



Happy and Healthy Workplaces

Makes Good Business Sense

Wednesday 2nd September 2015, 2pm - 6pm
Stradbroke Hall, Swan Hill

FORUM REPORT



*This Promoting Healthy Lifestyles Forum
was proudly brought to you by
Southern Mallee Primary Care Partnership.*

Background:

This forum focused on wellness in the workplace, and while involving the Achievement Program for workplaces in the presentations, looked more broadly at Workplace Health. This forum was coordinated by a working group made up of members of the Southern Mallee Achievement Program Network. The committee thought it was important to look more broadly at workplace health, and a component of the agenda, to focus on mental health and wellbeing in the workplace. The Achievement Program for workplaces was also presented on during the forum.

The working group formed to progress outcomes from the 2014 SMPCP Achievement Program Forum which focused on Schools emphasised the importance of healthy workplaces.

Guest Presenters:

SMPCP was fortunate to have **Margo Spalding**, director of **Jimmy Possum** [Bendigo Based furniture manufacturer and retailer] and former Telstra business woman of the year; and **Jeremy Forbes**, co-founder of **HALT [Hope Assistance for Local Tradies]** as guest speakers.

Margo Spalding:

Margo's story was one of strong leadership, innovation and inclusion, a genuine care of the health and wellbeing of her staff. She stated it was a "no brainer" as healthy employees and their families led to less absenteeism and more productivity. The audience appreciated her earnest overview of Jimmy Possum's approach to workplace health programs. They had formed a partnership with Bendigo Community Health Service. A range of programs and initiatives have occurred over the years at Jimmy Possum such as: hydration- drinking water, healthy food, physical activity challenges, health checks, weekly counselling. The Forum participants felt that the personal experience was a very powerful message. Margo's ideas and programs were very useful and adaptable.

"Margot Spalding and Jeremy Forbes were very inspirational..."



Photo: Margo Spalding, speaking with participants

"Great presenters. Always a good draw card"

"Margot's stories ring true, having an open door environment. Staff benefits, creating an environment where people want to come to work"

"If only this program of awareness was available...I wonder what difference it would make" - Participant talking about HALT



Jeremy Forbes- HALT:

Through Jeremy's experience as a trade qualified painter and decorator he has seen the highs and lows associated with the trade industry. HALT is a not for profit community based group that is committed to reducing the stigma of mental health, raise awareness of mental health and wellbeing and reduce suicide rates in the tradie community.

The participants valued Jeremy's frank presentation which was based on the lived experience. HALT works with community groups and local mental health providers to run events such as the "save your bacon" breakfasts run in local hardware stores, engaging tradesmen and women in their own environments. These events work due to informal process. Workers and health services mingle over breakfast. A brief presentation is given by a tradie with lived experience. There is value in the peer support.

e. haltaustralia@gmail.com

<http://thehaltbrekky.com/staff/jeremy-forbes/>

<https://www.facebook.com/hopeassistancelocaltradies/>

"Continue to work with staff on health and wellbeing ideas. Speak to staff about this as a whole. Organising HALT to come to our area"

"Good result, personal stories bring home the message!"

Mental Health First Aid:

The mental health theme continued with speakers Claire Gillen, Withdrawal Nurse, from Northern District Community Health service and Jann Barkman, Psychologist, from Swan Hill District Health Counselling Department. They provided an excellent overview of Mental Health First Aid program. Access the SMPCP MHFA Achievements Paper more information about [MHFA in the Southern Mallee!](#)

"I found the Mental Health First Aid information very interesting"

Mental Health First Aid **ACTION PLAN**



- A**pproach, assess and assist with any crisis
- L**isten non-judgmentally
- G**ive support and information
- E**ncourage appropriate professional help
- E**ncourage other supports

VISIT www.mhfa.com.au FOR INFORMATION ON COURSES

Your Local MHFA Providers are:

East Wimmera Health Service

Northern District Community Health Service

Swan Hill District Health

These local organisations are more than happy to talk to your about delivering MHFA!



Healthy Together Victoria- Achievement Program for Workplaces:

The Achievement Program was also presented with local examples including; Gannawarra Shire Council, Swan Hill District Health and Northern District Community Health Service. Examples of the process of engaging with employees, identifying areas of focus and ideas and activities discussed.

www.achievementprogram.healthytogether.vic.gov.au

"A lot of good ideas regarding simple things to create a healthier workplace ie food options, stretches, team challenges to increase communication"

"Relevant to my line of work and workplace, help with implementing the achievement program within my workplace."

Who:

This forum was open to workplaces in the Southern Mallee catchment. We had 34 individuals attend from work places and health services in the catchment. Health, community, retail, hospitality, manufacturing, finance, business and farming were represented. The participants were drawn to the forum because of the focus on Happiness in the workplace.

Overwhelmingly, the evaluation demonstrated the appreciations of hearing the lived experience from the workers and workplaces. The participants were keen to look at ways to engage with men and the farming sector.



Farming
Insight Financial Planning
Bakery on Broadway
Manufacturing
Boort District Health
Jane Eliza Motor Inn
East Wimmera Health Service
Swan Hill Rural City Council
Trades
Business
Murray Mallee Machinery
HALT Hope Assistance Local Tradies
Southern Mallee Primary Care Partnership
Sunrise Rotary
Northern District Community Health Service
Lee Sutherland Contracting
Accounting
Simmons Farm
Healthy Minds Network
Kerang District Health
GMG Accounting
Grays Bakery Kerang
Jimmy Possum
Gannawarra Shire Council
Prout Contracting
Swan Hill District Health
Local Government
Community
Hospitality
Victorian Institute of Culinary Arts and Tech
Rural Financial Counselling Service
Health

Ideas from the day!
Ways to improve workplace wellbeing



Needs Leadership-Champions within organisation	Prioritise Wellbeing
Empower staff to take charge of health	Encourage Health Checks, link in with Local Agencies (heart health, diabetes, foot care better sleep, etc)
Encouraging better communication in workplace	Offer healthy options; Water, Breakfasts, Fruit and nuts
Encouraging staff meal and tea breaks	Counselling sessions available to staff
Standing Desks/ Workstations	Fitness challenges and Physical activity sessions
Immunisations	Display Swan Hill District Health Service Desk Dweller Kit - Stand and Stretch exercises
Walking Meetings	Social activities, BBQs, social connection

What Next:

The feedback indicated:

- A need to reach men and engage with workplaces that employ men.
- Participants valued the “lived experience”, personal experiences are very powerful, as discussed by guest speaker Jeremy Forbes and Margot Spalding.
- There was interest in HALT visiting to our catchment to run some events with workplaces.
- Workplaces to investigate MHFA [Mental Health First Aid].
- Talk to your local organisations; East Wimmera Health Service, Northern District Community Health Service and Swan Hill District Health, about workplace health strategies and programs.

Post Forum Update from SMPCP:

- SMPCP has continued to work with Jeremy Forbes from HALT. HALT is very keen to work collaboratively with community and mental health service providers to deliver event in the Southern Mallee in 2016.
- SMPCP staff have attended Mental Health First Aid delivered by Swan Hill District Health. SMPCP have become a Gold Skilled MHFA Workplace and are working towards a Workplace Mental Health First Aid Policy. More information about the Skilled Workplaces Initiative visit: www.mhfa.com.au



Working Group Members and SMPCP Member Agencies; Swan Hill District Health, Northern District Community Health Service and East Wimmera Health Service are keen to talk with workplaces about their workplace health issues, and discuss what support and programs are available, including the Achievement Program.

For further information Contact SMPCP:

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