

SA Prison Health Service



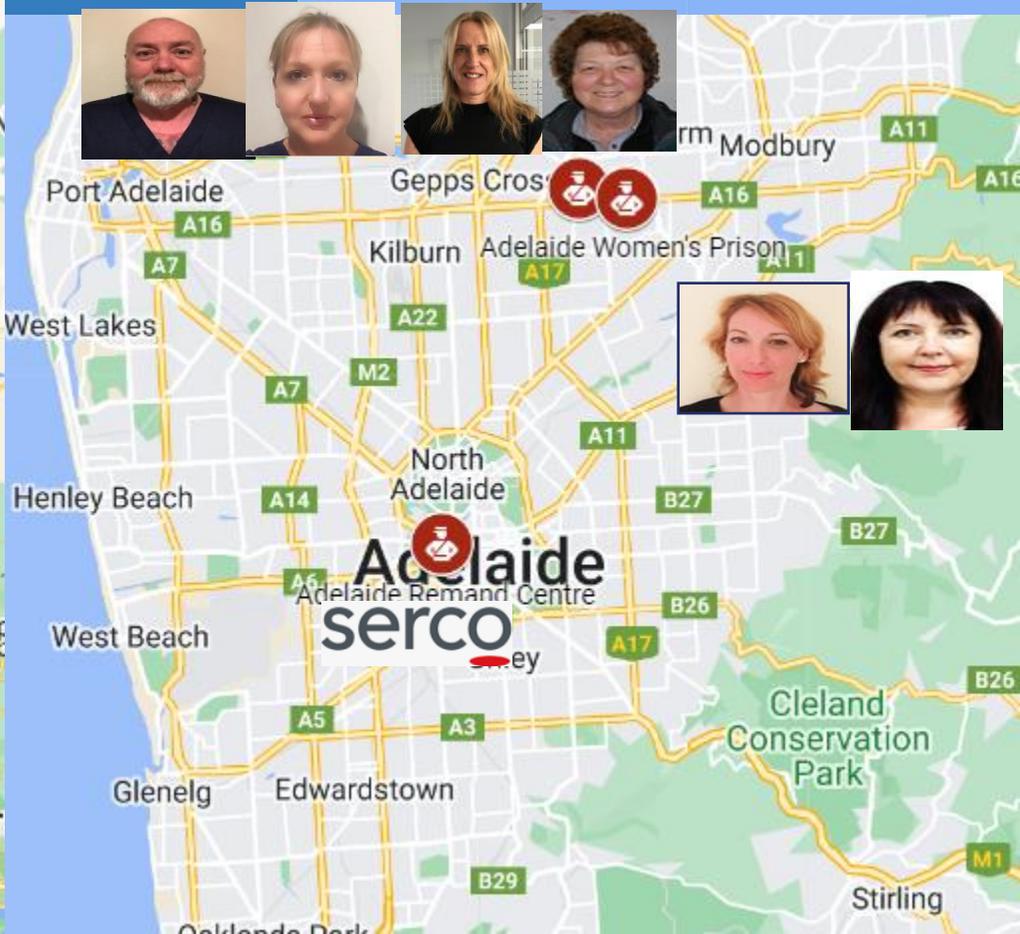
Mindfulness Self-Management Resources to Reduce Anxiety and Depression in People in Custody

South Australian Prison Health Service Wellbeing Program



We would like acknowledge this land we meet on today is the traditional lands for Kaurna people and that we respect their spiritual relationship with their country. We also acknowledge the Kaurna people as the custodians of the greater Adelaide region and that their cultural, linguistic and heritage beliefs are still important to the living Kaurna people today.

South Australian Prison Health Service (SAPHS)



Prison Capacity 3581

Google My Maps



Evidence for a problem worth solving:

- ✓ Mental health disorders are amongst the most prevalent health conditions within prison populations. Rates of anxiety and depression are well in excess of those of the general community¹.
- ✓ Management of anxiety and depression comparable to community settings can be a challenge in the prison environment.
- ✓ Conflict between security and healthcare systems, inadequate access to patients, inability to access modern electronic IT platforms and devices for self-directed management² are all barriers in prison.
- ✓ Additionally prisoners can experience re-traumatisation on re-entry to prison environments³.

1. Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2018, *The Health of Australia's Prisoners*, Australian Government, Canberra / Connell, 2014, Mental Health of Prisoners: Identifying Barriers to Mental Health Treatment and Medication Continuity, American Journal of F
2. Exploring barriers to and enablers of adequate healthcare for Indigenous Australian prisoners with cancer: a scoping review drawing on evidence from Australia, Canada and the United States. Health and Justice, .
3. Facer-Irwin, 2019, PTSD in prison settings: A systematic review and meta-analysis of comorbid mental disorders and problematic behaviours. PLOS One / Navarro-Atienzar, 2019, Childhood Trauma as a risk factor for suicidal behaviour in prisons, Revista Esp



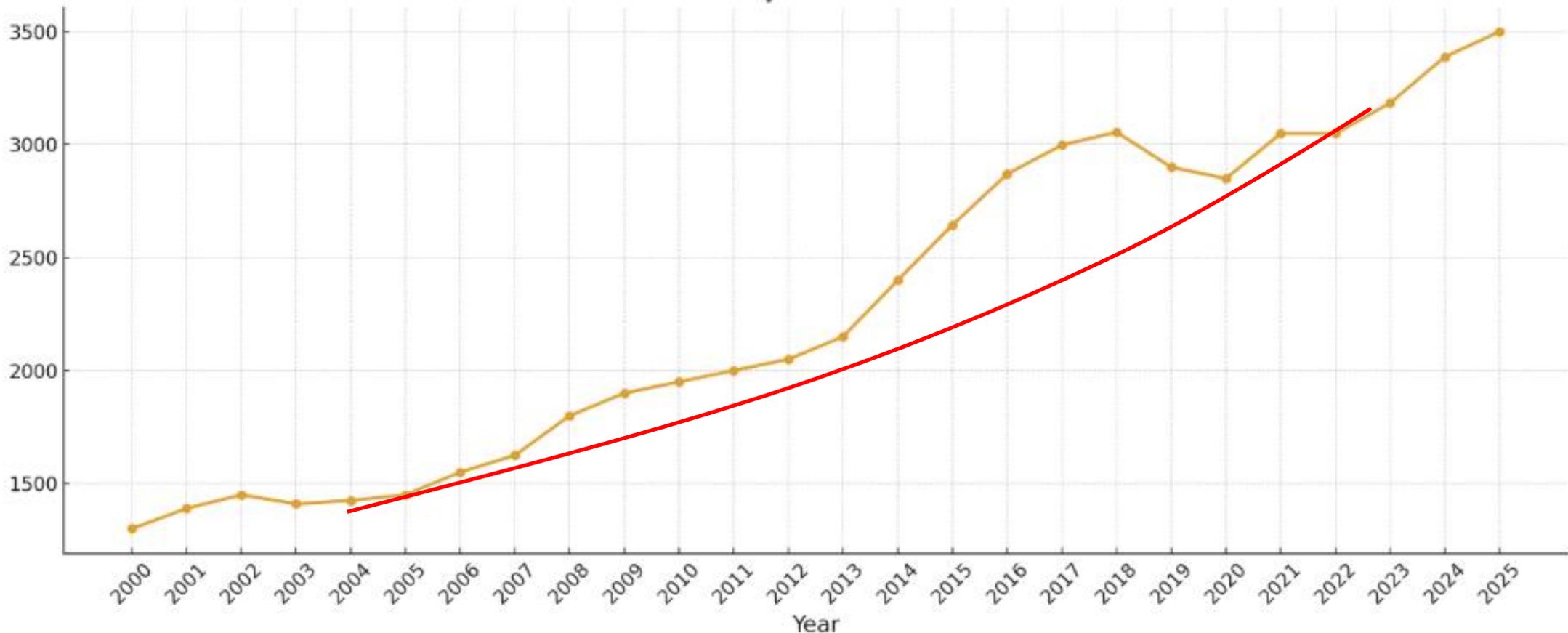
Evidence for a problem worth solving:

- ✓ A service gap was identified for those prisoners with low to mild levels of anxiety and depression.
- ✓ Relevant tools for prisoners to engage in self-directed management of symptoms was lacking.
- ✓ This gap was highlighted by SA Prison Health Services Mental Health Link Nurses. The nursing team reported that this was an area needing an inventive solution due to inability to provide time and relevant resources either due to access restrictions, lack of therapeutic space, time and relevant mental health resources for prisoners.
- ✓ A small handout from the NHS on anxiety in prison was found and was an catalyst for thinking about change and opportunities.



