

Media Release

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Talking to others key to tackling mental illness

For those struggling with their mental health, talking to others can be an important part of their recovery, and is a key message this Mental Health Month.

It is something South Western Sydney Local Health District Senior Peer Support Worker Ashley Reynolds knows well.

Ms Reynolds suffered from intense anxiety and depression from a young age and now uses her personal experience to help people struggling with their own mental health.

“My recovery was greatly aided when I sought out professional support, and started to learn about my conditions and what has been helpful for others in managing and improving their wellbeing,” she said.

“It is important to talk to other people about what you are going through as it helps you to make sense of what you are going through, helps to release built up tension and helps you feel as though you are not alone, and lets you see that there are people who care about you.

“Peer work is a burgeoning field that recognises the value and expertise of people who have experienced mental illness, and that people with lived experience have the potential to contribute to the care and recovery of others experiencing emotional and psychological distress.”

Ms Reynolds said she helped her clients to start doing things that were important to them and provided understanding, empathy and hope for the future.

“Peer workers focus on the individual as a whole, not just a diagnosis and difficulties,” she said.

“I role model that recovery - living a satisfying life of your own choosing despite having a mental health condition - is possible. This contributes to the consumer’s hopefulness for the future, their own self-image, confidence to connect with others, and reduced self-stigma.”

Patients can access mental health services across the District, including hospital and community-based services, carer support and Aboriginal mental health workers.

For more information about the District’s Mental Health services visit www.swslhd.health.nsw.gov.au/MentalHealth/.

For information about Mental Health Month visit www.mentalhealthmonth.wayahead.org.au.