A message from Dr Vicki Palmer, Principal Investigator

There are over 17 different teams involved in CORE, with 200 staff taking part. 144 (72%) people completed the first staff survey in March this year. Here is some information we learned about staff from the first survey:

- Staff range in age from 23 to 64 years old (average age is 42). More than two-thirds of participating staff are women.
- The average length of time that staff report being with an organisation is three to four years (though some people report being with an organisation for over ten years).
- Organisations have provided 90% of staff with training or professional development about adult recovery from mental illness, such as Hearing Voices or Trauma Informed Training.
- One in five staff are involved in recovery-focused projects in addition to the CORE Study, such as projects to build the peer workforce or raise mental illness awareness.

The next survey will be in February 2016—let’s see if we can reach 90% of people this time!

“We’re thirsty!” — WHAT HAPPENS BEFORE AND AFTER THE SERVICE IMPROVEMENT PROJECT (SIP)?

One group of participants (staff, service users and carers) have started the CORE Service Improvement Project (SIP). We can’t tell you who but if you haven’t heard from us please don’t worry—your turn is coming up.

We’re less intensively involved with staff who are not currently undergoing the SIP. But, we won’t forget you! We need to keep in touch to make sure we understand the service context.

Part of this involves the brief online survey every nine months.

We’ll send out newsletters (like this one) and suggest face-to-face meetings from time to time. You’re welcome to contact us in the meantime with comments or questions.

We’re also happy to host or facilitate any events that you and your mental health colleagues might be interested in, such as special speakers, information seminars or Mental Health Week events. Let us know!

CORE Study needs new participants ALL THE TIME

We expect that some people will be exited from your caseload over the course of the study, and new people will come on. Please keep handing out study postcards to new clients and their carers, as well to as old ones who might have changed their mind about CORE. Your help in recruiting people to the study is essential to its success. Thank-you for all your hard work so far!

CONTACT THE CORE TEAM

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This study is approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee at The University of Melbourne (1340299.5). If you have any complaints or concerns about the conduct of this project please contact: The Manager, Human Research Ethics, The University of Melbourne on (03) 8344 2073.
The Service Improvement Project (SIP) are to be rolled out over 2015, 2016 and into 2017. Based on a quality improvement method known as experience based co-design, the SIP involves three steps:

Step 1 HAVE A VOICE. Service users and carers share their stories about the good things in the service and things that could go better.

Step 2 SHARE YOUR VIEWS. Service users, carers and staff meet in separate focus groups to explore what people shared in Step 1.

Step 3 SHAPE YOUR CARE EXPERIENCES. Using what was learned in Steps 1 and 2, service users, carers and staff work together to come up with action plans to improve the service.

Staff are involved in up to 10 hours of meetings over six months. Meetings take place during business hours at rooms in (or near) the organisation where the staff members work. Involvement in the CORE Study can be covered by Client Support Units. (The CORE Study involves planning, quality assurance activities and data collection which constitutes support to the overall MHCSS client group).

Friday October 9 is Hat Day, an initiative of Australian Rotary Health.

The CORE Study is hosting a Hat Day BBQ 12pm to 1pm Flagstaff Gardens (opposite Queen Victoria Markets)

We want you, your service users and their carers to come along in your favourite hats. It's a fun and positive way to show our support for our study participants, and the 1 in 5 Australians affected by depression, anxiety, schizophrenia, anorexia and other serious mental illnesses.

100% of the money raised goes to Australian Rotary Health to fund programs like:

- Suicide prevention strategies
- Web & phone-based self-help tools
- New understanding & treatments for schizophrenia
- Early interventions for mental illness prevention
- Reducing substance misuse in at-risk groups

Places are limited, so telephone 1800 721 513 by Thursday October 1st to secure your spot.

STUDY INVESTIGATORS
Dr. Victoria Palmer, Professor Jane Gunn, Professor Helen Herman, Associate Professor David Pierce, Associate Professor John Furler (The University of Melbourne), Dr. Donella Piper (Consultant), Professor Rick Iedema (University of Tasmania), Dr Rosemary Callander (Tandem representing Victorian Mental Health Carers), Mr Wayne Weavell (Victorian Mental Illness Awareness Council).

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