



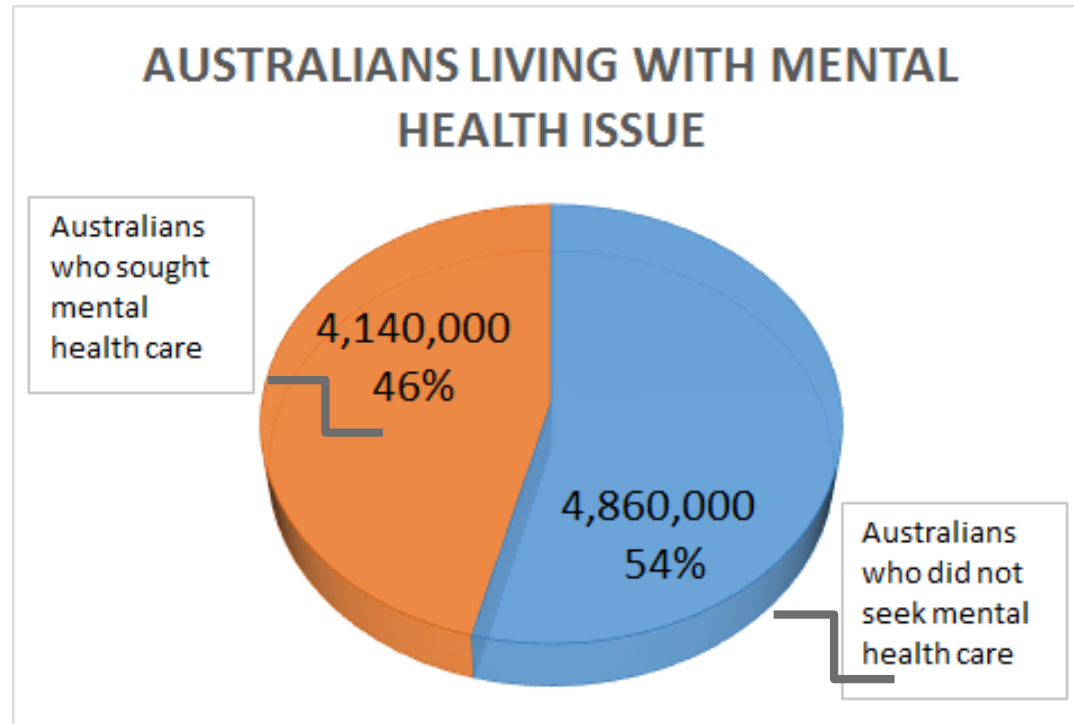
# WPI

# Addressing Mental Health Stigma in Regional Australia

Jason Abel, Hannah Bornt,  
Robert Harrison, Anastasia Karapanagou  
8 December, 2017  
Victorian Counseling Psychological Services  
b17vcps@wpi.edu



# Of the 9 million people living with a mental health issue in Australia in 2014, 54% did not receive mental health care.



Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. (2017a). Mental health services in australia. Retrieved from <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/mental-health-services/mental-health-services-in-australia/report-contents/summary/prevalence-and-policies> ; Black Dog Institute. (n.d.). *Facts and figures about mental health*. Black Dog Institute.

# The previous Worcester Polytechnic Institute (WPI) group who worked with VCPS earlier this year focused on ways to reduce mental health stigma in Melbourne.

---



Figure 1: I See a Psychologist Final Report. (2017). I See a Psychologist: Reducing Stigma through Normalizing Mental Health Care in Australia. Retrieved from [https://web.wpi.edu/Pubs/E-project/Available/E-project-050117-030456/unrestricted/I\\_See\\_a\\_Psychologist\\_Final\\_Report.pdf](https://web.wpi.edu/Pubs/E-project/Available/E-project-050117-030456/unrestricted/I_See_a_Psychologist_Final_Report.pdf)

# Goal

---

The goal of this project was to improve knowledge of, and access to, mental health care in regional Australia, by making evidence based recommendations for VCPS' telecommunication service, *Chinwag*.



**Telehealth is the use of telecommunication services to provide telemedicine, medical education, and health education over a distance.**

---

**Telehealth  
Victoria**  
Community of Practice



Telehealth Victoria. (2017). Telehealth victoria community of practice. Retrieved from <https://telehealthvictoria.org.au/>

**STROKE**  
TELEMEDICINE

Victorian Stroke Telemedicine. (2017). Overview. Retrieved from <http://www.vst.org.au/overview/about-us/>

