



The Mind Your Mind Project

A report on the review of the Mind Your Mind Kit

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Please note: The Youth Minister's Round Table of Young Territorians is an independent advisory council. The views expressed in this report are those of the authors and are not necessarily those of the Office of Youth Affairs or the Northern Territory Government.

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- Our fellow 2006 Round Table Members for their support and assistance in distributing surveys around the Territory.
- Sarah Galton for taking her time to meet with us and providing some much needed information.
- Department of Employment, Education and Training for granting us permission to distribute surveys in NT schools.
- All school students who participated in focus groups: Casuarina Senior College and Marrara Christian College.
- All schools around the Territory that participated in the surveys.

Executive Summary

Mental health among young people, particularly teenagers and senior secondary school students was one of the main issues concerning the members of the 2006 Youth Minister's Round Table of Young Territorians (Round Table). While a number of projects are being conducted around the Northern Territory to counter this issue, it still remains a major hurdle in many young people's path to success. While there are numerous counsellors, and other professionals who are ready to help out, many young people turn to resources on mental health, through which they come to understand how to deal with their problems by themselves.

The Mind Your Mind Team undertook this project to investigate the effectiveness and accessibility of one such resource on mental health of young people: The Mind Your Mind Kit. This kit was released by the Office of Youth Affairs (Northern Territory) in 2004, and consists of a series of fact sheets on a range of mental health issues faced by young people, such as bullying, suicide prevention, stress, relationships, etc. The Kit focussed on mainstream young people between the ages of 14 and 25. While a lot of positive feedback was obtained regarding the Kit, it has not been reviewed as of yet. This project aims to find any hidden groups that the Kit may not be reaching, any subject matter that may be missing, and whether the format of the Kit should be changed so that it is more accessible and appealing to young people.

Data collection was mainly done through surveys and focus groups of young people in the age group 14 to 25 years. Surveys were distributed across the NT to all schools and youth based organisations. 310 surveys were received back. Focus groups were conducted at Casuarina Senior College with a group of six year 11 and year 12 students and at Marrara Christian College with a group of six year 8 students.

The results of the surveys and focus groups showed that:

- A small minority of respondents (7%) were aware of the Kit, and of those who had used the Kit, a vast majority (75%) gave positive feedback, while a minority of 13% felt that it needed improvement, mainly in terms of the format.
- A vast majority of the respondents stated that they would find the content useful.

- A vast majority (88%) believe that mental health of young people is important, and almost all respondents acknowledged that mental health among young people was an issue in their regions.
- Most respondents suggested that the Kit be made into media formats for easier accessibility and to make it more appealing to young people. Some respondents recommended that the Kit be translated into ethnic and Indigenous languages.

Using these results, our team recommends that:

- The Kit be advertised and promoted among young people e.g. posters in schools, etc.
- The Kit is distributed in media formats such on DVDs, and audio version.
- The Kit is translated in other languages including in Indigenous languages. The languages would have to depend upon the demographics of the Northern Territory.
- The Kit be reviewed at a regular basis and is updated so that it contains information on the current issues facing youth. Relevant fact sheets should be distributed to school students.

Introduction

The Mind Your Mind Team reviewed the effectiveness and accessibility of the Mind Your Mind Kit, which is a series of fact sheets on a range of mental health issues faced by young people.

The Team members range in age from 15 to 23, and are therefore able to cover the age groups that the Kit is designed for. Mental health among young people was recognised as a key issue by the members of the Round Table in 2006. It was agreed that despite the many measures implemented to counter the issue, it still persists. As mental health issues are generally not talked about amongst young people, resources on mental health play a key role in providing information to young people on how to deal with such problems. The Mind Your Mind Kit is one such resource, and is being reviewed and evaluated by the team. Our project aims to obtain answers to the following questions regarding the Kit:

- Is the Kit useful for young people and is it being utilised by them?
- What fact sheets in the Kit are most useful for young people?
- Should the format of the Kit be changed to increase accessibility and make it more appealing to young people?

The questions above were investigated mainly through consultations with young people, and professionals including school counsellors. Our main methods of data collection were surveys and focus groups amongst young people and school counsellors. Opinions gathered from these were used to analyse the accessibility and effectiveness of the Kit, and make recommendations on how it can be improved.

