being accepted onto the NDIS after an adversarial 18-month ordeal. Marie continues to fight to maintain Belinda's NDIS access.

Marie has become a prolific public commentator on the complex systemic issues within the NDIS that marginalise people with disability.

Community Connection through Recovery Award

This award category celebrates individuals with lived experience of a mental health condition whose mental health recovery journey has led them to become more involved in their community.

Millie Corin

Millie has volunteered as a Lived Experience Educator with MIEACT since 2021, bravely sharing her story of anxiety, depression and eating disorders with hundreds of Canberrans to help eliminate stigma and reduce barriers to help-seeking.

Millie recently shared her story at the MIEACT Gala Ball and played a big part in raising \$125,000 for a new primary schools program. She has also actively worked with media to raise mental health awareness.

Millie has a genuine passion for all things mental health, and wants to help people learn from her experiences to better manage their own mental wellbeing.

Lived Experience Ally Recognition Award (LEARA)*



This award recognises an individual or organisation with a longstanding and exceptional contribution to mental health consumers and consumer-centred mental health services in the ACT. It acknowledges those who work collaboratively with consumers to achieve positive change.

Tim Daly

Tim founded This is My Brave, Australia (TIMBA), a 100% volunteer-run charity dedicated to generating mental health awareness and advocacy while reducing stigma.

Tim's motto is that storytelling can change a life. Having the opportunity to reclaim your story and share it in a supportive space can be an utterly transformative experience. Tim's encouragement and support of those contemplating sharing their mental health journey, and the long-term impacts this experience has on their lives, is nothing short of inspiring.

Tim works tirelessly to coordinate projects supporting those experiencing hardship, loss, and health issues, with a focus on dignity and empowerment.

Leadership through Lived Experience Award: Consumer

This award recognises an individual with lived experience of mental health conditions who has made an outstanding contribution to advocacy and social change benefiting people with lived experience. This can relate to a specific program the consumer has initiated/coordinated or ongoing work in this area.

Joey Brogden

As the youth lived experience champion, Joey has been an integral part of the 'Right care, first time, where you live' research collaboration between the University of Sydney and the Office for Mental Health and Wellbeing.

Drawing on her lived experience of the ACT mental health sector, Joey has advocated for alterations in mental health initiatives in the ACT and effectively engaged with the research team and policymakers.

Joey's passion and commitment to ensuring other young people can effectively engage with the program and have their voices heard have been invaluable.

David Perrin Award*

The award is presented in memory of David Perrin, an individual with multiple disabilities who made his mark in mental health services and was an inspiration to all who knew him. It recognises a mental health consumer who lives an independent and self-determined life beyond what they may have expected after diagnosis.

Liam Adams

Liam is a creative young man who lives with Autism and intellectual disability. A writer and cartoonist, Liam's first book sold out on its first day! A reprint is now available, and his second book will be available in November.

Liam also creates and sells mugs, pens, notebooks, t-shirts, doggy t-shirts and zany original Christmas cards.



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He recently started a business that he named *Everyone Needs A Liam* because of the nice things he would say and do for others. He launched his business at Smith's Alternative and has a casual stall at the Old Bus Depot Markets.

ACT Mental Health Consumer Network Scholarship*

These scholarships (worth up to \$500 a year to a maximum of \$2,000 in total) recognise mental health consumers who are furthering their education. They are intended to cover general education expenses such as computers, course texts and course fees.

Felicity Maher

Felicity is a mixed media artist and creative designer. Everything she creates has a touch of fancy and a dash of sparkle.

As a mental health consumer herself, Felicity loves to create items and facilitate social opportunities for people with disabilities and mental health conditions.

Felicity recently joined the County Women's Association in Canberra and uses her creative skills to enhance the organisation's charity projects. She is also a member of Women with Disabilities ACT.

Her latest creative pursuits include cake decorating and music therapy for wellness, and she wants to share these skills with her community.

Rufus Scholarship*

Established in December 2019 by a private donor, this Scholarship provides an annual grant of up to \$600 to support a mental health consumer who would not otherwise have the financial means to do so to further or continue their education.

Elise Mariee Crouch

Elise has a passion for helping mental health consumers in the ACT. She has a long history of contributions in aged care, childhood education and care, nursing and volunteer work, reflecting her passion for the greater good of humanity.

Having attained a Certificate II in Community work, Elise is now enrolling in a Certificate IV to enhance her ability to support her community.

Elise also sits on various committees for the ACT Mental Health Consumer Network and has completed advocacy and consumer representation certificates.

MHCC ACT Training Scholarships

These three scholarships provide grants of \$1000 each to smaller organisations whose main work is with marginalised and minority population groups, to be used to undertake MHCC ACT's mental health training.

A Gender Agenda

A Gender Agenda is a fully peer-led organisation that supports trans, gender-diverse and intersex people in the ACT.

Through a preventative model of social support, AGA tackles social isolation through a lively calendar of regular and special events for its community members, their allies, friends and



family. AGA's peer navigators facilitate a safe space where members can access peer and social support and build community connections.

AGA's services include The Gender Center: a drop-in peer navigation service that provides trans and gender-diverse people with access to information and referrals to support them through social, legal, and medical transition pathways.

Mental Health Foundation (ACT)

Established in 1984, Mental Health Foundation (ACT) (MHF) is a Canberra-based community service organisation providing supports to people with severe mental illness or psychosocial disability. Its mission is to "deliver quality mental health services in the ACT and surrounding region through innovative accommodation, outreach and support solutions".

MHF provides NDIS-funded accommodation services, outreach services, support coordination, recovery mentoring and youth to adult transition services.

MHF's incredible team of mental health support workers also provide temporary accommodation to consumers being discharged from the acute mental health unit who would otherwise be released to homelessness.

Dalai Byambasuren

Growing up in Mongolia, mental health was associated with shame and stigma. Dalai chose to challenge those taboos by moving to Australia to study mental health.

However, the challenges of being a migrant, including language barriers and lack of social network, led to Dalai experiencing mental health struggles first-hand.

After graduating with a Diploma of Community Services, Dalai recently started the Mongolian Association of Canberra ACT to support fellow Mongolians and empower them by sharing her lived experience, as well as break down the shame and stigma of mental health in their communities.

*Provided by the ACT Mental Health Consumer Network.