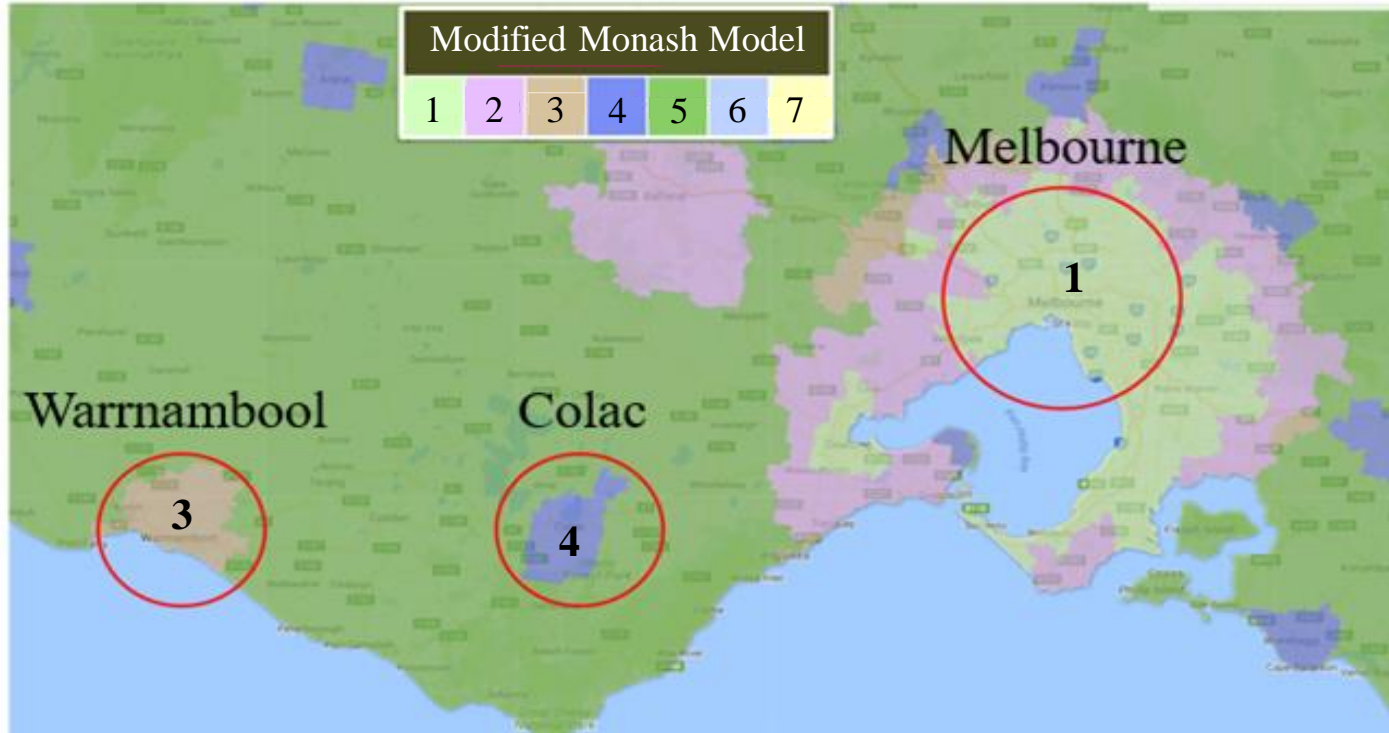


# VCPS' platform *Chinwag* aims to improve access to mental health care for people living in regional areas of Australia.



**Monash regions are determined by the modified Monash model, a geographical classification system based on population data.**

---



# Objectives

---

1. Analyze differences in attitudes towards mental health services between regional and metropolitan Australians
1. Solicit and compile content for the *Chinwag* website
1. Evaluate social networks that would be appropriate for increasing publicity and engagement of *Chinwag*



# There is a lack of mental health practitioners in regional area.

## Colac



Colac Otway Shire. (2017). *Lake Colac*. Colac Otway Shire.