Major Findings

In order to review the Mind Your Mind Kit, information had to be gathered regarding the purpose, audience and content of the Kit. Our primary contact was the Office of Youth Affairs (OYA), which was responsible for the compilation of the Kit. A meeting with the author of the Kit Ms Sarah Galton was particularly fruitful in gaining information about the Kit. She provided information on the intended audience of the Kit, its purpose, and possible areas which might need to be reviewed, such as the format of the Kit, and any subject matter that may be missing.

It was decided to take the following approaches to the collection of data:

- Surveys
- Focus Groups
- Informal consultations

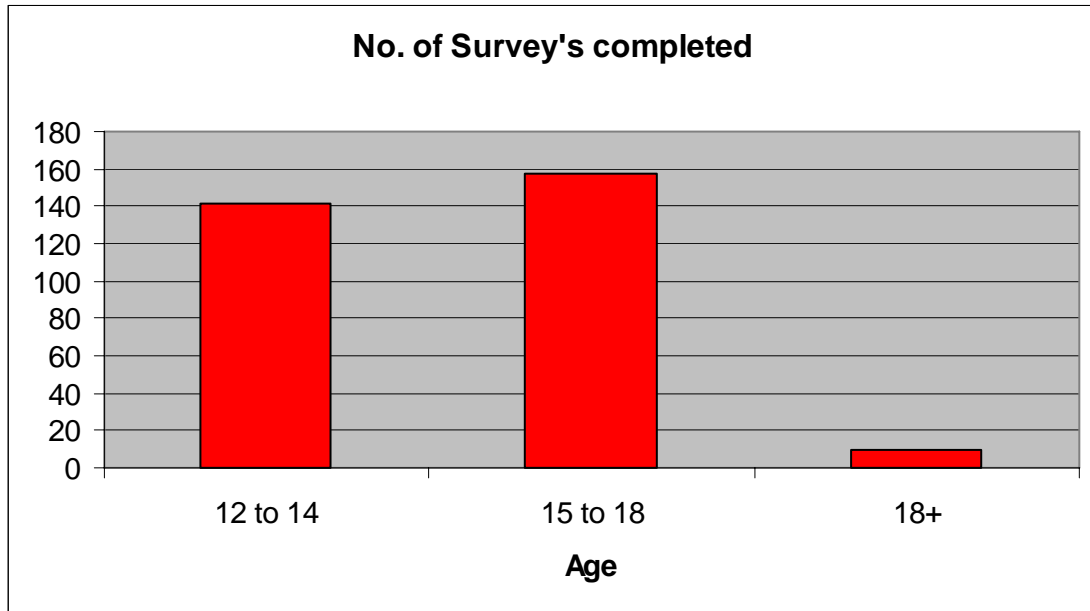
Two sets of surveys were formulated, one for young people (12 to 25 years of age) and another for school counsellors. These were designed so that opinions on the Kit from both perspectives could be obtained on similar questions. The surveys were finalised and copies were sent to all members of the Round Table so that they could distribute them within their networks. The Department of Employment, Education and Training (DEET) was contacted for permission to distribute surveys throughout Territory schools. Once the permission was granted, the surveys were distributed to all government and non-government schools in the NT, accompanied by letters to the principals. About 310 surveys were received back.

Using the results of the surveys, focus groups were conducted in two schools. A group of eight year 11 and 12 students from Casuarina Senior College took part in one of the focus groups, and another group of six year 8 students from Marrara Christian College took part in another. The focus groups aimed to obtain more detailed answers for the questions in the surveys. No focus group was conducted outside of Darwin, as all members of the Team are residents of Darwin.

YOUTH SURVEYS

A total of 308 surveys were received back, and the respondents consisted of 149 (48%) males and 159 (52%) females.

