



SCIENCE AND
INDUSTRY
ENDOWMENT
FUND



STEM Community Partnerships Program

Camden local scenario

Mental Health

Mental health is defined as a state of well-being in which every individual realises their potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully and is able to contribute to their community (WHO definition)¹. The social and emotional well-being of individuals and communities is influenced by social and economic conditions i.e. physical environment, available health services, education, housing, transport and employment.

Nearly half of all Australians will develop mental illness at some point in their lives.² There are a range of mental illness conditions including depression, anxiety, eating disorders, traumatic stress disorder, bipolar affective disorder, schizophrenia and other psychotic illnesses.

Recent Camden Local Government Area statistics (2016) show that 14.1% of health issues reported to hospitals were self-reported to be high/very high mental health distress (compared to 11.8% in NSW) with 6.0% of deaths (5.0% NSW).³ Studies have shown that people who experience mental illness have a reduced life expectancy as their physical health, impacted by medication and lifestyle choices, may not be managed with the same thoroughness as their mental health issues. This presents a serious public health challenge to provide the skills and services for diagnosis, treatment and ongoing support in the community.

To maintain good mental health, it is helpful to be part of the community, have social connections and strong personal relationships.

How your Council tackles the complexity of this issue will impacts you now and future generations.



Photos courtesy of Camden Council and Macarthur Advertiser

Your task

Your task is to use the information above and resources provided below as a start to identify a local problem and design a STEM-focussed solution.

(Question, Design, Explore, Communicate)

1. https://www.who.int/features/factfiles/mental_health/en/
2. <https://nswmentalhealthcommission.com.au/sites/default/files/publication-documents/Physical%20health%20and%20wellbeing%20-%20final%208%20Apr%202016%20WEB.pdf>
3. https://www.swslhd.health.nsw.gov.au/planning/content/pdf/CommunityHealthProfile/Camden_Health_Profile_2016.pdf

Resources

CSIRO research

- Tracking mental health: <https://research.csiro.au/lasc/home/projects/social-media-analytics-mental-health-research/>
- CSIRO global megatrends: <https://publications.csiro.au/rpr/download?pid=csiro:EP126135&dsid=DS2>
- Home monitoring of chronic disease: <https://www.csiro.au/en/research/health-medical/diagnostics/home-monitoring>

Reports

- South West Sydney: Our Health: <https://www.swslhd.health.nsw.gov.au/pdfs/SWS%20Our%20Health%20in%20brief.pdf>
- Mental Health Commission of NSW:
 - Physical health and mental wellbeing: <https://nswmentalhealthcommission.com.au/sites/default/files/publication-documents/Physical%20health%20and%20wellbeing%20-%20final%208%20Apr%202016%20WEB.pdf>
- Camden Council Mental health Support Services: <https://www.camden.nsw.gov.au/covid-19-support/mental-health-support-services/>

Articles

- Mental Health Reform fact sheets: <https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/mentalhealth/reform/Pages/mhr-factsheets.aspx>
- Beyond Blue: <https://www.beyondblue.org.au/the-facts/what-is-mental-health>
- NSW Department of Education Wellbeing for schools: <https://education.nsw.gov.au/student-wellbeing>