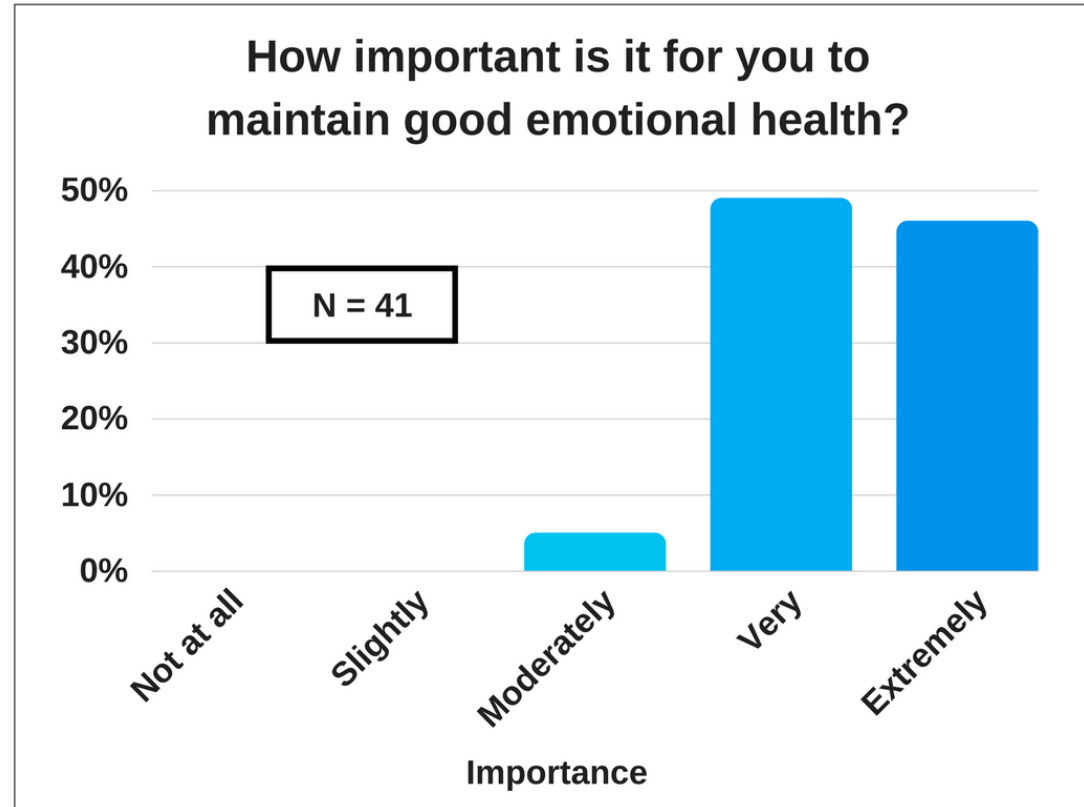
## Warrnambool



Dennis Family Homes. (June 2017). *A look at life in Warrnambool*. Retrieved from <https://www.dennisfamily.com.au/look-life-warrnambool/#g3RBsWVik0LmRsv0.97>

# Perceptions on Mental Health

Differences between regional and metropolitan Australians' perceptions of mental health were demonstrated through a mental health survey.



# Interviews were conducted with two regional Australians to gain insight on their perceptions of mental health.

**Thank you** for taking the time to talk with us. We work in Melbourne that offers counselling to people living in your area. We find out the best way to offer counselling services to people in your community through your home computer. We want to understand how people in Colac and Warrnambool **access mental health care**. Would you be happy to read this consent form? Do you have any questions?

How do you **define mental health**?

Do you think that people are generally **caring and sympathetic** toward people with mental health illness such as depression or anxiety? What about illnesses like dementia?

What **effects** do you think this attitude has on **those living with mental illness** and their loved ones?

What **effects** do you think it has on their tendency to **seek help**?

Would you be **comfortable** talking about your **own experiences** with mental illness?

Have you ever lived with or is currently living with mental illness? How do you stay mentally healthy?



# Interviews with GPs/practice managers gave the team insight regarding what content to include on the *Chinwag* website.



Marg White,  
Director of  
Community  
Services

Dr. Archie, General  
Practitioner of  
Southwest Medical  
Center



Deb, Practice  
Nurse from  
Cambourne Clinic

Miffy Shelton,  
Practice Manager  
from Corangamite  
Clinic



Alistair Ross  
Practice  
Manager from  
Warrnambool  
Medical Center

Figure 1: Colac Area Health. (2017). Colac area health foundation news- above & beyond award. Retrieved from <https://www.cahfoundation.org.au/news/>  
Figure 2: South West Medical Centre. Staff profiles. Retrieved from <http://swarh.com.au/swmc/content/staff-profiles.aspx>  
Figure 3: Cambourne Clinic. Our nurses. Retrieved from <http://www.cambourneclinic.com.au/our-nurses.html>  
Figure 4: CODA. Board Profile. Retrieved from <http://www.coda.org.au/about-us/board-profile.html>  
Figure 5: Matthew O'Toole. (2013, ). Clinic recognized for work on medical study. *The Standard* Retrieved from <http://www.standard.net.au/story/1264117/clinic-recognised-for-work-on-medical-study/>