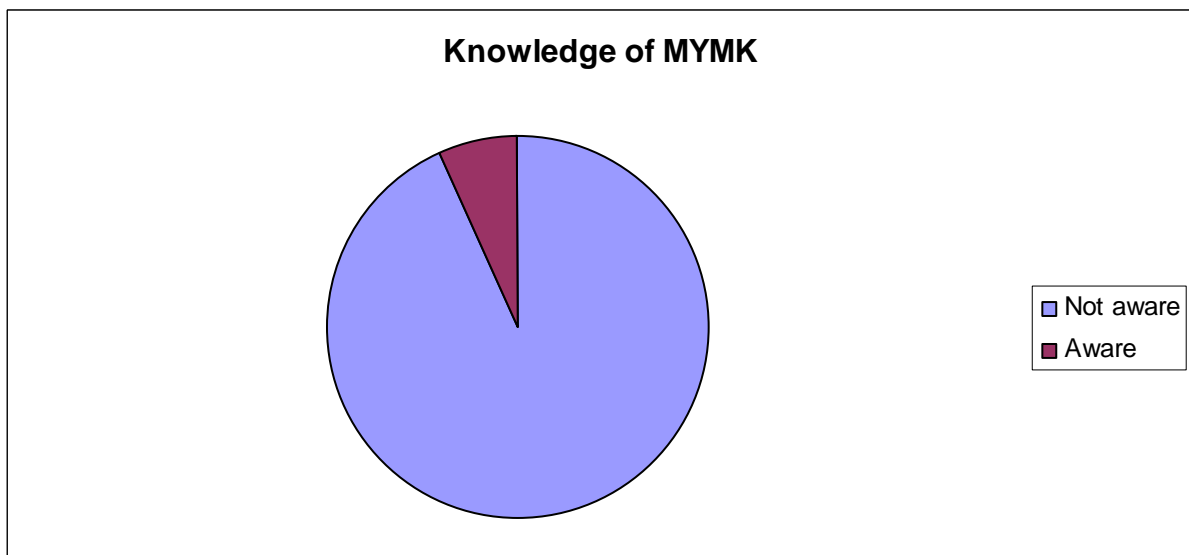
Age breakdown and composition of respondents:



| | |
|----------------------------|-----|
| 12-14 yrs (inclusive): | 141 |
| 15 – 18 years (inclusive): | 157 |
| 18+: | 10 |

Awareness and usage of Kit

Total of 22/308 respondents were aware of the Kit and had read it (7%)

