

2022

**THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY FOR THE
AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY**

Ministerial Statement:

**MindMap the ACT Youth Navigation portal - update on
Recommendation 17 of the Standing Committee on Health
and Community Wellbeing report on Annual and Financial
Reports 2019-2020**

**Presented by
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Minister for Mental Health
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Madam Speaker, on 19 October 2021, the ACT Government released the online youth navigation portal, MindMap. MindMap is the first of its kind to provide a consolidated and coordinated approach for young people seeking support and assistance for their mental health, and links with existing services within the Canberra region. Children and young people, along with parents and carers are able to find the right services and supports for their needs with the platform. There are also youth navigators to assist, and clinical support if required.

We know through the Review of Children and Young People undertaken by the Office for Mental Health and Wellbeing in 2019, that young people find it hard to navigate the mental health sector and are not aware of the supports available here in the ACT or how best to access these supports. We know this is true also for parents and carers looking for the right services for the children and young people in their care. We heard that young people wanted the knowledge and skills to manage their mental health and wellbeing and to be empowered to take ownership of their journey.

MindMap provides a safe space for young people to engage in an appropriate way to find the right services and supports for their mental health and wellbeing. With a range of features including online chat, phone support, email, or to search the site anonymously, young people can seek and find the support they need. MindMap is staffed by Youth Navigators and Clinical Youth Navigators through Marymead and are available between 12pm to 11pm 7 days per week. MindMap has almost 100 services linked to the site and has nearly 300 resources to support young people seeking information on mental health.

MindMap was developed with young people, for young people, and will continue to evolve to ensure the site is offering up-to-date support for our community.

I am pleased to provide an update on the implementation of MindMap and the current data we are seeing through the site. Since the launch, MindMap has been accessed by over 9,100 people, with over 25,000 pages viewed. The Youth Navigators have received over 150 telephone calls which has progressively increased since the launch. The chat feature is the preferred method for young people seeking to engage with a Youth Navigator for assistance.

The key issues that are being raised are support for anxiety and depression both within the search functions, but also through telephone and the chat feature. Other topics relate to relationships, abuse/family violence, feelings/emotions, self-harm/suicide prevention, social and emotional wellbeing, and eating disorders/body image. We can also see that users are seeking dedicated support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander services.

We can see that of those users that chose to provide their age, 50% were between 6 and 17 years of age, 24% were between the age of 18-24, and 26% were nominated as parents or carers. We can see through this data, that 38% were happy to travel to access the right service in Canberra by selecting multiple locations through the search feature. Breakdown data for locations is included in the report, noting that a young person can seek information on services without choosing a preferred location. 51% were seeking face to face services, with 28% seeking a combination of delivery options. This is consistent with the feedback we are hearing from young people, that are interested in face-to-face support at the commencement of their journey, with online support only following an established relationship.

An important offering of MindMap is the 'Active Hold' service that Marymead offers to support a young person while they are on a waiting list for a service. This involves face-to-face or phone counselling sessions at a young person's

request with a Clinical Youth Navigator, along with contact with the young person. This feature is an incredible opportunity to support a young person, including their family, before they commence with a service and to ensure their needs have not changed.

We know from the advice provided by mental health community advocates, service providers, and researchers in the ACT that it is critically important to be able to respond quickly when someone has the courage to say they need help. Being able to hold the space for someone until they are able to engage with a service is helpful in managing symptoms while they wait, and ensuring they don't disengage before they have the chance to receive the support they need.

Currently the Active Hold service provided by the Clinical Youth Navigator at MindMap does not appear to be widely known, and so far only one young person has engaged in this service, but the feedback was highly positive for both the young person and their family. The Office for Mental Health and Wellbeing and Marymead are investigating further strategies to make this service more widely known.

I am encouraged by the data and feedback from the community that MindMap is already a valuable resource for our community.

A critical part of MindMap is the formal evaluation which is currently in progress. The evaluation is being overseen by the MindMap Governance Committee that meets monthly. There is a dedicated group looking specifically at the evaluation involving the Australian National University, University of Canberra, the Youth Coalition, Mental Illness Education ACT, Marymead and the Office.

The first part of the evaluation will focus on the process of implementation followed by the short-term outcomes and first year impact

I am keen to hear the findings of this evaluation and will be happy to share the findings later this year so that we can continue to work with young people and our community to ensure they receive the support for their needs.

ENDS