# Usability testing of the *Chinwag* website helped find minor and major concerns.



HOME WHY ARE YOU HERE OUR TEAM ABOUT US FAQ CONTACT US

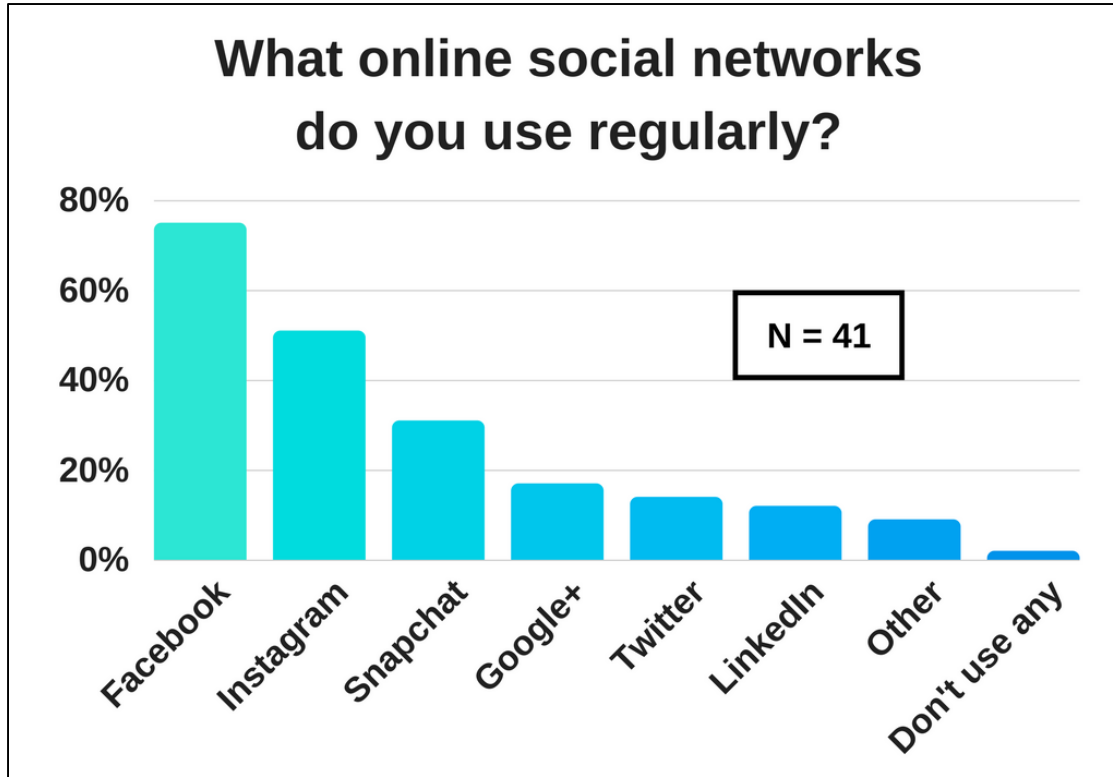


## PROVIDING PSYCHOLOGISTS TO RURAL AUSTRALIA

*Chinwag* is a psychology service provided by qualified psychologists using video conferencing, connecting rural Australia. The tele-health platform we use supports health professionals, including general practitioners,

- These are a **list of tasks** that participants were asked to talk through their experience as they are asked to complete:
1. Find a practitioner who **addresses** gambling
    - a. Find how much it will **cost** to have a session with this practitioner
    - b. Find another **concern** that this practitioner addresses
  2. Find a concern related to someone's child
    - a. Find out how to make a **booking** with a practitioner
  3. Find a **frequently asked question** that tell you if you are eligible for Medicare rebates
  4. Find the *Chinwag* **email and phone number**
  5. Find where to learn why *Chinwag* will be cost effective
  6. Find where to learn why *Chinwag* will be cost effective
- When completing these tasks, please take the time to explore each as you want

# Social Media

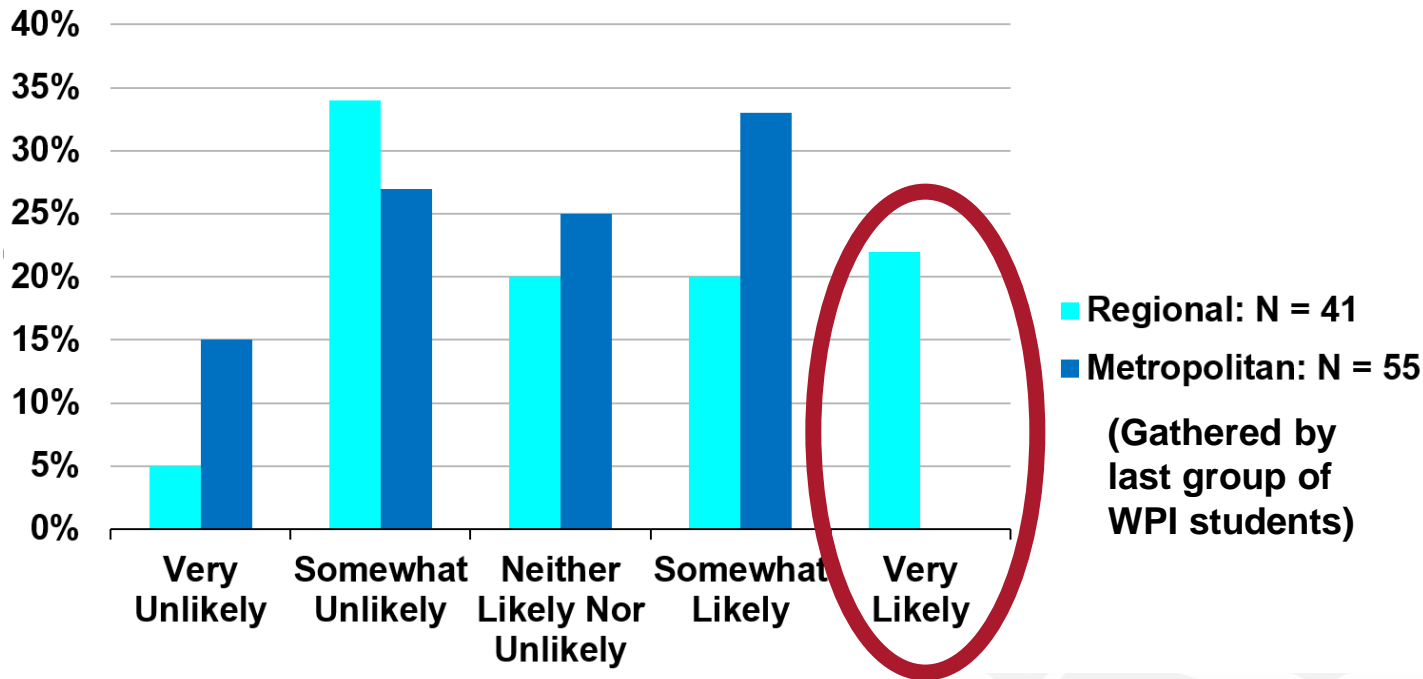


**Social media surveys, site observations, and content analysis enabled the team to learn about regional Australians' social media use.**



**The mental health survey suggests that regional Australians are more willing to utilize mental health services than metropolitan Australians.**

## How likely are you to go visit a psychologist or counselor?



## There are opposing perceptions of mental health among regional Australians, according to interviews conducted in Colac.