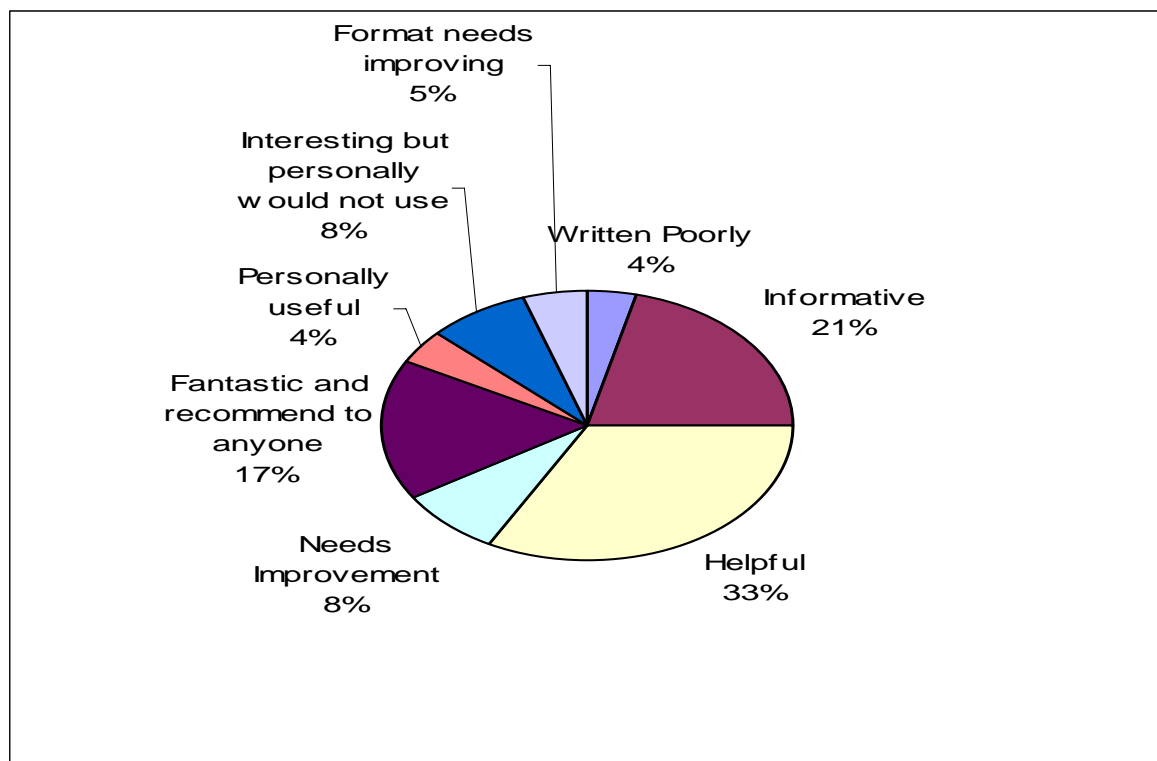


The results show that a small minority (7%) of respondents were aware of the kit. This indicates that the Kit has been utilised to a small extent.

If yes, how has it affected you?

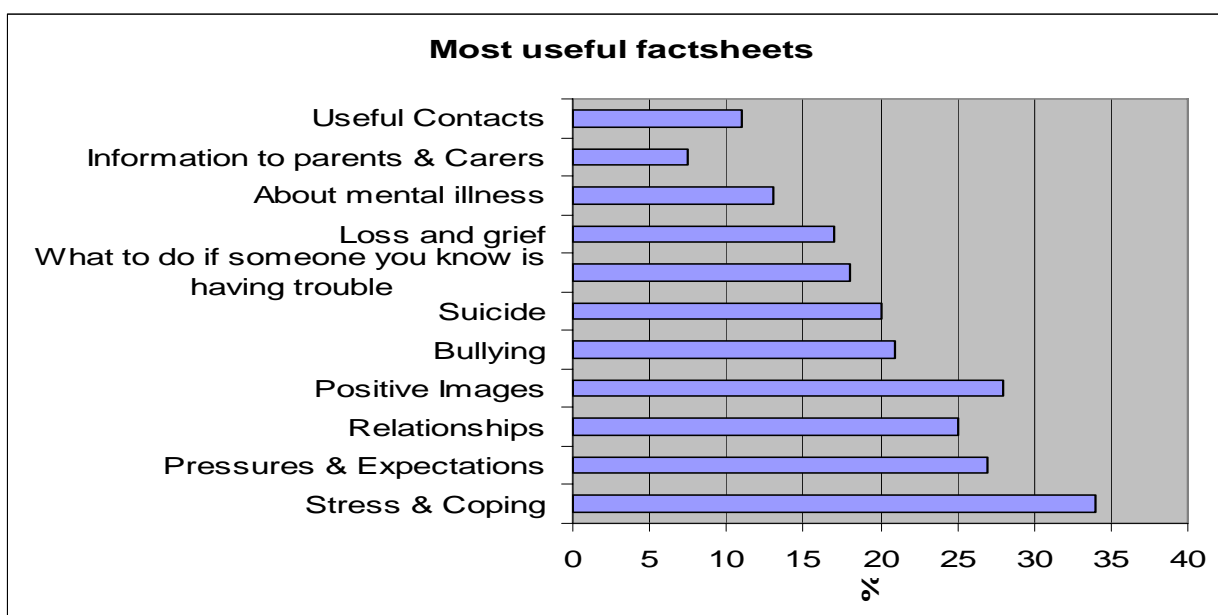
Of those who had used the Kit, most respondents stated that it had assisted them. One of these respondents commented that it had “made (them) more aware of how many mental health issues there are and the contact information is good for parents and youths.” A small minority of respondents provided some negative feedback of the Kit, stating that it had “not really” assisted them. None of these respondents had a more elaborate explanation of their negative feedback.

Overall, how would you describe the Kit?



These results show that a vast majority of the respondents who had used the Kit found it useful. A minority of respondents have stated that the Kit needs improvement, particularly in terms of the format.

