

# DO YOU CONSULT AND DESIGN MENTAL HEALTH PROGRAMS?

## WANT HELP TO UNDERSTAND THE LIVED EXPERIENCE OF SEXUALITY AND GENDER DIVERSE PEOPLE?



### ACON's Rainbow Mental Health Lived Experience Network can help



#### HOW CAN THE RAINBOW MENTAL HEALTH LIVED EXPERIENCE NETWORK ENGAGE WITH YOUR ORGANISATION?

People across NSW have called for our mental health and social services to be centred on the people who use them. To achieve this, we must embrace the participation, influence and leadership of people with lived experience of mental distress in service design, delivery, monitoring, reporting, research, evaluation and improvement activities.

As a network of individuals with lived experience of mental distress, The Rainbow Mental Health Lived Experience Network gives the broader mental health sector an increased capacity to engage with people of diverse genders and sexualities in processes of service co-design, consultation work, and focus groups. There is a fee for service; network members are paid for their time.

Our Lived Experience Network can help with:

- Consumer/client consultations
- Focus group testing
- Feedback on resources and materials
- Provide their experiences and ideas for service improvement
- Guest speaker engagements.

#### WHAT IS THE RAINBOW MENTAL HEALTH LIVED EXPERIENCE NETWORK?

The Rainbow Mental Health Network is a group of sexuality and gender diverse individuals with lived experience of mental distress. The Network currently comprises 11 people from the Sydney, Western Sydney, Hunter, Illawarra, Shoalhaven and South Coast regions who have

been trained to represent sexuality and gender diverse communities in mental health consultative processes. In 2020, the network is expanding into the Northern Rivers and South West regions of NSW. The network can be engaged in person, by phone, or online.

#### HOW WAS THE RAINBOW MENTAL HEALTH LIVED EXPERIENCE NETWORK ESTABLISHED?

People of diverse sexualities and genders experience higher levels of preventable mental distress than other population groups due to minority stress, the cumulative experience of violence, stigma, harassment and invisibility. With seed funding provided by the Mental Health Commission NSW, in 2019 ACON trained a group of sexuality and gender diverse people with lived experience of mental distress to advocate and represent their communities, with a goal to shift mental health service cultures and assumptions. The Rainbow Mental Health Lived Experience Network was formed.



#### GET IN CONTACT

You can engage the Rainbow Mental Health Lived Experience Network by contacting Lucy Watson, community health promotion officer of Mental Health Programs at ACON.

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Find out more: [acon.org.au](http://acon.org.au)