*“I think **10 sessions should be enough** to either work out, whether a psychologist... can actually help the person [or if] they need more help from a different sort of expert, but I don't believe it should be allowed to be an ongoing thing for 20 or so years...”*

-Interviewee 1

*“I think [people] realize it's a condition... it's not this thing- this demon, and some people live with it for the rest of their lives and some people can get through it and some people don't, it's as simple as that... I think **it's a chronic condition** for a lot of people.”*

-Interviewee 2



# Interview Feedback

**GPs/practice managers had positive feedback and a few concerns regarding *Chinwag*:**

## Pros

- Increase access to mental health care available to regional Australians
- Anonymity
- Timeliness of scheduling appointments

## Cons

- Local psychologists losing business
- Willingness and ability for older population to use telepsychology
- Communication between telehealth psychologist and GP/ local psychologist

A list of major concerns were given to VCPS to be fixed in the future, while other minor issues were fixed by the team.



HOME

WHY ARE YOU HERE

OUR TEAM



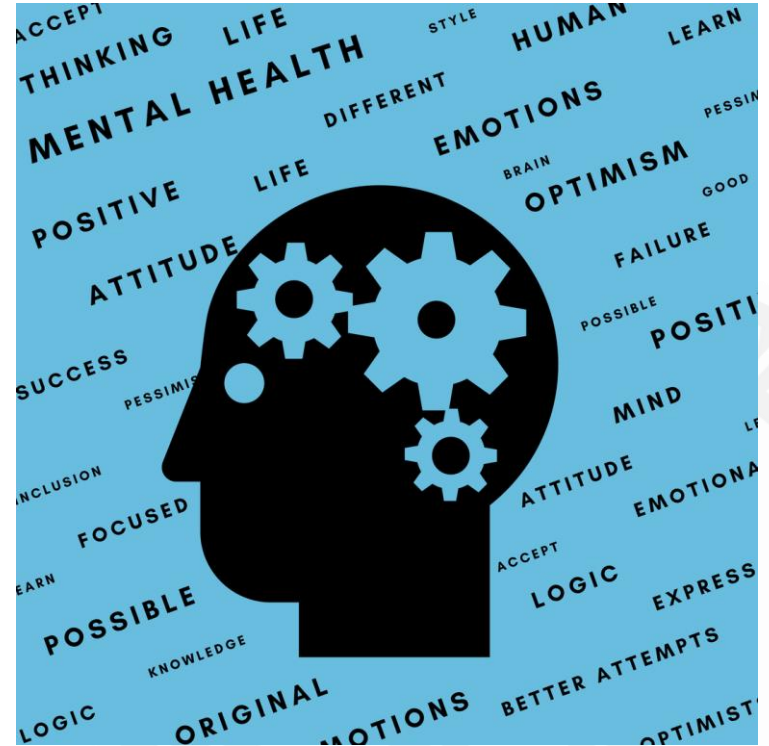
I'm wanting assistance with... ≡

Client age ≡



# Social Media Posts

Facebook and Instagram are used by more than half the people who took the social media survey, so the team focused on these two social networks to advertise *Chinwag*.



# A report summarizing the differences between regional and metropolitan Australians' perceptions of mental health was created for VCPS.

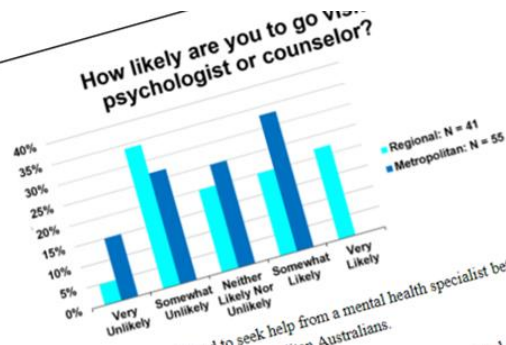


Figure 10. Comparison of likelihood to seek help from a mental health specialist between regional and metropolitan Australians.

In summary, the survey suggests that regional Australians appeared to be more willing to utilize mental health services than the survey takers from metropolitan Australia.

## Case Study

In addition to the mental health survey, the team conducted interviews with two regional Australians while visiting regional areas. The first interviewee was an older male resident of Colac (ID 15009). He was retired and lived in public housing. At first he was asked to take the mental health and social media surveys, then upon speaking with him further, he agreed to answer a few questions. He gave consent for the interview to be recorded. His responses made his opinions on mental health clear. In summary, he wasn't entirely sure what mental health meant, or how someone is diagnosed with a mental health problem. He seemed to feel betrayed by the Australian government for "letting people use the system" for mental health services, yet not allowing him a Disability Support Pension for his physical condition (suffered five heart attacks). He went on to say that mental health cases go unaddressed even when the person is "fixed" which needs to change. "Professionals need to be held accountable," he said. "Professionals are not solving the root of their patients' problems. He said that his condition goes to an expert, they are "fixed" but he treated over a period of 20 years.



# The *Chinwag* website will motivate practitioners to refer clients.



Home



## Accessible - Medicare Rebatable - Effective

Chinwag is a video conferencing service that matches a client in a remote area to an available psychologist. This type of counselling is known to be very effective with both the client and the psychologist able to communicate clearly. Chinwag serves rural Australians who would otherwise not be able to access a psychologist. This service is bulk billed (or rebatable) via Medicare.

## How will this be achieved?

Using our real-time platform, you can refer a patient to a psychologist who is available, via video conferencing, from 6am to 10pm, seven days a week. The process patients use to connect for a consultation is easy and responsive. Appointments are often available on the same day of your referral. It is worth noting that the *Chinwag* service is dedicated to ongoing counselling and psychology, and not generally for critical incident or crisis care as provided by services such as Lifeline.

