

Chapter 2: Method

Evaluation components

MHPN documentation (Component a)

MHPN provided the evaluation team with relevant documentation relating to the establishment, delivery and sustainability phases. These included the MHPN governance charter, its 2009 annual report, organisational charts, meeting timetables, examples of regular communication with mental health professionals (e.g., FAQ sheets), marketing materials, the participants' manual, facilitators' kit and network co-ordinators' kit. The evaluation team undertook a desktop review of this documentation.

MHPN workshop calendar and workshop attendance list (Components b and c)

MHPN provided the evaluation team with data on the registrations for and attendances at workshops by mental health professionals between February 2009 and June 2010. These data came from each state/territory MHPN office from two sources: the workshop calendar and the workshop attendance list, both of which were provided to the evaluation team in the form of Excel spreadsheets.

The workshop calendar dataset included data about each workshop's location (using the Australian Bureau of Statistics' Australian Standard Geographical Classification Remote Area [ASGC-RA] classification system¹²) which was not available from the attendance list dataset, as well as information about facilitators' professions.

The attendance list dataset included information on each workshop participant who registered for a given workshop, including their date of registration, their profession type, and whether the registration resulted in an attendance, a cancellation, or a no show. Data on individuals who 'walked-in' to a workshop without previously registering were also available. Data were also available on the location (state/territory) of each workshop.

It should be noted that there were some inconsistencies between the two datasets, with the attendance list data providing a slight undercount of the number of participants attending overall (because of delays or failures on the part of facilitators to provide the relevant data, despite follow-up prompts).

Mental health professionals' pre-workshop survey (Component d)

The mental health professionals' pre-workshop survey was designed by the evaluation team to collect demographic and professional/employment information from participants, as well as information about their expectations regarding workshop participation and their current practices with respect to interdisciplinary collaboration and networking (see Appendix 1). Once a mental health professional had enrolled in his/her first workshop, he/she was invited via email to participate in the evaluation and complete the survey. Surveys were completed between December 2009 and July 2010.

All 4,508 mental health professionals who registered to participate in initial workshops in the specified time period were asked to complete the pre-workshop survey. In total, 1,696 mental health professionals responded to the pre workshop survey, representing a 38% response rate that was representative of the profession mix at workshops. Appendix 2 profiles the survey respondents by their key demographic and professional characteristics.

Mental health professionals' post-workshop survey (Component e)

The mental health professionals' post-workshop survey was designed by the evaluation team to elicit feedback from workshop participants. It incorporated questions from a post-workshop survey that MHPN had used to evaluate workshops prior to CHPPE's involvement in the evaluation. Mental health professionals were asked to rate how well the workshops' objectives were met, the relevance and usefulness of the workshop to them, their intention to participate in ongoing networks, the facilitation of the workshop, and the materials used in the workshop (see Appendix 1). After attending a given workshop, mental health professionals were emailed a link to the survey and encouraged to complete it. Surveys were completed between December 2009 and July 2010.

All 7,132 mental health professionals who participated in the workshops in the specified time period were invited to complete the post-workshop survey, and 2,369 did so. This equated to a 33% response rate, and was representative of the profession mix at workshops. Appendix 2 profiles the survey respondents by their key demographic and professional characteristics.

It is worth noting that the number of invitations to complete post-workshop surveys was greater than the number of invitations to complete pre-workshop surveys. This was because the pre-workshop survey was offered to mental health professionals when they registered to attend an initial workshop, and therefore any given individual received only one pre-workshop survey. By contrast, the post-workshop survey was offered to attendees at all workshops, so those who attended subsequent workshops received more than one invitation to complete a post-workshop survey. In addition, the post-workshop survey was collected from the outset, whereas the pre-workshop survey was introduced once the workshops were underway.

Mental health professionals' 14-week follow-up survey (Component f)

The mental health professionals' follow-up survey was designed by the evaluation team and mirrored the questions asked in the pre-workshop survey (Component d) with respect to interdisciplinary collaboration and networking, which enabled changes in these activities to be monitored (see Appendix 1). Fourteen weeks after attending a given workshop, participants were emailed a link to the survey and encouraged to complete it. Surveys were completed between April 2010 and July 2010. It should be noted that because workshops were conducted until the end of July 2010, and the analysis for the current report was conducted in August, not all participants had the opportunity to complete the 14-week follow-up survey.

