

Networks can take a variety of forms, depending on the group's needs. This Fact Sheet outlines the various types and formats for network meetings, as well as provides some tips to make organising meetings easy.

Types of networks

MHPN supports a range of interdisciplinary mental health practitioner networks. Networks tend to be either:

- > general networks that cover a range of topics
- > specific interest networks that draw together practitioners with an interest in a particular mental health subject
- > comorbid specific interest networks that focus on the intersection between mental and physical health in relation to a chronic disease such as diabetes, cancer or heart disease.

Meeting purpose

Regardless of the type of network, agreeing on a shared purpose helps direct and focus meeting discussions so that they are relevant and useful to all who attend. While networks are free to choose their own purpose, the following have been popular:

- > **Peer Review Networks** are small, self-directed groups of interdisciplinary mental health professionals who meet regularly to share and critically reflect on their clinical experiences and issues in a supportive environment.
- > **Education Networks** provide an avenue where practitioners can explore one or more shared areas of

mental health special interest from a collaborative perspective.

- > **Clinical Review Networks** provide forums where practitioners review the clinical treatment and management of mental health consumers.
- > **Community Development Networks** are arenas where practitioners work together to plan events, initiatives and/or activities that bring the community; of clinicians, consumers, service providers, and/or members of the general public together with the aim of increasing mental health awareness.

Meeting formats

Meetings can take any format the group agrees, the following have been popular:

- > group discussion of a case study
- > guest presenter (either external or from within the group)
- > service presentations (either external or from within the group)
- > watch and discuss an MHPN webinar recording
- > interdisciplinary panel discussions of an issue or case study (panellists may come from within the group or be invited guests)
- > journal review and analysis.

Mental Health Professionals' Network

Emirates House
Level 8
257 Collins Street
Melbourne
VIC 3000

postal
PO Box 203
Flinders Lane
VIC 8009

email
contactus@mhpn.org.au

telephone
1800 209 031

www.mhpn.org.au

Practical tips to help make planning meetings easy

Planning the meeting includes making some logistical arrangements and decisions. The following provides some tips to help make these easier.

DECISION	TIP
Selecting a venue	<p>Consider the following low-cost options:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > workplace meeting rooms > library meeting rooms > community centres > private room in a restaurant or hotel.
Catering	<p>Providing light refreshments can be particularly beneficial if the meeting is held between finishing work and dinner. Arranging catering doesn't have to be onerous or expensive, the following provide easy options:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > supermarket platters (generally ordered from the deli) > subway platters > sandwiches > biscuits and tea/coffee
Budget	<p>MHPN can provide financial support for network meetings. The following might help stretch the budget a little further:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Look for a free venue at the local library, community centre or a network member's workplace. > Reduce catering expenses by having nibbles rather than a meal or asking attendees to bring food to share. > Members can make a copayment towards their meal if the meeting is held at a restaurant. > Consider a small thank you gift instead of payment for guest speakers. Please note that guest speaker payment is only for external expert speakers.
Responsibilities	<p>Sharing the various administration and organisational responsibilities associated with the network may encourage networks to meet more often and be more interactive. Network members can help with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > facilitating a meeting > arranging guest speakers > recruiting new members > organising the venue/catering > liaising with MHPN to advise of meeting details and return the attendance sheet.

Did you know...

MHPN provides \$400 (ex GST) funding to help cover the costs of holding meetings, see the MHPN Network Support Fact Sheet to learn more.

Next steps

If you would like to start a new network contact MHPN, or refer to [An Easy Guide to Starting a Network Fact Sheet](#).

Want more information? Contact MHPN