*Chinwag* is a service established by Victorian Counselling and Psychological Services (VCPs), a private practice of more than 50 psychologists, psychiatrists and general practitioners. Our clinical team is further supported by our national network of over 100 psychologists who provide services to rural, regional and remote areas around Australia.

## It's easy to connect

Simply give your patient our phone number, or call us whilst you are with your patient and discuss the referral with our intake team. Our intake and support team which will match your patient to the most suitable practitioner delivering private confidential counselling and psychology services. Our team will assist your patient with a test video conference call using the patient's mobile phone or home computer so they are prepared for their appointment. The service is secure and utilises the latest technology making it easy, reliable, secure and confidential.

## Your patient: Shared care.

You will be able to advise your patient that you are working closely with the *Chinwag* psychologist in relation to their care and that you will be retaining the



### Dr. Aude Plontz

#### Consultant Psychologist

#### MPsych, PhD, MAPS.

I provide support to individual clients, couples, and families finding their way through a broad range of issues; from clients curious about how to bring more vibrancy or awareness into their lives, to clients struggling with entrenched feelings of depression or anxiety.

In my work, I uphold values of evidence-based and person-centred practice. I invite my clients to work with me in a collaborative manner from a humanistic perspective, exploring their personal choices and inner experiences with respect and sincerity and striving to adapt my approach to my clients' preferences. I view psychological counselling as a process aimed at facilitating change in not only observable behaviours and habits of thinking, but also more fundamentally in what could subjectively be experienced as deep emotional or existential shifts. The main counselling methods I utilise are Cognitive-Behavioural Therapy (CBT, including exposure, relaxation, & mindfulness – based strategies, Acceptance and Commitment Therapy -ACT, and Schema Therapy) and Emotion-Focused Therapy. I also use interventions from Feedback-Informed Therapy, Narrative Therapy, Sensorimotor Psychotherapy, Solution-Focused Therapy, or Hypnotherapy.

My areas of special interest include:

- Chronic, entrenched, or pervasive feelings of depression or anxiety
- Obsessive and compulsive symptoms
- Trauma and abuse (including emotional abuse and other forms of relational trauma)
- Life transitions (including grief & loss, pregnancy and birth)
- Interpersonal difficulties (including work with couples)
- Clients with a culturally and linguistically diverse background (including clients with a refugee background or French or German-speaking clients)

#### Fees

50 minute consultation: \$200.00

For more information on:

- Medicare rebates
- Reduced fees/bulk billing
- Assessments and reports
- Non attended session fees

Please call Chinwag on 1300 244 692



#### Book an appointment

Use this form below to request an appointment with this practitioner

Name (required)

Email (required)

Phone (required)

Practitioner (required)

Dr Aude Plontz

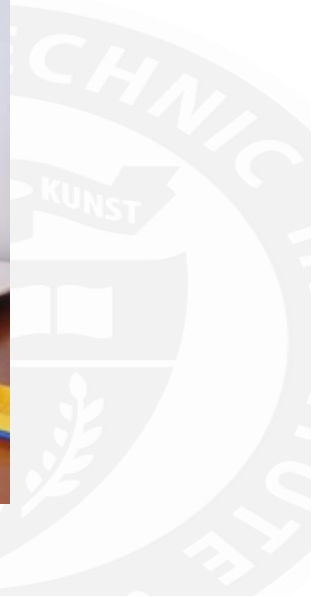
Message

I'm not a robot



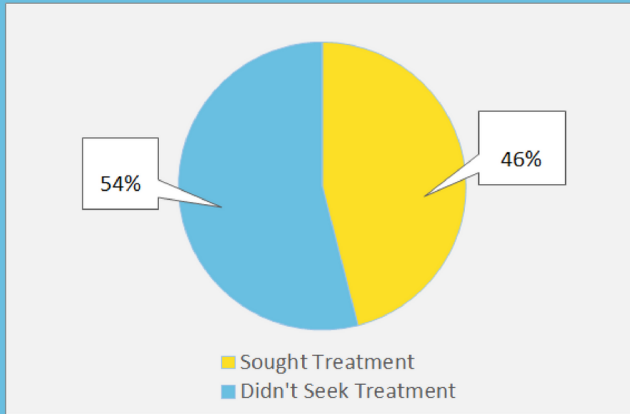
Send

A short informational video will demonstrate *Chinwag's* client journey.



# Social media posts were created for publication throughout the rest of 2017 and the beginning of 2018.

Of the 9 million people living with a mental health issue in Australia in 2014, only about 46% sought mental health treatment.



When you  love  
what you have,   
you have  
everything you  
 need.

# Field testing of the *Chinwag* website with regional Australians will provide feedback to improve the website.

Thank you for taking the time to try out our website. We hope you may be able to improve the website.

For the first part, you will be asked to rate certain aspects of the website of improvement, and 5 means you were very satisfied.

