

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **Mental health first aid course focuses on providing help to all people**

COMMUNITY members, volunteers and health workers came together recently to learn more about providing mental health first aid to people from diverse backgrounds.

The workshop focused on building awareness around multicultural sensitivities when administering mental health first aid.

“As with any mental health first aid course, this workshop aimed to equip participants with information and resources to provide support when a mental health issue is developing and to provide first aid assistance in a crisis situation,” course presenter Elvia Ramirez, from the Metro South Addiction and Mental Health Services to Queensland Transcultural Mental Health Centre, said.

“This particular workshop went further by providing information on how to respond when the person has a culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) background.

“At the end of the course, the participants came to understand that cultural considerations are essential when approaching, assessing and linking the person to appropriate professional help and when applying the other first aid actions.”

The workshop also included data and case studies relevant to CALD diverse community members, as well as where to get more information and other resources.

The workshop was facilitated by Darling Downs Hospital and Health Service health promotion officer Richard Henshaw and was held at the Metro Care facility in Toowoomba.

The free workshop was supported by the Toowoomba Hospital Foundation through an Easternwell community grant enabling participants to take part in the course for free.

“The training had a positive response, forcing us to exceed our capped number for the course with 28 people participating. These people are now eligible to receive a certificate in mental health first aid,” Mr Henshaw said.

Amongst the participants were volunteers from the Metro Care’s Street Crew.

“Our street crew provides on the ground, peer support in Toowoomba’s CBD and liquor precincts on Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights,” Matt Gregg from Metro Care said.

“It is great that our volunteers have been able to access this training locally and for free through the support of Easternwell and the Darling Downs Hospital and Health Service.

“We hope to continue our partnership in the future to create more opportunities for learning and growth.”

The Toowoomba workshop was held in March and followed on from a similar workshop that was held in Stanthorpe on February 11 and 12 which had 17 participants.

**Caption:**

Metro Care operations manager Matt Gregg with Darling Downs Hospital and Health Service's Richard Henshaw at the mental health first aid course.

**Ends**

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