South Australia Adult Prisoner Numbers

51% of adults entering a prison within Australia report that they have been told by a health professional that they have a mental health disorder(AIHW 2025). Prisoners can be in a cell for up to 23 hours a day in some prison environments.



The hardest prison to escape is our own mind



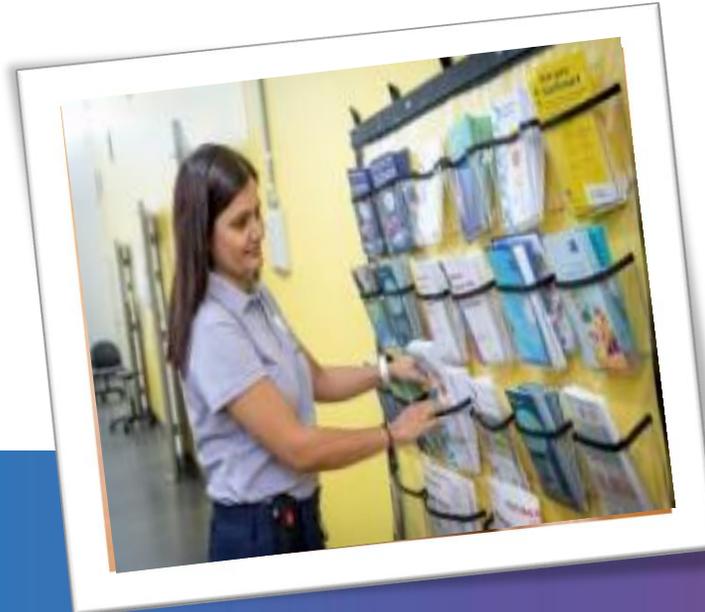
Aim:

- ✓ Develop and test paper-based wellness books with themes around self-directed management of symptoms of anxiety and depression specifically aimed at prisoners currently incarcerated.



Measurement plan:

- ✓ Formal research was undertaken to determine effectiveness of the self-directed management workbooks.
- ✓ The research focused on the effectiveness of the workbooks as an intervention to reduction symptoms of anxiety and depression.
- ✓ DASS21 and HADS scores were completed prior to provision of the workbooks and compared to scores taken following the utilisation of the workbooks by the prisoner.



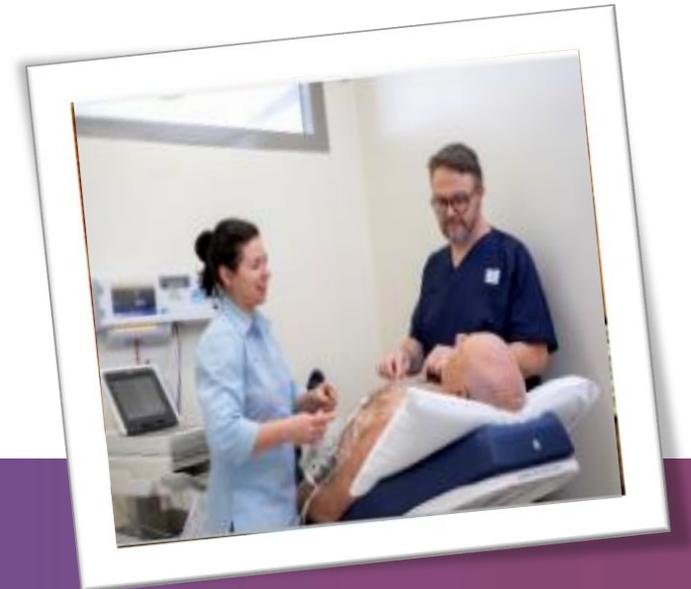
Measurement plan:

- ✓ SA Prison Health Services Mental Health Link Nurses participated at sites to consent prisoners, undertake DASS/HAD scores and provide intervention.
- ✓ 89 prisoners participated in the study with pre and post DASS/HAD scores following use of the wellness workbooks with the majority of participants from Yatala Labour Prison, Port Lincoln Prison, Adelaide Women's Prison and Mobilong Prison.



Intervention design & strategy: Design

- ✓ The workbook content was co-designed with a University of South Australia Social Work Student and SAPHS Nurse Consultants
- ✓ The workbooks were reviewed by people in custody at both Yatala Labour Prison and Cadell Prison for feedback.
- ✓ Members of the ATSI Granny's Group also reviewed the workbook
- ✓ South Australian Literacy Council members also provided feedback on design and layout.
- ✓ The result was five individual wellness workbooks.