1.) Please rate the **layout** of the website. 1 2 3 4 5

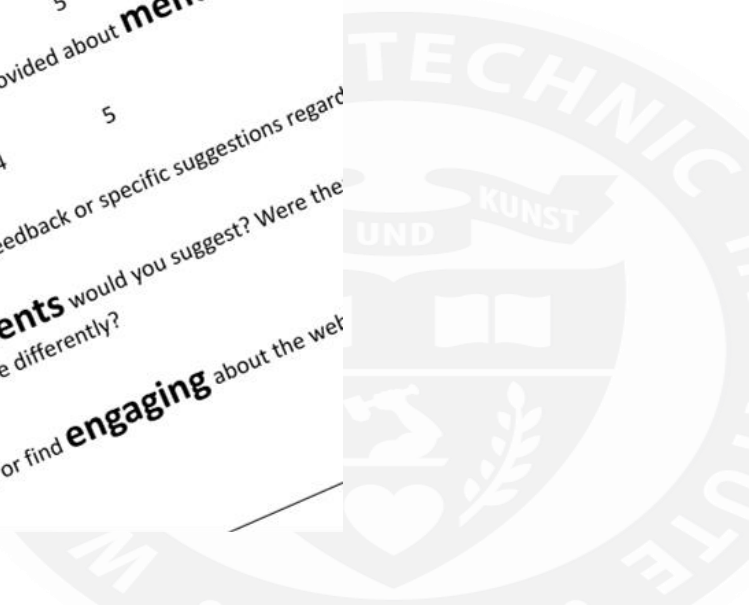
2.) Please rate the **ease of use** of the website. 1 2 3 4 5

3.) Please rate the **information** the website provided about **VCPS**. 1 2 3 4 5

4.) Please rate the **information** the website provided about **mental health care**. 1 2 3 4 5

In final part of this survey, you will be asked to provide feedback or specific suggestions regarding your experience, what **improvements** would you suggest? Were there any aspects you disliked or thought could be done differently?

What did you like or find **engaging** about the website?

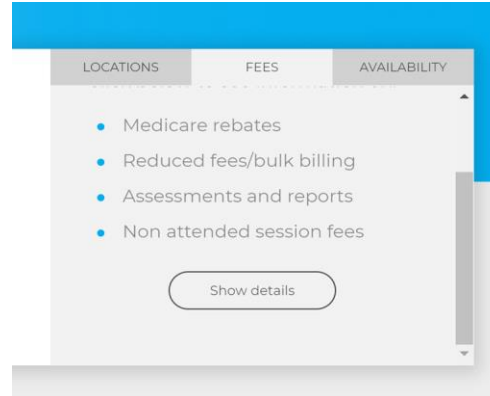




# Additional content for the *Chinwag* website will improve the experience for users.



WordPress. Security. Retrieved from <https://wordpress.org/about/security/>

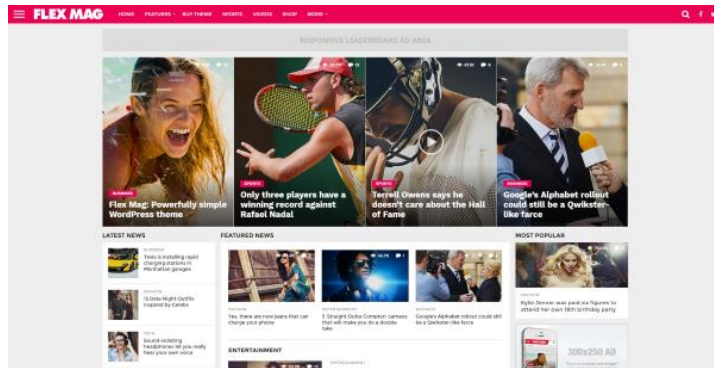


Victorian Counselling and Psychological Services. Dr Aude Plontz. Retrieved from <https://www.vcps.com.au/consultant-psychologist/dr-aude-plontz>

# Additional content for the *Chinwag* website will improve the experience for users.



PNG Mart. Search Button PNG File. Retrieved from <http://www.pngmart.com/image/28753>



Elegant Themes. (2016). 15 Best WordPress Themes for News & Tech Sites in 2016. Retrieved from <http://www.elegantthemes.com/blog/resources/best-wordpress-themes-for-news-tech-sites>

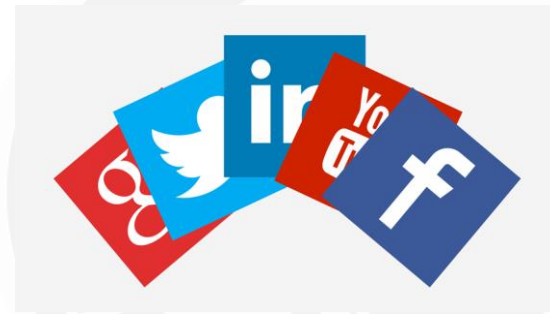


## Addictions

Having an addiction can make you feel completely powerless. Even if you have tried to break free and failed before, there are treatment programs that can help.

Addiction is a physical or psychological need for a substance (e.g. drugs and alcohol) or behaviour (e.g. gambling, sex). This can include a broad range of different behaviours – from drug taking to internet addiction – which involve an instant reward followed by delayed negative effects or emotions. If you are experiencing addiction, you may engage in a behaviour even though you know that negative consequences will follow. You may feel out of control or unable to stop despite desperately wanting to.

In the case of physical addiction, the body gets used to the substance and gradually you will require a higher dose or a longer exposure to produce the same rewarding feeling. If you have been taking a substance and now find you need it to function normally, you may now have become dependent on the substance. This dependence will create a period of withdrawal, which makes it especially difficult to battle the addiction on your own.



