

**Mental Health
Australia**

Annual Issues & Opportunities Workshop — Webinar Report

Lived Experience Research

Dr Michelle Banfield

2 December 2020



Mentally healthy people,
mentally healthy communities

mhaustralia.org

Introduction: Annual issues & opportunities workshop

Each year, Mental Health Australia hosts a two-day Annual Issues and Opportunities Workshop for members of the National Register of Mental Health Consumer and Carer Representatives (National Register) and the National Mental Health Consumer and Carer Forum (NMHCCF). This year, members from the Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) Mental Health Consumer and Carer Group from the Embrace Multicultural Mental Health Project were also invited to attend.

This year, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the two-day face-to-face workshop was not possible, so the 2020 Annual Issues and Opportunities Workshop will occur across the year as a webinar series.

These webinars aim to further develop the representative skills of mental health consumers and carers already participating in national policy initiatives. In particular, the webinars are designed to develop representatives' advocacy, policy development, and leadership skills. The webinars also provide important networking opportunities for representatives.

The theme for the 2020 webinar series is **Consumer and Carer Leadership in a Time of Crisis – Social, Environmental and Political**.

The sixth event in the Annual Workshop series was held on 2 December 2020. This webinar was led by Dr Michelle Banfield from the Lived Experience Research Unit, Centre for Mental Health Research, Research School of Population Health, College of Health and Medicine at the Australian National University.

Dr Michelle Banfield has been a lived experience researcher for more than 16 years. She is head of Lived Experience Research at the Australian National University Centre for Mental Health Research, where she leads a small team of staff and students who have lived experience of mental health issues, conducting research prioritised by consumers and carers. Michelle and her team use their own lived experience to inform their research and involve others with lived experience as active partners in the research process. Michelle has authored more than 70 papers and guides on lived experience research, including two guides to consumer and carer involvement. Her main research interest is how to improve people's experiences of seeking help for mental health issues.

This report provides highlights from the webinar and a summary of the key themes and outcomes raised during the webinar or through the subsequent evaluation survey.



Webinar 6: Lived Experience Research with Dr Michelle Banfield

Webinar Summary

The active involvement of consumers and carers in health research has been Australian policy for almost two decades. Mental health research is one of a small number of areas where the policy has been put into practice, but active involvement remains unusual.

In the first part of this webinar, Dr Banfield described the projects and activities of her lived experience research team over the past 10 years. These include consumer and carer priority-setting projects, research to develop mental health peer work, and continual work to develop a flexible model of involvement that encourages other researchers to be inclusive.

The second part of the webinar was an interactive Q&A session, where participants asked Dr Banfield questions and discussed ideas. Dr Banfield also invited input on where research involvement should go in the future, in particular, how to be involved in the research process (not just as participants), what makes a lived experience researcher, and how we can effectively update our priorities with a broad range of people with lived experience.

Key themes raised by consumers and carers during the training

- There is a difference between researchers that use their lived experience to shape and inform their research and researchers that have a lived experience but don't use it.
- Lived experience can shape our career options where lived experience is seen as a strength
- Ethics committees are open to being influenced – it's not a 'watertight' system.

Feedback

An evaluation survey was sent to all participants following the webinar, which three out of 18 webinar participants responded to. These responses help gauge the level of participant satisfaction with the webinar as well as participants' reflections and insights.

Example Reflections

66.7% of Evaluation Survey respondents reported being very satisfied with the webinar overall.

"Awesome Presentation."

"I would like to be informed of opportunities to get involved in Michelle's work."

"Thank you so much Michelle – it was great to hear about what's going on in the field of research."



Appendix 1: Webinar Attendees

National Register of Mental Health Consumer and Carer Representatives (the National Register)

The National Register is a pool of 60 trained mental health consumer and carer representatives from across Australia. National Register members work at the national level to provide a strong consumer and carer voice in the mental health sector. The National Register is a Mental Health Australia project.

National Mental Health Consumer and Carer Forum (NMHCCF)

The NMHCCF is a combined national voice for mental health consumers and carers. The NMHCCF listen, learn, advocate and influence in matters of mental health reform. Mental Health Australia auspices and has a formal Memorandum of Understanding with the NMHCCF.

Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) Mental Health Consumer and Carer Group

The CALD Mental Health Consumer and Carer Group is comprised of a CALD mental health consumer and a carer representative from each state and territory of Australia. The CALD Group includes a passionate, energised and diverse mix of voices, and provides advice to the National Multicultural Mental Health Project Alliance based on members' lived experience and connections to their communities.



Appendix 2: 2020 Workshop Working Group

The 2020 Annual Workshop planning was informed by a working group of consumer and carer representatives, who helped shape the theme, speakers and presenters for the webinar series.

The working group developed the theme of “Consumer and Carer Leadership in a Time of Crisis – Social, Environmental and Political” for this year’s Annual Workshop, which provided a focus for the webinar series.

Working group members included:

- Susan Adam
Carer Representative — National Register Member
- Keiran Booth
Carer Representative — National Register Member
- Fay Jackson
Consumer Representative — National Register Member
- Noel Muller
Consumer Representative — National Register member
- Angela Rao
Carer Representative — National Register member
- Carli Sheers
Consumer Representative — National Register Member



For more information please contact the Consumer and Carer Team at Mental Health Australia on 02 6285 3100 or at natreg@mhaustralia.org.

Mental Health Australia is the peak, national non-government organisation representing and promoting the interests of the Australian mental health sector and committed to achieving better mental health for all Australians. It was established in 1997 as the first independent peak body in Australia to represent the full spectrum of mental health stakeholders and issues. Mental Health Australia members include national organisations representing consumers, carers, special needs groups, clinical service providers, professional bodies, public and private mental health service providers, researchers and state/territory community mental health peak bodies.



Mental Health Australia



Mentally healthy people,
mentally healthy communities

Mental Health Australia is the peak independent national representative body of the mental health sector in Australia.

Mental Health Australia Ltd
9-11 Napier Close
Deakin ACT 2600
ABN 57 600 066 635

P 02 6285 3100
F 02 6285 2166
E info@mhaustralia.org
mhaustralia.org