SAPHS Mental Health Wellbeing Program



Intervention design & strategy:

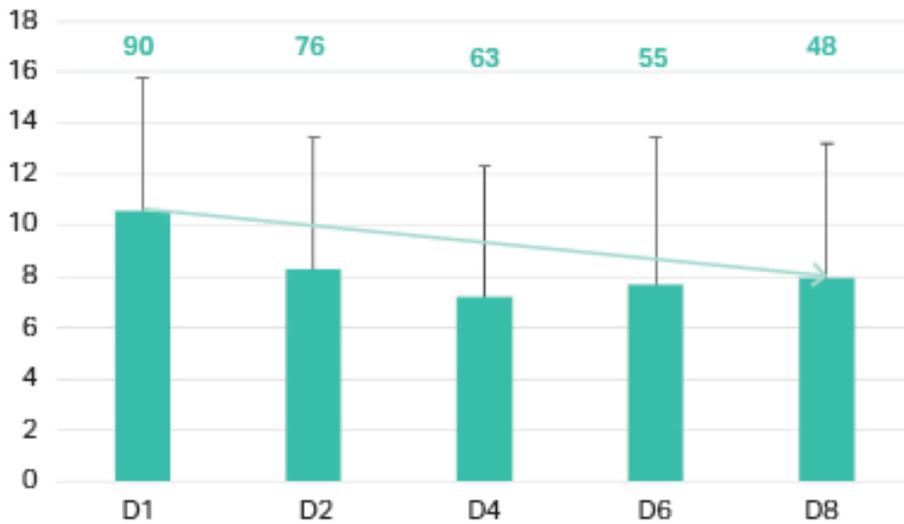
- ✓ The intent of the research was to reduce emotional distress. A distress protocol was in place during the period of the research. The distress protocol was not used by any participant and there were no reported instances of emotional distress.
- ✓ First-time SAPHS has lead research on our own.
- ✓ The study did not account for points of stressors throughout the use of workbooks and evaluation such as court visits, relationship breakdown, financial loss, movement to another prison location or cell.



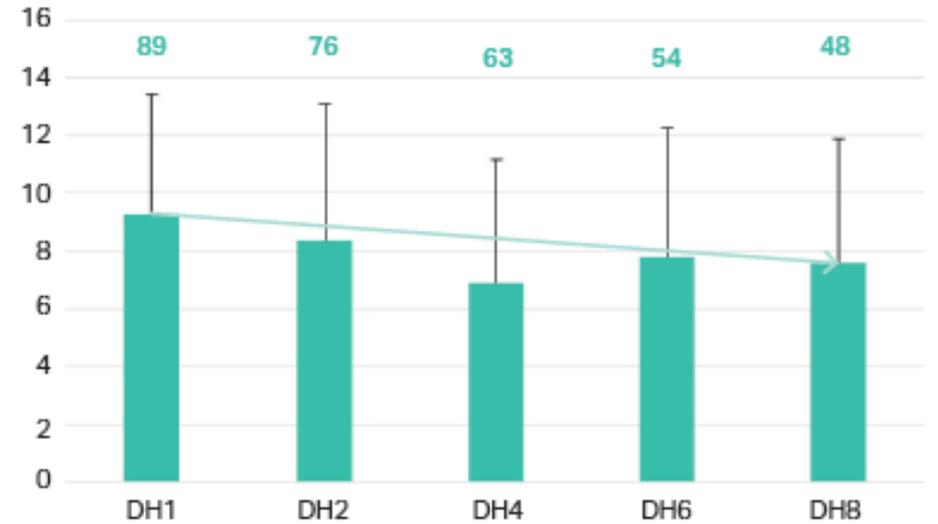
Results:



