



Frequently Asked Questions FAQs

headspace Port Macquarie Family Reference Group (FRG)

What is the headspace Family Reference Group?

The Family Reference Group is made up of a diverse group of people with lived experience of supporting a young person experiencing mental health challenges.

Group members provide consultation and advocacy across headspace Port Macquarie for the role, contribution and needs of families in headspace programs and services. The reference group's important contribution enables families across Australia to support young people to live rich, full and meaningful lives.

What exactly does participation in the Family Reference Group involve?

Members of the FRG have the opportunity to be involved in a number of ways including:

1. Advising on local and national projects
2. Marketing, promotion and community awareness
3. Resource development
4. Education and training for staff and young people
5. Evaluation, research and policy advocacy
6. Media spokesperson for headspace Port Macquarie

It is hoped that the variety of participation activities will appeal to a broad range of interests and that members can draw on their experience, strengths, interests.

Who are the current group members?

The reference group consists of:

- Members with experience supporting a family member who has accessed mental health support services
- A mix of ages, genders, and support roles.
- Representatives from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.
- Diverse family types.

Who is considered family?

At headspace, family is defined uniquely by each young person. Family is considered an integral part of a young person's circle of care. Family and other caregivers – whether by birth, choice or circumstance – hold a significant role in supporting a young person.

The term family may include parents, caregivers, siblings, partners, Elders, kin, mentors and other community members who are viewed by the young person as people who play a significant emotional, cultural, faith-based or other role in their life. At headspace we acknowledge and respect the diversity of families across Australia.

What is the commitment?



Your participation as a Family Reference Group member is voluntary. There is an expectation that you participate in group discussions at meetings that are held 4 times per year. In addition to group chats in between official meetings.

We understand Reference Group members have other commitments such as work, education or their caring roles so there is flexibility and choice regarding the number and nature of your participation.

Can you tell me a bit more about the activities that I can be involved in?

There are a number of activities that Family Reference Group members have the opportunity to be involved in. Group members will be invited to participate in these opportunities via expressions of interest. **You are not expected to participate in all types of activities, nor do you need to have previous experience in order to participate.**

Activities may include:

- **Involvement in focus groups and consultations**
From time-to-time focus groups are held around specific topics to help headspace Port Macquarie decide on direction of its activities and resources to be developed. The purpose is to ensure that the interests and opinions of family and community are represented in all aspects of headspace Port Macquarie activities. These discussions may take place at face-to-face meetings or may occur between meetings via online forums or over the phone.
- **Evaluation, research and policy advocacy**
Members may have the opportunity to work on projects undertaken by the headspace Port Macquarie's Strategy, Impact and Policy team. The team is responsible for guiding the organisation's strategic direction; informing the policy reform agenda; and monitoring and evaluating headspace Port Macquarie's services to support continuous quality improvement, guide service innovation and inform future directions in youth mental health.
- **Media spokespeople and community engagement**
Family Reference Group members are supported to become active community advocates for youth mental health and for the involvement of family. The goal is to raise awareness of youth mental health, encourage young people to seek help early and to educate the broader community in youth mental health. Members may be involved in community education activities, or as media spokespeople on the issue of youth mental health. Media spokespeople may be requested to speak at public functions or at local schools, mental health forums and conferences.

Participation in media opportunities is optional for group members, and training and support is available for those who wish to participate.
- **Local and National Projects**
With support from headspace Port Macquarie, members of the Reference Group may have the opportunity to lead or contribute to specific projects.

What support does headspace provide to members of the Reference Group?

- Induction to headspace and a range of optional learning modules.
 - Personal Development and Training in a range of mental health topics.
 - Clinical support to ensure safe lived experience practices during participation
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