

## Focus area

General practice considerations and support options for mental health and suicide prevention.

## Why focus on this?

It is essential for General Practitioners and practice staff to have the necessary skills and knowledge to address and deliver person-centred mental health care and/or suicide prevention strategies within the general practice setting (RACGP, 2016).

For most Australians, general practice is the first port of call when they access Australia's health care system, and their general practitioner (GP) is usually the first person they consult about their mental healthcare (including suicidal ideation).

## Quality improvement ideas

- Identify patients who are prescribed antidepressant and/or anxiolytic medications but do not have a coded diagnosis of depression and/or anxiety.
- Identify patients eligible for a Mental Health Treatment Plan.
- Enable person-centred care by encouraging patients to discuss and undertake mental health and suicide prevention management with their GP.
- Appoint a staff member who is responsible for creating and maintaining a mental health register.
- Have a team meeting to brainstorm how recall and reminder systems could improve patient care and income generation.
- Draft a written procedure for recall and reminder systems.
- Where appropriate, offer patients the opportunity to book a Mental Health Care Plan Review appointment OR follow up appointment before they leave the practice after their initial Mental Health Care Plan appointment.
- Engage the clinical team to upskill in current suicide prevention practices.

Access the PHN's Quality Improvement Community of Practice, or contact your Primary Care Improvement Officer for access to the PHN's Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Toolkit, for additional support and information.

NOTE: there is a 'Readiness Checklist' also in the Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Toolkit, refer to Page 5. The Readiness Checklist has been developed to assist general practices to identify areas and opportunities for change and to build a sustainable team-based approach to improve mental health wellbeing and strategies for suicide prevention in General Practice.

## Resources

- [Primary Health Network for Hunter, New England and Central Coast Quality Improvement](#)
- [HealthPathways Hunter New England](#)  
Username: hnehealth  
Password: p1thw1ys
- [Central Coast](#)  
Username: centralcoast  
Password: 1connect
- [Patientinfo HNE & CC](#)
- [Department of Health GP Mental Health Treatment Medicare Items](#)
- [Mental Health training standards 2020-2022](#)
- [Mental Health services in Australia: in brief 2019](#)
- [Royal Australian College of General Practitioners Mental Health](#)
- [RACGP - Health of the Nation 2019](#)
- [Guidelines for Preventative Activities in General PracticeW](#)