**Frequently Asked Questions**

**headspace Family and Friends Reference Group**

**1. What is the headspace Family and Friends Reference Group?**

The Family and Friends Reference Group is a group of up to ten people who have had a family member or friend access **headspace** services. They consult with **headspace** National Office and their local **headspace** centre on a variety of topics and issues, and are involved in a number of local and national projects.

The reference group aims to give family members and friends the opportunity to provide input into the strategic direction of **headspace** National office, **headspace** programs, and mental health services nationally

The reference group will consist of up to ten people

* All members must have experience supporting a family member or friend who has accessed **headspace** services
* Representation from a variety of different states and territories, and a mix of metropolitan, regional and rural areas.
* A mix of ages and genders
* Representation from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and friends
* Representation from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds
* A diversity of family type
* All members must have easy and regular access to the internet and phone

**2. What does being in the reference group involve?**

Members of the Family and Friends Reference Group will have the opportunity to be involved in a number of ways including:

1. As consultants for **headspace** National Office (hNO) by providing feedback to all areas of the organisation in a variety of ways
2. Local and national projects
3. Media spokespeople for **headspace** National Office and local centres
4. Marketing, Promotion and Community Awareness
5. Resource development
6. Education and training for both staff and young people
7. Evaluation and Research
8. Policy advocacy

By providing a variety of activities it is hoped that it will provide the opportunity to draw on people’s strengths, abilities and capabilities, while also appealing to a broad range of interests.

**3. What’s the time commitment?**

The appointment of Family and Friends Reference Group Members is 18 months. Annually, there will be one face-to-face meeting in Melbourne, and three meetings via teleconference. **headspace** will cover the cost of all flights and accommodation and participants will be paid for attendance at the meeting.

In between the face to face events, contact will be maintained through Facebook, email, and teleconferences. There will be an expectation that you participate regularly in group discussions. This is a volunteer role, and although you will be paid for some of the events, it is expected that you will also volunteer your time for subcommittees, projects and other events.

**4. Can you tell me more about the activities that I can be involved in?**

There are a number of activities that Family and Friends Reference Group members have the opportunity to be involved in. You do not need to have previous experience in order to participate in any of these.

**MEDIA SPOKESPEOPLE AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

**What is it?** Family and Friends Reference Group members are supported to become active community advocates for youth mental health and for the involvement of family and friends. 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, conferences and the like.

**LOCAL AND NATIONAL PROJECTS**

**What is it?**  With support from **headspace** National and local centres, members of the Reference Group may have the opportunity to lead specific projects. We encourage members to develop their own projects where they see a need. Interested members will be required to submit a project proposal; feasibility will be assessed by a panel of **headspace** National employees.

**INVOLVEMENT IN FOCUS GROUPS AND CONSULTATIONS**

**What is it?** From time to time focus groups are held around specific topics to help **headspace** decide on direction of its activities and resources to be developed. The purpose is to ensure that the interests and opinions of family and friends people are represented in all aspects of **headspace** activity.

**When do they meet?** 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**

**What is it?** Members may have the opportunity to work with the evaluation and research teams at **headspace** National. Topics for research and evaluation will depend on the need at the time.

**When do they meet?** A subcommittee or working group will be established to work in these areas. Members will be notified and asked for expressions of interest through email. Communication will be mostly through online forums and email.

**6. What costs are involved?**

**headspace** National will cover the following costs:

* Travel costs to attend face to face events
* Accommodation while attending face to face events
* You will be paid for attendance at face to face events.

If you have any further questions, please contact Sarah Faithfull, Youth Participation Officer at [sfaithfull@headspace.org.au](mailto:sfaithfull@headspace.org.au) or on 0439 306 229.