



The Matilda Centre Research Mentoring Program

Applicant Information Handbook



THE UNIVERSITY OF
SYDNEY

—
Matilda Centre

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Overview and background

The Matilda Centre Research Mentoring Program provides workers in community managed organisations (CMOs) with academic mentor support to facilitate the development of research knowledge and skills.

The Program is built on the success of the Community Mental Health Drug and Alcohol Research Network (CMHDARN) Mentoring Program, which originated in 2013 through a partnership between CMHDARN and the Matilda Centre – then known as the NHMRC Centre of Research Excellence in Mental Health and Substance Use and was based at the National Drug and Alcohol Research Centre, University of New South Wales.

CMHDARN is a NSW Mental Health Commission funded partnership project between the Mental Health Coordinating Council (MHCC) and the Network of Alcohol and other Drug Agencies (NADA) – two NSW peak bodies for CMOs in the mental health and alcohol and other drug sectors, respectively. This partnership was developed to broaden the involvement of the community mental health and drug and alcohol sector in practice-based research and to promote the value of research and the use of research evidence in practice.

The Matilda Centre Research Mentoring Program will continue to provide an opportunity for practitioners working in CMOs who are MHCC or NADA members to be mentored by one of the Matilda Centre's Early Career Researchers. Over time, it is envisaged that this program may expand to provide opportunities for mentoring to those working in other settings (e.g., public health) and in other Australian states and territories.

Program details

The Matilda Centre Research Mentoring Program aims to support practitioners and services in building their capacity to develop and conduct research projects. Research and evaluation projects undertaken within service delivery organisations provide an opportunity for reflective practice and the generation of evidence regarding areas of success and areas for improvement. The Matilda Centre Research Mentoring Program can provide support at any stage of a research project and relate to many different aspects of research.

Examples of support sought may include, but is not limited to, guidance on:

- conducting a literature search;
- developing research question/s;
- engaging people with lived experience in research;
- choosing a study design/methodology (e.g., qualitative and/or quantitative methods);
- survey/questionnaire/interview design;
- types of data and methods of data collection;
- data analysis (e.g., statistical testing, analysis of qualitative data);
- ethics approval processes;
- developing and obtaining feedback of resources;
- writing-up research for publication.

Benefits for mentees and mentors

One of the benefits of the Mentoring Program for both **mentees** and **mentors** includes opportunities to develop collaborations and build relationships.

Other benefits of the Mentoring Program for **mentees** include:

- facilitating an increase in practitioner knowledge, confidence, and skills in research and evaluation; and
- fostering a research culture within services.

Other benefits of the Mentoring Program for **mentors** include:

- providing mentors, the opportunity to enhance their understanding of services and the specific operational issues which may impact on conducting, implementing, disseminating, and translating research; and
- valuable and highly regarded mentoring experience for Early Career Researchers.



Program eligibility

Initially, following the transition from the CMHDARN Mentoring Program to the Matilda Centre Research Mentoring Program, applicants will need to:

- be based in NSW
- be working for an organisation that is a current member of either MHCC and/or NADA; and
- demonstrate evidence of organisational support and capacity, including manager (or equivalent) sign-off.

Although applicants do not need to have identified a specific research project, they should at least have a research concept in mind and research skills that they have identified to enhance or a topic they would like to develop over the course of the mentorship program.

Following the initial transition phase, it is envisaged that the Matilda Centre Research Mentoring Program will broaden to include mentees from other organisations across Australia to apply.

Expectations of the program and participants

In entering the Mentoring Program, both **mentors** and **mentees** agree to adhere to the terms of the partnership as developed and agreed by them in [The Matilda Centre Research Mentoring Program- Short- or Long-Term Agreement Form.](#)

In entering this relationship, the **mentor** agrees to support the mentee to:

- Draw upon the mentee's existing experience and knowledge to create a clear and reasonable course of action and plan for the proposed research
- Clarify and set goals and objectives
- Develop an action strategy that meets the mentee's specific objectives
- Be accountable for what they have agreed to do
- Create a plan for what can be accomplished
- Shift perspectives to new possibilities if needed
- Provide constructive feedback to the mentee

In entering this relationship, the **mentee** holds the responsibility for:

- Setting and organising meeting times
- Committing to and taking the mentoring relationship seriously
- Respecting the mentor's availability and time
- Being receptive to information and feedback



- Setting realistic expectations with the mentor

Mentees should be aware that progressing the agreed upon research goals is likely to require a significant time commitment outside of their mentoring meetings. Mentees are advised that they will generally need to allow at least 4-5 hours in preparation for every one-hour spent with their mentor.

