

Because You Matter:

A survey of the social conditions and service experiences of people accessing psychosocial services in Australia



WHO WE ARE

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The Because You Matter survey was developed to help understand how social conditions are shaping the lives of people accessing psychosocial services, and their experiences of accessing support.



The project pooled expertise from:

- Research and service development staff at Australian Psychosocial Alliance (APA) member organisations
- a Lived Experience Advisory group (LEAG) of people who had accessed an APA service
- academics based in Monash University's School of Occupational Therapy



Survey details:

- 32 questions (demographic, choice, likert, free-text)
- Open from Aug - Nov 2025
- 172 people completed the survey
- Four key themes were developed

FOUR KEY THEMES

1. The value of connection



- Participants spoke of the importance of connection to people, place, and purpose.
- A sense of connection had the strongest positive impact on wellbeing for many participants — through relationships, family, pets, nature, community, meaningful activity, employment and housing.
- Groups were among the most valued supports for routine, friendship, and a safe space to show up.

“APA groups have made a real difference to my mental health. I get to meet lots of amazing people and the staff are welcoming and support me when I need.”

Approximately half of participants were satisfied with their level of social connection — but 29% were somewhat or extremely dissatisfied, highlighting an important area of need. Isolation was tied to worse symptoms and slower recovery; connection is protective against both.

2. Hopes for more ease and stability

Participants hope for independent lives with more peace and ease — but cost of living and housing pressures make this hard.



19%

reported rarely or never having enough income to meet their daily needs

45%

went without at least 5 expenses in the past 6 months due to cost



“You can’t get better when you don’t know where your next meal is coming from or if a doctor’s visit is going to send you broke or if you lose your accommodation... I want to get better but without the right circumstances, support, and opportunities it’s not possible. I am just in constant survival mode.”

3. Calling for service consistency, continuity, diversity, and accessibility

Participants saw value in a wide range of supports, however:



72%

did not access a service they needed in the past 6 months



Barriers included:

- Cost
- Long waiting times
- Fear of accessing the service
- Not being taken seriously

Participants shared that support duration can be inadequate and their fears of services being taken away.

When people couldn’t access the supports they needed, there was an overall trend that their physical and mental health got worse.

4. The importance of feeling supported and listened to



Participants want to feel cared for, respected, not alone. They want services that are:

Dignifying

Reliable

Holistic

Curious

Non-judgemental

This is especially important as



31%

experienced unfair treatment or discrimination in the past 6 months

Participants want organisations to advocate for system and societal change

“Don’t assume hopelessness. Don’t try and fix things. Just listen and be flawed like the rest of us.”

SO, WHAT DOES THIS TELL US?

- Connection is vital.
- Affordability, availability, and lack of safety can be barriers to wellbeing.
- Services that are dignifying, curious, holistic, non-judgemental and reliable make a difference
- Everyone has a role in making this a reality.

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