

## World Mental Health Day 10<sup>th</sup> October 2022

### “Make Mental Health and Wellbeing for all a global priority”

On this World Mental Health Day, VAADA wish to acknowledge the many individuals that experience co-occurring substance use and mental health concerns in Victoria and the support of the AOD sector workforce in ensuring that mental health and wellbeing for all is a global priority.

The intersections between AOD and mental health are significant and ever increasing within Victoria through implementation of the Mental Health Royal Commission Recommendations.

For example, a recent study by the Matilda Centre<sup>1</sup> found that “general alcohol consumption is associated with 65% increased risk of suicidal behaviours and “between 19-63% of people who die by suicide have a personal history of diagnosed AOD use disorder”.

Furthermore, the prevalence of trauma related issues is well documented within people who use substances of dependence with “1/3 of adults who reported exposure to childhood trauma developing and AOD use disorder”<sup>2</sup>.

A systematic review by the Centre of Research Excellence in Mental Health and Substance Use of a range of Australian studies on co-occurring mental illness and substance use suggested that 31 per cent of men and 44 per cent of women living with a ‘substance use disorder’ live with at least one other diagnosable mental illness.<sup>3</sup>

As reflected by the World Health Organisation, stigma and discrimination continue to be a barrier to social inclusion and access to the right care, and those with both AOD and mental health issues, their families and supporters and to a lesser degree the workforce must navigate these cultural constructs daily.

Within Victoria, as a result of findings from the Royal Commission into Mental Health, the development of improved integrated treatment for those with co-occurring mental health and AOD needs has gained significant momentum. This momentum continues in spite of significant challenges within the AOD sector to meet demand and truly reflects the historical intention of our sector to welcome anyone regardless of their multiple needs.

In solidarity with the World Health Organisation, VAADA too “... envision a world in which mental health is valued, promoted and protected; where everyone has an equal opportunity to enjoy mental health and to exercise their human rights; and where everyone can access the mental health care they need”.

---

<sup>1</sup> Suicide Prevention Australia and Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Research and Education Group, The University of Sydney’s Matilda Centre for Research in Mental Health and Substance Use (2022) Closing the loop: alcohol and drugs in suicidality and effective interventions, Suicide Prevention Australia

<sup>2</sup> Barret, E., Teeson, M., Chapman, C., Slade, T., Carragher, N. & Mills, K. (2015) Substance use and Mental health consequences of childhood trauma: An epidemiological review; National Drug and Alcohol Research Centre, University of New South Wales, Australia

<sup>3</sup> Christina Marel, Katherine L Mills, Rosemary Kingston, Kevin Gournay, Mark Deady, Frances KayLambkin, Amanda Baker, Maree Teesson. (2016) Guidelines on the management of co-occurring substance use and mental health conditions in alcohol and drug treatment settings; National Alcohol and Drug Research Centre, University of New South Wales, Australia

May we remember those, who today, just like yesterday, are navigating the stigma towards substance use and mental health. Remember those that have become tired of navigating and those that are no longer with us to continue the fight. Together as workforces, may we continue to advocate for the needs of all and elevate the priority of mental health and AOD.

[ends]

***VAADA** is the peak body that represents over 80 Alcohol and other Drug services across Victoria. On a daily basis these services are dealing with the effects of harmful alcohol and other drug consumption.*