

Social Prescribing Initiatives: Access Health and Community

Service: Access to Community, Social Prescription Service

Main Component: Employing Volunteer Community Connectors (VCC) the program aims to assist socially isolated people to identify and access suitable community activities.

Community linkages are based upon a person's interests. VCCs can help to identify activities, make enquiries and warm introductions according to client preferences and need. VCCs can also assist with travel planning and accompany people to their first session if necessary (transport is not provided). Volunteer interactions happen by phone and in community in public places (not home visits).

The relationship is limited to 3 months because the focus is on community linkage rather than an ongoing buddy. Rereferral is an option.

For further information email a2cprogram@accesshc.org.au

Detailed Information Sheet: A2C supports people to become more connected with their community. It is aimed at people who are experiencing difficulties with daily living, or who are in caring roles, and feeling like they've lost community connection or are experiencing loneliness. The program is for people aged under 65.

We have a team of Volunteer Community Connectors with great knowledge of community.

The Community Connector can help to find the right interest groups/clubs/education and then support the person to join. This may include working through access barriers - the Community Connector can even go with the person to get started. We will be guided by participant's preferences.

To get involved: Click this [referral form](#) to complete a brief expression of interest. (The form is suitable for participants or staff to complete). Alternatively call the coordinator on 98311913 or email a2cprogram@accesshc.org.au

How the program works:

1. Program Coordinator meets with the interested client and goes through intake and screening questions. They obtain background information and assess immediate needs. They will either refer the client on, or match them with a Volunteer Community Connector (VCC)
2. The client is matched with a VCC who reaches out to the client and builds rapport, has meaningful conversations about what matters to them, and learns about interests
3. Suitable activities are identified – such as book club, arts, support groups, sports, language learning, or interest group such as bird watching or dungeons and dragons
4. Client supported to make contact with the program. The level of VCC involvement will vary according to client need and preferences

5. Attendance barriers revealed and addressed along the way (such as how to get there, which tram stop, where to park etc., or talking through how it will be to join a group after so long)
6. The client attends the community program. If the client would like the VCC can go with them the first time they attend.
7. Review and exit at 3 months.

Who is the program open to? People aged under 65 in or around Boroondara, Yarra and Manningham who are experiencing difficulties with daily living – including situations that are temporary due to carer duties, illness or changed circumstances. The program is available to carers of people on NDIS but is not designed for people with a NDIS package.

Cost: The service is free, but the cost of activities will not be covered. For further information email a2cprogram@accesshc.org , or call 98311913.

Who is this for? Under 65s experiencing loneliness or social isolation

Outcomes: For people to be meaningfully engaged in community activities and experience the benefits of social connection with a view to social inclusion.

Service model is being evaluated for enhancement but is intended to be ongoing.

Organisations-involved: Access Health and Community operating in City of Yarra, City of Boroondara & City of Manningham

Keywords: social prescription, connection, social inclusion, loneliness, ending loneliness, community, community connection

Link: <https://accesshc.org.au/A2C/>

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