

16 April 2024

Creating a Compassionate Community in the Blue Mountains

On Friday, 3 May, Wentworth Healthcare, provider of the Nepean Blue Mountains Primary Health Network, will be hosting a community event in Springwood focussed on building a Compassionate Community in the Blue Mountains.

Compassionate Communities is a globally recognised and internationally active approach recognising the power of community in the care of people, families and carers through the experiences of ageing, illness, caregiving, dying, death and grief.

A Compassionate Community is one where the community works together and understands that caring for one another through the ageing journey is not a task solely for health and social services. People benefit when there is improved mobilisation of local networks, groups and services that are more conscious, aware and equipped to offer support.

One of the principles of Compassionate Communities is that older people with strong connections have improved physical and mental health compared to those who are socially isolated and experiencing loneliness. As such, everyday people play a vital role in a Compassionate Community to help care for and support people as they age.

Wentworth Healthcare established this approach initially in the Blue Mountains as part of improving informal supports for end-of-life care and expanded to the Hawkesbury area for older people identified as being socially isolated and lonely.

Kate Tye, Executive Manager Primary Care Development at Wentworth Healthcare noted that as humans, the importance of social connections and the need to belong, has been studied and researched many times, from many different angles.

“Our very evolution as a species relied upon our ancestors working together as a community. Yet, in this ever-increasingly digitally connected world, some people are finding themselves more isolated than ever before,” said Ms Tye.

“This innovative approach utilises an asset-based community development approach building on the strengths in the community to implement sustainable strategies and interventions for people experiencing, or at risk of, mental and physical health conditions associated with social isolation or loneliness,” she added.

Older people, and organisations who offer services for older people, in the Blue Mountains are invited to attend this Compassionate Community event. Experts and those involved in local initiatives, that have made a difference in communities, will share information with participants on the supports that are available and who in the community may benefit from them. Morning tea and lunch will be provided.

The Blue Mountains Compassionate Community event is on **Friday, 3 May**, from 10 am - 2 pm at **Springwood Sports Club**, 83 Macquarie Road, Springwood. Register by Wednesday, 1 May by visiting nbmphn.com.au/CommunityProgram or calling Wentworth Healthcare on **4708 8100**.