What fact sheets would you find most useful?



The results show that the majority of respondents (34%) would find information on **stress and coping** the most useful. Interestingly, this consisted of 35% of all secondary school students, 21% of all primary school students and 24% of all working people. This clearly indicates that secondary school students need information on coping on the enormous amount of stress due to academic pressure. As one respondent stated, “there’s a lot of pressure on students”.

28% of all respondents stated that they would find information on **positive image** the most useful. One such respondent commented, “I know how hard it is when you want to look a certain way”.

27% of all respondents stated that they would find information on **Pressures and expectations** the most useful. This consisted of 29% of all secondary school students, 11% of all Primary students and 18% of all working people. This once again indicates that many secondary school students face issues on pressures and expectations. One such respondent commented, “My parents have expectations of me and I want to know how to meet them”.

25% of all respondents indicated that they would find information on **Relationships** the most useful. One such respondent commented that “it’s always good to know how to deal with other people”.

21% of all respondents stated that they would find information on **bullying** the most useful. As one such respondent commented, “It happens a lot”.

20% of all respondents stated that they would find information on **Suicide** the most useful. One respondent commented, “A lot of my friends think of suicide when their lives get a little hard”.

18 % of all respondents would find information on **What to do if someone you know is having trouble** the most useful. One respondent commented, “I have friends who go through trouble and I would like to help them more”.

17% of all respondents stated that they would find information on **Loss and grief** the most useful, “because a lot of people suffer from body image and it carries on to suicide, and loss and grief”.

13% of all respondents would find information **about mental illness** the most useful, as they are “not aware of things about mental health”.

Is mental health important, and is it a serious issue among young people?

88% believe that mental health of young people is important. A vast majority believe that it is a serious issue among young people. 55% state that it’s not really spoken among peers, and 53% state that they ‘know when a friend is down but don’t know what to do’.

Do you think a different format would be better?

A vast majority suggested that the Kit should be made available on media formats such as DVDs, TV networks, and Radio. One respondent noted that a media format is needed in order “to make the Kit more appealing to young people who may not have the patience to read”. Some respondents also suggested that the Kit be translated into different languages, so that it reaches out to youth from diverse linguistic backgrounds. Although the Kit can be accessed through the internet on http://www.nt.gov.au/dcm/youth_affairs/health/mental_health.shtml, few respondents did comment that the Kit should be made available on the web. This indicates the lack of awareness of the Kit among young people.

SCHOOL COUNSELLOR SURVEYS

Only a few of these surveys were received back. An overview of these surveys is as follows:

Awareness / usage of Kit:

Although the Mind Your Mind Kit was widely distributed to all schools in the NT, a vast majority (almost 100%) of the counsellors stated that they were not aware of the Kit. Some even requested copies of the Kit. Of those who were aware of the Kit, most agreed that it was a useful resource and had made use of it.

Relevance of Kit to young people / any subject matter missing:

All counsellors agreed that the Kit was very relevant to young people. Most counsellors stated that the fact sheets sufficiently covered the issues faced by young people. A few suggested that there should be information on aggressive behaviour, sexuality, and personal safety included in the Kit.

Would the Kit be more effective in different formats?

A vast majority of counsellors suggested that the Kit should be made into audio visual formats like DVDs and videos with role play scenarios. These formats would be more appealing to young people. Some counsellors suggested that the Kit should be translated into Indigenous and ethnic languages.

AN OVERVIEW OF THE FOCUS GROUPS

Focus groups were conducted at Casuarina Senior College (CSC) and Marrara Christian College (MCC). The focus group at CSC consisted of eight year 11 and 12 (senior secondary) students. The focus group at MCC was composed of six year 8 students. Both groups had similar responses.

Access and availability of resources on mental health

The general view held by the students was that while there may be plenty of resources, there is often a lack of awareness as to how and where to gain access to them. Many young people do not feel comfortable approaching school counsellors or other personnel, seeking these resources. The students suggest that resources such as the Mind Your Mind Kit should be advertised and promoted in schools and in the media.

Would they use resources such as the Mind Your Mind Kit?

