



Government of Western Australia  
Mental Health Commission

## Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) WA

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Date: 19 November 2020  
Location: Mental Health Commission  
Attendees: Kim Lazenby, Head of System Development, MHC  
Amanda Hughes, Head of Policy, MHC  
Ebony Schroeder, Senior Policy Officer, Strategy and Reform, MHC  
Shane Mauger, Executive Manager, Service Delivery, YMCA WA  
Mark Furr, General Manager, Youth, Community and Leisure, YMCA WA

- The YMCA is a preventative organisation, where prevention is its primary role. However, if young people present to the organisation in crisis or are particularly vulnerable referrals to other services can be made.
- The YMCA Youth Services primarily work in the Access and Engagement space, with some Targeted Intervention. Youth work provided by the YMCA seeks to work with youth at all stages:
  - Surviving - those who are 'at risk' and are living day to day with no real goals, aspirations or hope other than surviving.
  - Functioning – those who are generally doing what society 'expects' of them; unsure of goals or aspirations and may feel they have limited choices; may be socially isolated or on the fringes of various groups, may not know where or how they fit in.
  - Aspiring - those who are generally doing 'ok'; they have goals and aspirations but maybe do not know how to or have the means to achieve them.
  - Thriving – those who are generally doing 'well'; they know what they want to achieve and how to do it.
- Mental health issues are increasingly present among young people.
- The YMCA focus on developing relationships with other services and collaborating to reduce duplication of services and to meet the varying needs of young people (for example, they have working relationships with WA AIDS Council, headspace, Save the Children and various city councils).
- The YMCA have strong connections in the education space and are currently in the process of developing a Curriculum and Reengagement in Education (CARE) School which aims to provide education of secondary aged students who have been unable to access or have significant difficulty in accessing mainstream education.
- The YMCA provides a range of drop in centres in metropolitan and regional areas (some of which are in development), but also the YMCA goes out into the community to reach young people.
- When employing staff the YMCA try to ensure that the demographics of the service is representative of the communities they are based in and providing services for.
- Instead of focussing on employing people who already have the right qualifications, once someone is employed they provide education and training pathways to work towards a qualification.
- Young people who have engaged with the YMCA often provide peer support to other young people at the service.