Dharma Nation. (2016). Social-Media. Retrieved from <http://www.dharmanation.org/2016/10/declare-social-media-a-public-utility/social-media/>

# Collecting and using real stories from citizens needs to fit within APS and WPI IRB guidelines.



Believe in Change

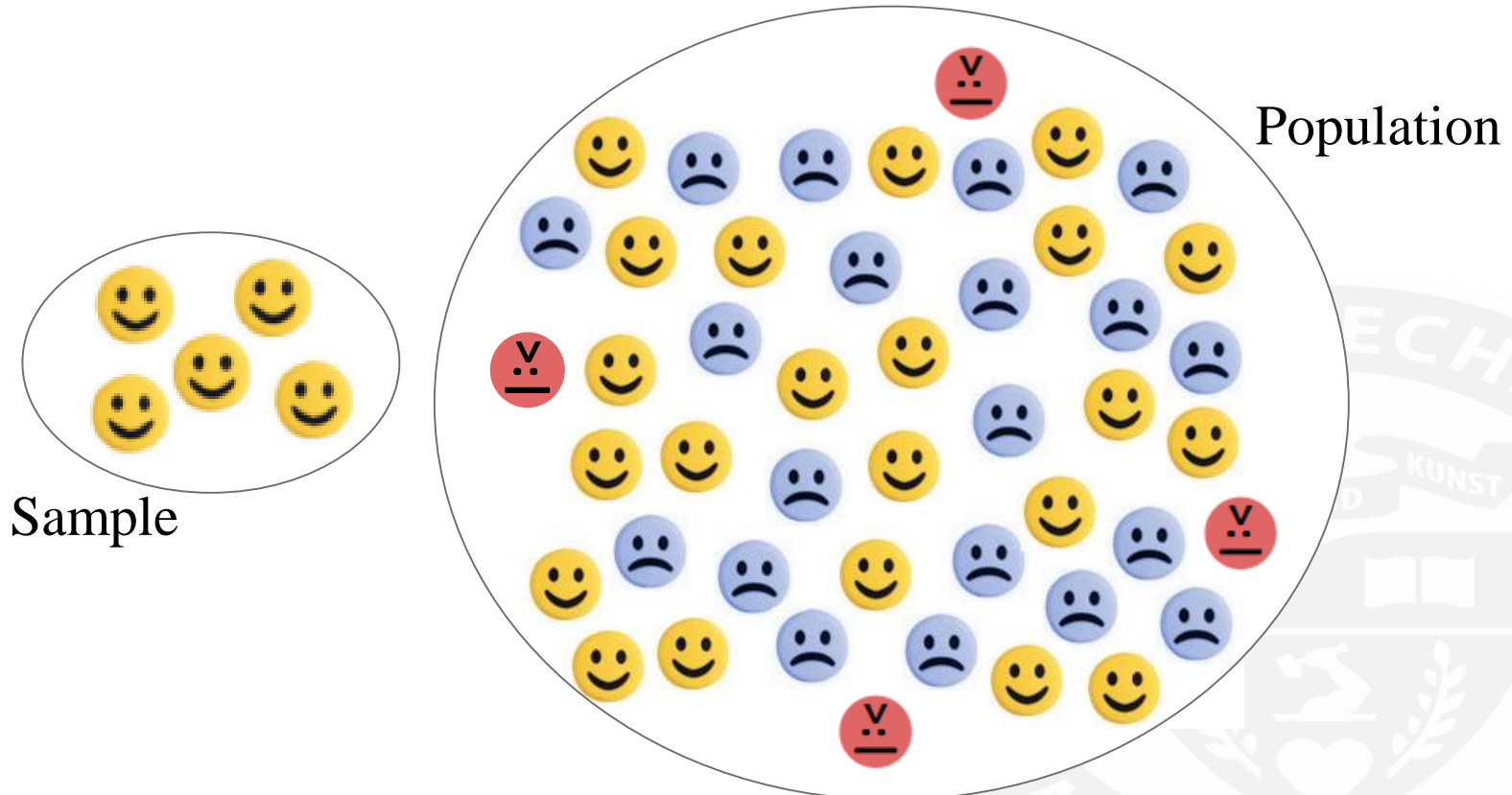
Australian Psychological Society. (2017). Find a Psychologist. Retrieved from <http://www.believeinchange.com/Home/Steps-to-Change/Find-A-Psychologist>



WPI



**More time should be dedicated to collecting survey data in order to allow for a larger sample size and more accurate / significant results.**



# Acknowledgments

- Natasha Ace, Operations Manager, VCPS
- Pana Maliadis, Business Manager, VCPS
- Dr. Fred Looft, Professor, WPI
- Dr. Karen Oates, Professor, WPI
- Harry Bryce, General Manager, VCPS
- Robert Luzzi, Director, VCPS
- Don Steele, Website Designer, Steeleworks
- Anna Outred, Provisional Psychologist, VCPS
- Anne-Marie Loney, Counselling Psychologist, VCPS
- Vicky Davis, Receptionist, VCPS
- Amy Dostal, Psychology Student, VCPS
- Hannah Miller, Psychology Student, VCPS
- David Love, Graphic Designer, VCPS
- John Smith, Consultant, VCPS
- Dianne Hobday, Consultant, VCPS
- Amanda Place, Copywriter, VCPS
- Effie Frangoulis, General Practitioner,

# Questions?