All mental health professionals who participated in the workshops were invited to complete the 14-week follow-up survey. By July 2010, 245 of 1,433 had done so. This constitutes a response rate of 18%. Appendix 2 profiles the survey respondents by their key demographic and professional characteristics.

Facilitators' post-workshop survey (Component g)

The facilitator post-workshop survey was designed by the evaluation team in conjunction with MHPN's evaluation committee. It sought information from facilitators on how they felt the given workshop was received by participants, plans for ongoing network arrangements, suggestions for future workshops, and the quality of MHPN resources and support (see Appendix 1). The survey was emailed to workshop facilitators by Strategic Data after each workshop. The survey data were collected between February 2010 and July 2010.

Five hundred and twenty nine facilitators who facilitated workshops between February and June 2010 were invited to complete the post-workshop survey and 331 did so (a response rate of 63%). Appendix 2 profiles the survey respondents by their key demographic and professional characteristics.

Facilitators' in-depth survey (Component h)

The facilitators' in-depth survey was designed by the evaluation team to collect information about facilitator's perceptions of the effectiveness of MHPN in generating sustainable ongoing networks and improvements in collaborative mental health care (see Appendix 1). Facilitators who responded to an invitation at any time during their involvement with MHPN were invited to participate in the facilitators' in-depth survey.

Six hundred and sixty six facilitators who facilitated workshops before the end of June 2010 were sent the survey and 190 completed it. This equated to a response rate of 28%. Appendix 2 profiles the survey respondents by their key demographic and professional characteristics.

Focus groups with mental health professionals (Component i)

Ten focus groups were conducted in two rounds to explore the impact of the workshops on mental health professionals who had attended them. The focus groups were run by the evaluation team in New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia, the Northern Territory, Tasmania, Victoria and Western Australia in December 2009 and April 2010.

Focus group participants were recruited in the following way. MHPN provided the evaluation team with a list of workshop attendees for each location. In order to protect participants' privacy, the list did not contain the names of participants, but identified them by a unique unit record number. The evaluation team selected a random sample of 481 providers (stratified by type of provider) from each list, and returned the corresponding list of unique identifiers to MHPN. MHPN then re-attached names to the list and emailed the selected providers to invite them to take part in the relevant focus group. A more detailed description of the recruitment and selection procedures can be found in the CHPPE's previous evaluation reports.^{5,7}

Each focus group was conducted by two members of the evaluation team (with one facilitating the discussion and the other acting as a scribe). Each focus group lasted between 60 and 90 minutes and was structured around a consistent set of questions (see Appendix 1), although they were fairly fluid and involved little detailed probing from the evaluation team. This methodology allowed each focus group to discuss content that was relevant and meaningful to the participants. Participants were asked about their professional qualifications, the number of MHPN workshops they had attended, whether they were involved in ongoing networks as a result, and their experiences of MHPN workshops in relation to the stated MHPN aims. Participants were paid \$100 for their involvement. All the focus groups were audio recorded and transcribed for analysis.

In total, 89 attendees participated in the two rounds of focus groups nationally, representing a 19% response rate. The maximum number of participants for each focus group was set at 12.

Sustainability focus group (Component j)

One sustainability focus group was held in May 2010 with MHPN Network Sustainability Project Officers and Senior Project Officers. These individuals were identified as potential participants for the focus group by MHPN, as their roles were seen as instrumental in the development and maintenance of ongoing networks. They were sent a plain language statement via email, and asked to complete and return a consent form if they wished to participate.

The evaluation team developed a set of questions for the focus group in collaboration with MHPN (see Appendix 1). The questions sought information from participants on their experiences of working with mental health professionals in establishing and maintaining ongoing networks, and their views about what enabled or inhibited this process.