The students generally agreed that they would turn to such resources before seeking help from counsellors and other professionals. Most young people prefer to deal with issues themselves using resources, rather than seeking help. This is complemented by statistics from Mission Australia's National Youth Survey 2005, which finds that for most young people, the primary sources of information on dealing with issues are magazines and internet, (apart from close relatives and friends). Interestingly, only a small minority of youths indicated that they would seek help from school counsellors.

Is the content of the Kit sufficient?

The students collectively agreed that the fact sheets in the Mind Your Mind Kit provided some much needed information on youth issues. Some suggested that information on substance abuse be included in the Kit.

Should the Kit be made into different formats?

Most students suggested that the Kit should be made into audio visual formats such as DVDs. This would appeal to young people who may not have the patience or ability to read the Kit, and would reach out to more youths.

Many of the young people who took part in the focus groups commented that the Kit would be very useful for them, and that they would use it. Most requested a copy of the Kit. This indicates that the Kit is generally of great use to young people, and provides much needed information on dealing with the key issues that young people face.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, the team recommends that:

- 1. The Kit be advertised and promoted among young people e.g. posters in schools.** The results of the survey showed that there is a lack of awareness of the Kit. Of the minority of respondents who had used the Kit, nearly all had found it useful. The survey also indicates that respondents were sometimes not aware that the Kit is available on the web. Although the Kit was distributed to all schools in the NT and youth organisations, they are rarely distributed and utilised. Advertising and promoting the Kit would draw more young people to use the Kit. As stated previously in this report, young people often prefer to use information packs to handle issues themselves. Therefore, if more young people are made aware of the Kit, more young people are being assisted.
- 2. The Kit is distributed in media formats such on DVDs or videos.** A majority of respondents (young people and counsellors) commented that the Kit be made into a media format to increase accessibility, and to make it more appealing to young people. Young people are generally reluctant to resort to written material. They would rather watch a video or listen to the radio. If the content of the Kit is transferred into a DVD, young people will be more inclined to use it in times of need. A video version would also enable young people to relate more to the content and comprehend more.
- 3. The Kit is translated in other languages including in Indigenous languages. The languages would have to depend upon the demographics of the Northern Territory.** Some respondents suggested that the accessibility of the Kit would be increased if it was translated into other languages. Especially with the increasing number of new immigrants and refugees in to the Territory, it would greatly benefit these ethnic youths if the Kit was translated. The languages would have to depend on the demographics of the Northern Territory.

4. The Kit be reviewed on a regular basis and is updated so that it contains information on the current issues facing youth. Relevant fact sheets should be distributed to school students. With the dynamic nature of our society, the issues faced by young people can change. To accommodate this, the Kit needs to be reviewed on a regular basis, and necessary changes need to be made so that it is relevant to the youth of the day. Different age groups face different issues. It is seen from the results of the survey that many secondary school students would need information on coping with stress, and dealing with pressures and expectations. Fact sheets on these issues can be distributed to school students to assist them in dealing with these issues. A few young people and counsellors recommended that fact sheets on substance abuse, aggressive behaviour, self harm and sexuality be included in the Kit. A thorough analysis of these issues must be conducted before the Kit is edited.

EVALUATION

Our project was mainly centred on the surveys and focus groups. Both the youth surveys and school counsellor surveys had their strengths and weaknesses. In both, the respondents were not required to provide their personal details, and were thus confidential. In this way, they were more inclined to honestly respond to the questions. Furthermore, the surveys were only two pages long, and a maximum of ten minutes was needed to complete each survey. This too contributed to the likelihood of the respondents completing the surveys. With permission from the Department of Employment, Education and Training, the surveys could be widely distributed to all schools in the Northern Territory. With the help of the Office of Youth Affairs and our fellow Round Table Members, we were able to get responses from regional and remote areas.

One weakness of the surveys was that a majority of respondents had not heard of the Kit, and could not answer questions on the effectiveness of the Kit. In depth answers to such questions could not be obtained. Another weakness lay in the age distribution of the respondents. While there were many respondents who were school students, a minority of respondents represented the age range 18 years to 25 years.