How it works

How to apply

- Applications can be submitted via our [online application form](#) at any time throughout the year.
- Once an application has been received and the applicant meets the criteria for inclusion in the program, the Matilda Centre Mentoring Program Coordinator will connect the applicant with an Early Career Researcher who has related interests and expertise. All mentors who are part of the Mentoring Program have obtained their PhD qualification.

A staged approach to mentoring

- Short-term mentoring will be the first step, and typically runs for a period of 3- to 6-months.
- It is up to the mentor and mentee to decide and to develop a shared understanding of what will be involved in their mentoring relationship, including:
 - Duration of the mentoring relationship (note that initial agreements will be no longer than 6-months in the first instance)
 - Frequency and duration of meetings
 - Mode/s of contact (e.g., face-to-face, phone, video conferencing and/or email communication)
 - Time commitment outside of meetings
 - Periods of limited availability
 - Research goals including their feasibility within the duration of this mentoring relationship.
- These expectations are formally documented in [The Matilda Centre Research Mentoring Program- Short-Term Mentoring Agreement](#) to be downloaded and signed by both parties at the commencement of the relationship.
- After the initial mentoring period, the mentee and mentor can decide if they want the relationship to be extended further or if the interaction has met the needs of the mentee. Longer-term mentoring over a period of 6- to 12-month can be valuable in building on progress and relationships established in the short-term. Expectations of this longer-term engagement would be formally documented in [The Matilda Centre Research Mentoring Program- Long-Term Mentoring Agreement](#) to be downloaded and signed by both parties.

CMHDARN Research Ethics Consultation Committee (RECC)

Where appropriate, mentees will be encouraged by their mentor to receive guidance from CMHDARN's RECC. This guidance will support mentees to consider the ethical implications of their research in the community sector and can include reviews of project proposals / methodologies / data collection tools and confidentiality processes.

Research outputs

The production of a research publication is not an expected outcome of the mentoring partnership. Nonetheless, the possibility may arise in some circumstances and the option of co-authorship between mentors and mentees may be considered. We recommend an upfront discussion about any possible publications or other research outputs that may arise, workload and time commitments, and authorship expectations.

Contact with the Matilda Centre Research Mentoring Program Coordinator

Throughout the mentoring period, the mentee will have occasional contact with the Matilda Centre Research Mentoring Program Coordinator to ensure that the project is meeting the needs of the mentee.

Conflicts

In the event of conflict, both parties should aim to address issues during the program, as they arise. If this is not possible, or the issues remain unresolved and/or require an intermediary, mentors and mentees should contact the Matilda Centre Research Mentoring Coordinator.

Ending the Mentoring Relationship

The initial mentoring relationship will come to an end once the duration specified in the 'Short-Term Mentoring Agreement' has been reached. If the mentee / mentor wishes to continue this relationship, a 'Long-Term Mentoring Agreement' will need to be negotiated and signed, as described above.

If the mentor or mentee needs to withdraw from the program at any time before the end of the program, they should contact their mentor/mentee and the Matilda Centre Research Mentoring Program Coordinator.

Evaluation of the Mentoring Program

At the end of the Mentoring Program both mentors and mentees will be asked to participate in a short evaluation of the Matilda Centre Research Mentoring Program that is used to ascertain levels of satisfaction with all aspects of the mentoring program (e.g., matching, monitoring, support, etc.)



Contact us

If you have any questions, please contact the Matilda Centre Research Mentoring Program Coordinators via the Matilda Centre email address (matilda.centre@sydney.edu.au) or by visiting the [Matilda Centre Research Mentoring Program page](#) on the [Matilda Centre website](#).

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