The focus group was conducted by four members of the evaluation team (two acting as facilitators, one as a scribe, and one collating comments on butchers' paper). The focus group lasted for 90 minutes. Participants were asked to view the focus group as a 'brain storming' session and interactions between participants were encouraged. The evaluators provided little comment during the process. This methodology allowed participants to provide content that was relevant and meaningful to them. No incentive was paid to participants for their involvement. The focus group was audio recorded and transcribed for analysis.

Nine Network Sustainability Project Officers and Senior Project Officers were invited to participate in the focus group and all returned consent forms. Ultimately, eight of these attended the focus group; four Network Sustainability Project Officers and four Senior Project Officers.

Sustainability and website survey (Component k)

All mental health professionals who attended workshops between January 2009 and June 2010 were sent an email invitation in July 2010 to participate in an online survey regarding their involvement in ongoing interdisciplinary networks and their views of the website in July 2010. Participants were asked about the MHPN website and their level of desire for interdisciplinary networking, their preferred method for networking, and the support they would like from MHPN to achieve their networking goals (see Appendix 1).

In total, 1,543 out of 7,689 mental health professionals completed the sustainability and website survey, a response rate of 20%. A smaller proportion of general practitioners completed the survey than attended workshops. The sample was otherwise representative of workshop attendees. Appendix 2 profiles the survey respondents by their key demographic and professional characteristics.

MHPN workshop master list (Component l)

The workshop master list data is collated directly from the workshop calendar data set and is updated by MHPN Project Officers from their communication with workshop facilitators. This dataset was given to the evaluators by MHPN. This dataset includes information about the each workshop's status (i.e., whether the group has agreed to meet again and if so, the progress it has made towards doing so and whether the facilitator has agreed to remain involved in the network).

MHPN network master list (Component m)

The network master list is gathered by MHPN project teams from the network co-ordinators. It includes data relating to the number of networks operating, the number of times networks have met, the number of workshops represented in ongoing networks, the profession of the co-ordinator and the ongoing involvement of the facilitator. These data were forwarded to the evaluators by MHPN.

MHPN network attendance list (Component n)

MHPN surveys network co-ordinators regarding the activities and composition of their network. This includes the number of mental health professionals that were invited and that attended network meetings, and the types of professionals attending networks. It should be noted that MHPN data is incomplete, given that it is only available for networks that voluntarily provide it to MHPN. Networks that do not access a \$500 payment offered to groups to facilitate ongoing networks have no responsibility to provide data. In addition, there are lags in data receipt.

National network co-ordinator feedback forums (Component o)

MHPN provided the evaluators with a summary report from five network co-ordinator feedback forums conducted by MHPN in March 2010. This report held information about the key themes that emerged from the forums in relation to the enablers and barriers in co-ordinating networks. Forums were held in Queensland, Victoria, South Australia, Western Australia and New South Wales. Forty-nine (out of a total of 94 invited) co-ordinators representing a broad cross section of professions took part (see Appendix 2 for the professions of participants).

MHPN web portal survey (Component p)

All 353 registered users of the web portal were sent an email inviting them to participate in the web portal survey in July 2010. The web portal survey gathered information about the frequency of website access, as well as the reasons for access and perceptions of the content and structure of the website (see Appendix 1). Seventy three registered online users completed the survey, representing a 21% response rate. Appendix 2 profiles the survey respondents by their key demographic and professional characteristics.

Web portal data from MHPN (Component q)

MHPN provided the evaluation team with a spreadsheet detailing the number of hits per month on each of the available web pages. Web portal statistics are collected on a monthly basis using Google analytics and other tracking software.

MHPN Online registration data (Component r)

MHPN Online registration data were provided to the evaluation team by MHPN. These online data are collected on a daily basis from the website.

Data analysis

Descriptive analyses were undertaken of quantitative data from all relevant sources, and the results are presented as simple frequencies, percentages and cross-tabulations.

Qualitative data from all relevant sources were subject to template analysis.¹³ This involved identifying a set of key themes and producing a template to organise these themes into a coded hierarchy. Higher order themes were developed by clustering lower order codes. This approach allowed the flexibility of some themes being developed *a priori* and others being developed during the analysis process.