WORKING TOGETHER: A new national phone and online support service for nurses and midwives is now available.

HERE TO HELP

Nurse & Midwife Support provides confidential advice and referral to nurses and midwives about their health and wellbeing. (Story, page 3)
New research has found links between shift work and negative physical and mental health outcomes, including increased incidence of depression and risky alcohol use.

In the Shift, Work, Play project that surveyed staff across Eastern Health, male shift workers reported significantly higher levels of psychological stress compared to men who did not work those shifts.

Funded by the Movember Foundation, the Turning Point study has significantly expanded this area of research and provided an insight into the loneliness and isolation faced by male shift workers.

According to the research, male shift workers reported that shift work affected their ability to participate in physical activity. Nearly 60 per cent of men found it difficult to exercise because they did not have time or were too tired to exercise.

Diet was also an issue, with more than 75 per cent eating less than two serves of vegetables while at work and 80 per cent eating less than two serves of fruit.

Dr Ogeil said common themes that affected men’s ability to participate in physical activity and their overall wellbeing included fatigue or exhaustion, not being able to commit to weekly groups or not having classes available at times that were suitable for shift workers and the shift work roster.

The research team is now looking at how the results can be used to improve the health and wellbeing of shift workers.
Health support for nurses and midwives is only a phone call or click away, thanks to a new national service operated by Turning Point.

Launched in March 2017, Nurse & Midwife Support (NM Support) is the first national dedicated telephone and online service that provides confidential advice and referral to nurses and midwives about their health and wellbeing.

Callers to the service have 24/7 access to an experienced team that can provide advice and referral to nurses and midwives on a range of health and wellbeing-related issues. The service also offers support to nursing and midwifery students, educators, employers and concerned family members.

Eastern Health Statewide Services Program Director Anthony Denham said that while nurses and midwives were recognised as the caregivers, they could also face health challenges and needed support in getting care for themselves.

“This may include stress caused by work, family problems, relationship issues, as well as alcohol and drug-related issues or mental health concerns,” Mr Denham said.

He said the service provided anonymous, “no strings attached” support that helped nurses and midwives deal with health issues that may be affecting their personal lives and their work.

Mark Aitken, who is a registered nurse working for NM Support, said the educational element of the service would help to better inform those working in health service settings on how to support colleagues who might be facing health issues and help them address those concerns.

The service is now available across Australia and is open to nurses, midwives, students, employers, educators, concerned friends or relatives and the public.

To access NM Support or for further information, call 1800 667 877 or visit www.nmsupport.org.au

IMPORTANT SERVICE: Eastern Health Statewide Services Program Director Anthony Denham speaks at the launch of Nurse & Midwife Support.

Turning Point has developed a new health promotion animation for people aged 55 and over, and who are worried about their alcohol use.

The animation was developed by researchers and staff from Telephone and Online Services, including Dr Michael Savic and Nyssa Ferguson, as part of a project funded by The Lord Mayor’s Charitable Foundation.

Alcohol use among people aged 55-plus is an emerging public health concern but most alcohol-related health promotion activities focus on young people. Turning Point aims to understand and respond to the alcohol-related concerns of people aged 55 and over.

Turning Point analysed 70 anonymous counselling online transcripts involving people aged 55 and over who were concerned about their alcohol use. They found that, like in other age groups, people aged 55-plus often used alcohol to relax and manage stress, and many wanted to shift this habit.

The team then developed an animation to prompt reflection about other ways to relax. Rather than relying on heavy-handed messaging or tired stereotypes about what activities people in this age group liked, the team wanted the animation to be engaging and have a positive message. The animation was refined with input from Turning Point’s Consumer and Carer Advisory Group.

The animation is available through Turning Point’s YouTube Channel (www.youtube.com/turningpointau) and as part of the self-help content on the revamped Counselling Online website (www.counsellingonline.org.au)
Members of the Turning Point Statewide Neuropsychology Service were among the presenters at the 2017 Victorian Alcohol and Drug Association (VAADA) Conference in Melbourne.

The team, which included Drs James Gooden, Vanessa Smithies and Madeline Connellan, presented a 60-minute interactive workshop on the topic, Supporting AOD clients with cognitive impairment: practical recommendations and strategies.

Dr Gooden said the workshop was well attended with overwhelming positive feedback.

“A key objective of our work is to provide education to clinicians in the AOD sector about the role of neuropsychology and cognitive impairment, and how this can present in the clients they see; as well as when to refer them for further assessment and what strategies to implement in the meantime to assist clients,” Dr Gooden said.

“By equipping clinicians with the commonly recommended strategies provided in assessment reports, they can get a head start on addressing some of the key concerns of clients where appropriate and work towards mitigating some of the possible contributing factors toward reduced cognitive functioning, such as difficulties with mood and anxiety or sleep.”

Later in 2017, the neuropsychology team plans to offer this workshop as a half-day professional development session at Turning Point, where vignettes can be discussed in detail, strategies demonstrated and the evidence base behind various strategies and interventions explored.

WEBSITE REVEALS AMBULANCE DRUG STATISTICS

A new website that provides an insight into drug-related ambulance data has been unveiled.

The Turning Point AmboAODstats website provides comprehensive details about alcohol and other drug-related ambulance attendances across Victoria.

Turning Point Researcher Associate Professor Belinda Lloyd said the website reported key information on alcohol, illicit and pharmaceutical drug harms requiring ambulance care.

Dr Lloyd said the website replaced the annual Ambo Project publication, with AmboAODstats offering a range of features, including interactive mapping. At present, the website contains figures to mid-2015, with future data to be updated on an annual basis.

“As well as the AOD sector, the website will mean local councils, law enforcement agencies, health services and the broader community will now have more ready access to this important data,” A/Prof Lloyd said.

Ambulance Victoria has been a key partner with Turning Point in the development of the AmboAODStats website.

Details: www.amboaodstats.org.au

EXPERT PERSPECTIVES

INTERACTIVE WORKSHOP: Dr James Gooden was among presenters at the 2017 VAADA Conference.

Anyone can experience a problem with alcohol, drugs or gambling

FREE 24 hours, 7 days a week counselling

For drug and alcohol support, call DirectLine on 1800 888 236 or visit counsellingonline.org.au

For gambling support, call Gamblers’ Helpline on 1800 858 858 or visit gamblinghelponline.org.au