

Mental Health Intervention Team

December 2009



STATEWIDE ROLL OUT OF MENTAL HEALTH TRAINING

Since July 2009 the NSW Police Force Mental Health Intervention Team (MHIT) has begun implementation mode.

The MHIT has developed an initiated our implementation strategy to ensure that up to 1500 police are MHIT trained by 2015 – as per our Commissioner's Executive Team deliverable.

Since its inception the MHIT has trained 193 officers (140 during the pilot program and 53 Mental Health Contact Officers). A total of 7 interstate officials have also been MHIT trained. In 2010 we intend to train a total of 327 officers.

The key group of operational police we have been training in late 2009/early 2010 is our

network of 80 NSWPF Mental Health Contact Officers (MHCO). MHCOs are senior operational police of Inspector rank. There is one MHCO in each Local Area Command in NSW.

The MHCO's role is to ensure the LAC is compliant with Mental Health Act, manage any interagency disputes and make representation for police at Local Mental Health Protocol Committees. The MHCO role is fulfilled along side the Inspectors' general duties responsibilities.

To date, 53 MHCO's have received MHIT training.

On a final note Charles Sturt University's full MHIT Evaluation is due end of 2009. We look forward to sharing with you evaluation findings in early 2010.

Why MHIT?

Mental Health Intervention Team training is a four day course administered by a range of clinical and operational policing experts. The 4 day course covers 21 seminars. MHIT training aims to ensure course participants work with mentally ill or disordered people in a sensitive, safe and efficient manner.

The MHIT also provides police officers with operational advice in relation to policing and mental health issues.

UPCOMING MENTAL HEALTH EVENTS
International Day of Disability 03.12.2009

NSW Police Force MHCO MHIT training, January 2010.

MHIT Contact Details:
Mental Health Intervention Team.
Level 5,
Sydney Police Centre
151-241 Goulburn St,
Surry Hills NSW 2010

MHIT@police.nsw.gov.au

Mental Health Information

Suicide

- In 2007, 21% of all male deaths under the age of 35 were attributed to suicide.
 - Suicide is the 10th leading cause of death in males overall.
 - Rates of suicide in the Indigenous community remain much higher than in the non Indigenous community
 - 26% of all Indigenous deaths in 2007 was attributed to suicide
 - Males have a higher risk of suicide than females although females have higher rates of self harm.
- Source: ABS (2007)

In September 2009 the MHIT gave a lecture on youth suicide prevention at the annual NSW Police Force Youth Liaison Officers Conference.

The MHIT have been active in the last quarter of 2009 in the area of suicide prevention policy. We are currently finalizing a discussion paper on youth suicide, policing and prevention; and we have been actively contributing to the drafting of the NSW Suicide Prevention policy.

Staffing and the MHIT

Superintendent Donohue continues as the NSW Police Force Corporate Spokesperson for Mental Health.

Inspector Joel Murchie, is the Commander, MHIT.

The Sergeant/Educational Development Officer position, MHIT is vacant. We are in the process of recruitment.

Darrin Cowan, Clinical Nurse Consultant remains in the NSW Health funded position in the MHIT.

Gina Andrews is the NSW Police Force Mental Health Policy Officer with the MHIT.

Senior Constable Sarah Murphy, Analyst and project officer has commenced maternity leave (we wish her well).

MHIT MHCO course participant feedback

- "The consumer panel makes you look at mental health consumers with more awareness. The education on the Mental Health Act was also good."
- "A worthwhile course for all operational police."
- "A great course it will be extremely beneficial to general duties & first response police."
- "I liked the way we can interact with the presenters; and the way you organized and strictly abide by time sessions. The participants guide was also excellent, and easy to follow."

Mental Health Policy update for last quarter 2009

- Mental Health Memorandum of Understanding news. In 2010 the Mental Health Interdepartmental Committee will be updating the existing 2007 MOU inline with the Mental Health Act 2007, recently gazette Declared Mental Health Facilities, revised key performance indicators, the NSW Police Force Interhospital Transportation Guidelines, and provide additional policy direction on interagency information exchange. It is important to note that *the existing MOU still applies*.
- The NSW Police Force & NSW Health Interhospital Transportation Guidelines are being redrafted. We hope to come to agreement with NSW Health on the Guidelines by March 2010. In sum, NSW Police Force policy position is: police are to only be involved in agreed high risk transports – when NSW Health has exhausted other reasonable alternatives available (i.e. sedation, waiting until relevant NSW Health resources are available) and the clinician and police involve agree that it is a high risk situation necessitating police involvement . In general, Police vehicles are *not* to be used in interhospital transports. However, we concede that there may be exceptional circumstances where the Duty Officer in charge concludes that the high risk to the patient, public and staff necessitates the use of a police vehicle to transport. This kind of situation would be the exception to the rule.
- Legal clarification on parameters of police interagency information exchange on mental health consumers in acute and non acute situations. The MHIT is finalizing a fact sheet on this issue for MHCOs and operational police. Furthermore, we have taken the lead at the Mental Health Interdepartmental Committee in drafting a letter to the NSW Crown Solicitor seeking legal clarity on this issue. This correspondence is currently with NSW Health legal for final clearance.
- Declared Mental Health Facilities (DMHF). On 13 November 2009 the first round of DMHF were gazetted under the Mental Health Act 2007. This first round saw the declaring of certain emergency departments to be declared mental health facilities in the "mental health emergency assessment" class under section 109 of the Mental Health Act 2007. NSW Health intends there to be a second and a third round of DMHF to be gazetted. NSW Police has written to NSW Health requesting that additional mental health facilities be added to the DMHF list (anticipating that this will alleviate the transportation issues in regional NSW). The MHIT will continue to work with MHCOs to gather relevant data to substantiate our requests for additional DMHF.
- Identifying mental health frequent presenters to NSW Police Force, Ambulance Services NSW and NSW Health Research Project. The goal of the project is: *To describe the group of persons with mental health disorders who are frequent presenters to emergency services (police, ambulance and health) in order to inform the development of appropriate service models for this group*. The scope of the project has been expanded to include persons who present with mental health, alcohol and drug problems. Funding has been set aside for this research project; however, the project is yet to commence. This interagency project is being managed through NSW Health. The Senior Policy Officer – Mental Health continues her university research on the issue of policing and mental health frequent presenters.