The focus groups had their strengths in that they enabled us to obtain in-depth answers to the questions. A weakness was that both groups were school students, and both were held in Darwin schools. Thus, there was no representation of non-schooling youth and those in rural and regional areas.

A general issue with the project was TIME. Due to the limited amount of time available to the members (who are senior secondary school students and working people), some parts of this project were rushed, and may not be detailed.

CONCLUSION

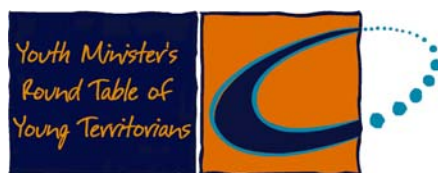
The focus of this report was to review the effectiveness and accessibility of the Mind Your Mind Kit. Being a resource on mental health of young people, the Kit serves a vital purpose in the wellbeing of youth. Often, young people prefer to try and deal with issues themselves, before resorting to seeking help from others. Thus, resources such as the Mind Your Mind Kit have great benefits to young people. To assist youth to the maximum possible extent, the Kit must be easily accessible, and should have the right content. In this project, the Kit was reviewed for the first time since its release in 2004. After analysis of the data collected, recommendations were made as to how the Kit can be improved.

The information gathered shows that while most young people would find the Kit very useful, only a small minority were aware of the Kit. This indicates that the Kit has to be made more accessible. An overwhelming number of respondents stated that the format needs to be modified, in that a multimedia format such as a DVD would be more appealing and accessible. There have also been suggestions to translate the Kit into different languages.

The team is of the view that the Mind Your Mind Kit should be advertised and promoted, and its format should be revised. These changes will make the Kit more accessible and more effective. The Kit will then be able to assist more young people in dealing with the issues they face.

APPENDICES

Youth Survey



Mind your Mind Kit Evaluation Survey

Due Date: 11 September 2006

Are you a young person between the ages of 12 – 25 and currently living in the Northern Territory? Then we need your help! Our project team is reviewing the *Mind your Mind Kit** produced by the Northern Territory Government through the Department of the Chief Minister and the Department of Health and Community Services.

*A series of fact sheets to encourage positive mental health amongst young people. The twelve fact sheets have been especially designed to educate young people on mental health issues and offers practical solutions to deal with stress and upsetting emotions.

1. How old are you? _____ **2. Are you male or female?** Male Female

3. What region/town or community do you live in? (Please tick)

| | |
|--|--------------------------------------|
| Katherine <input type="checkbox"/> | Darwin <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Tennant Creek <input type="checkbox"/> | East Arnhem <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Alice Springs <input type="checkbox"/> | Other _____ |

4. What is your current occupation/student status? (please tick)

| | |
|---|--|
| Primary School Student <input type="checkbox"/> | Higher Education <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Secondary School Student <input type="checkbox"/> | Unemployed <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Work Part time <input type="checkbox"/> | Casual employment <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Work Full time <input type="checkbox"/> | Other _____ |

5. How long have you lived in the Northern Territory? _____

6. If you have lived in the Northern Territory for less than three years, where have you previously lived and for how long? _____

7. Please complete the table below:

| What is your background? (eg. Aboriginal) | If relevant, what religion do you practice? | What language do you normally speak at home? |
|--|---|--|
| | | |

8. Are you aware of the Mind your Mind Kit? Yes No (If no, go to question 11)

9. Have you read the Mind your Mind Kit? Yes No

If yes how has it assisted you?

10. Overall how would you describe the kit? (Tick **three** statements from below)

- | | | | |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------|---|--------------------------|
| Written poorly | <input type="checkbox"/> | Needs Improvement | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Informative | <input type="checkbox"/> | Fantastic and recommend to anyone | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Helpful | <input type="checkbox"/> | Personally useful | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| A good read, but nothing else | <input type="checkbox"/> | Interesting, but personally would not use | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Horrible | <input type="checkbox"/> | Format needs improving | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Other _____ | | | |

11. What Fact Sheets do you/or would you (please tick) **find most useful?**

- | | | | |
|----------------------------|--------------------------|---|--------------------------|
| Stress and coping | <input type="checkbox"/> | What to do if someone you know is having trouble coping | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Pressures and expectations | <input type="checkbox"/> | Loss and grief | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Relationships | <input type="checkbox"/> | About mental illness | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Positive image | <input type="checkbox"/> | Information for parents and carers | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Bullying and harassment | <input type="checkbox"/> | Useful contact information | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Suicide | <input type="checkbox"/> | | |

Please explain why:

12. Do you believe the mental health of young people is important? Yes No

13. Do you believe that mental health is a major problem in your region? (Please tick one statement that describes your thoughts).

