

Media release – 13 November 2019

Equal ground created in the ACT

A new mental health program for same-sex attracted and gender diverse people aged 16 and over will be available soon in the ACT.

Equal Ground aims to address research that suggests a disproportionate number of same-sex attracted and gender diverse people experience poorer mental health outcomes, and have a higher risk of suicidal behaviours than their peers.

These outcomes paint an alarming picture – illustrating the need for quality, inclusive mental health services tailored to the specific needs of the LGBTIQ+ community.

Delivered by Marathon Health, Equal Ground has a ‘no wrong door’ policy and centres on providing the right care, in the right place, at the right time.

Julie Blunden, Marathon Health Portfolio Manager ACT, says Equal Ground has a strong focus on support and connections – with confidentiality, privacy and even anonymity a priority.

“Equal Ground provides a safe environment for people to discuss and explore issues without judgement. There’s also a strong focus on community and connections – meaning we want to ensure people who access this service are connected to the right groups, so they can feel they are part of a community. A sense of belonging and community is essential for mental wellbeing.

We have recruited a really passionate and incredible team who are eager to support our LGBTIQ+ community and help people get back on track,” Ms Blunden comments.

Capital Health Network Chief Executive, Adj Prof Gaylene Coulton said the PHN program will provide Canberrans from the LGBTIQ+ community with holistic care, primarily focused on their emotional, psychological and social wellbeing.

“People will set goals together with their Social and Emotional Wellbeing Worker and develop a Wellness Plan. The program has a stepped-care approach where people can also step up to an appointment with one of the program’s Psychologists, if needed,” said Adj Prof Gaylene Coulton, Capital Health Network Chief Executive.

Equal Ground is supported by funding from the ACT PHN through the Australian Government’s PHN Program.

The program will be delivered at Marathon Health’s ACT office at 3 Torrens Street, Braddon. Appointments can be made by calling 02 5109 9750.



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The stats¹:

- LGBTI young people aged 16 to 27 are five times more likely to attempt suicide whilst transgender people aged 18 and over are nearly eleven times more likely
- 41.1% of homosexual/bisexual people aged 16 and over met the criteria for a mental disorder and had symptoms in the last 12 months
- 37.1% LGBT people aged 16 and over reported being diagnosed or treated for any mental disorder in the past three years

-ENDS-

About

Marathon Health is a not-for-profit, registered charity delivering high quality health and wellbeing services to people in country NSW and the ACT. We're the largest provider of headspace services in Australia and the largest non-government employer of allied health staff in Western NSW. We are a strong voice for rural health: we live here, we work here, and our future is here. Find out more about us at marathonhealth.com.au

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¹ <https://lgbtihealth.org.au/statistics/>