- | | | | |
|--|--------------------------|--|--------------------------|
| "It is not really spoken about amongst peers" | <input type="checkbox"/> | "I have used the Mind Your Mind Kit for research purposes and that's about it" | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| "I know when a friend is down but don't know what to do" | <input type="checkbox"/> | Other _____ | |

14. How would you personally explain or define mental health?

15. Currently the Mind Your Mind Kit is available on the Internet and hard copy. Do you think another formats would work? If yes what format would you like to see? (e.g. different languages, on TV/radio etc.)

**PLEASE RETURN TO:
OFFICE OF YOUTH AFFAIRS
GPO BOX 4396
DARWIN NT 0801
Or fax: 08 8999 3722**

For a copy of the Mind your Mind Kit please access www.youth.nt.gov.au

Counsellor Survey



Mind your Mind Kit Evaluation Survey

Due Date: 11 September 2006

Are you a school counsellor that is currently working in the Northern Territory? Then we need your help! Our project team is reviewing the *Mind your Mind Kit** produced by the Northern Territory Government through the Department of the Chief Minister and the Department of Health and Community Services.

*A series of fact sheets to encourage positive mental health amongst young people. The twelve fact sheets have been especially designed to educate young people on mental health issues and offers practical solutions to deal with stress and upsetting emotions.

1. Are you male or female? Male Female

2. Which NT school do you currently work at? _____

3. What region, town or community do you live in?

| | |
|--|--|
| Katherine <input type="checkbox"/> | Tennant Creek <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Alice Springs <input type="checkbox"/> | Darwin <input type="checkbox"/> |
| East Arnhem <input type="checkbox"/> | Other _____ |

4. How long have you been a school counsellor? _____

5. How long have you been working as a school counsellor in the Northern Territory?

6. Are you *aware* of the Mind your Mind Kit? Yes No

7. Have you *read* the Mind your Mind Kit? Yes No

8. If yes, have you used the Mind Your Mind Kit fact sheets with young people in your school? Yes No

If no, why not?

9. If yes to question 8, what fact sheets have you used?

| | |
|--|---|
| Stress and coping <input type="checkbox"/> | Pressure and expectations <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Relationships <input type="checkbox"/> | Positive image <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Bullying and harassment <input type="checkbox"/> | Suicide <input type="checkbox"/> |
| What to do if someone you know is having trouble coping <input type="checkbox"/> | Loss and grief <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Information for parents and carers <input type="checkbox"/> | About mental illness <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | Useful contact information <input type="checkbox"/> |

10. As a counsellor do you think the fact sheets are relevant for young people in your region? Yes No

11. In your view, what Mind Your Mind fact sheet/s are the most useful?

- | | | | |
|---|--------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|
| Stress and coping | <input type="checkbox"/> | Pressure and expectations | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Relationships | <input type="checkbox"/> | Positive image | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Bullying and harassment | <input type="checkbox"/> | Suicide | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| What to do if someone you know is having trouble coping | <input type="checkbox"/> | Loss and grief | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Information for parents and carers | <input type="checkbox"/> | About mental illness | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | | Useful contact information | <input type="checkbox"/> |

12. Is there an aspect of mental health that relates to young people that is not covered in the fact sheets? Yes No

If yes to question 12, what do you think needs to be included?

13. Do you think the format and language of the Mind your Mind Kit is relevant to young teenagers in your school?

Very Relevant

Not Relevant

1

2

3

4

5

14. If chosen not relevant to question 13, what other formats would be more suited to young teenagers? E.g. DVD, computer disc, language

15. Any other comments?

PLEASE RETURN TO:
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DARWIN NT 0801

Or fax: 08 8999 3722

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