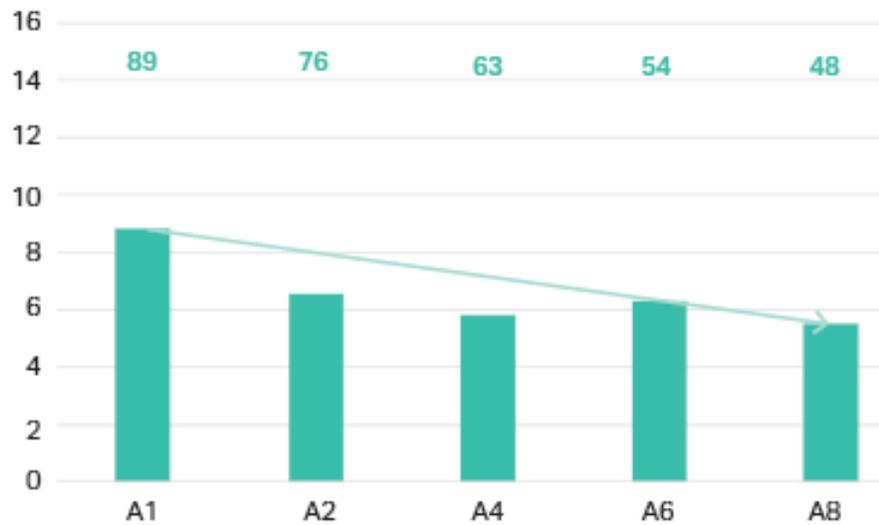
Depression (from DASS)



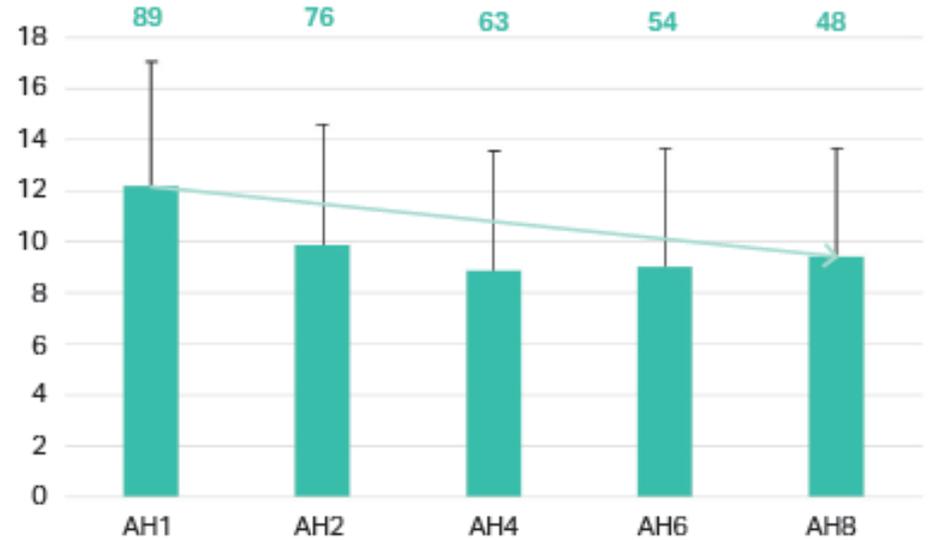
Depression (HADS)



Anxiety (DASS)



Anxiety (HADS)



Results:

- ✓ The post workbook HADS & DASS 21 scores were less than the pre workbook scores
- ✓ Considering mean and standard deviations, the results show the workbooks are a useful intervention in managing mild anxiety and depression in the prison environment.
- ✓ Positive reports from prisoners and staff.
- ✓ Positive comments from other services and staff: FMH, SAPOL and DCS.
- ✓ Formal study results.



SAPHS Mental Health Wellbeing Program



Self-Awareness:-

Thoughts

Emotions

Mindfulness

Wellbeing



SAPHS Mental Health Wellbeing Program

Self-Awareness:-

Behaviour Change

Skill Development

Exercise

Sleep

Nutrition

Emotional Wellbeing



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	Workbook 1 Mindfulness, what is anxiety, stress, mood reflection diary.
	Workbook 2 What is depression? hopelessness, dealing with grief and loss, hopelessness, sleep diary, how to sleep better, relaxed breathing, reflection.
	Workbook 3 Drugs in prison, addiction, tolerance, dependence and withdrawal, coping with cravings/urges, craving pain, reflection.
	Workbook 4 Emotional regulation, communication, dealing with anger and aggression, conflict, conflict resolution, reflection.
	Workbook 5 Exercise, eating healthy, resilience, goal setting, goal planning, reflection



SAPHS Behavioural Activation / Trauma informed Care Programs

SA Prison
Health
Service



University of
South Australia

**Professional Certificate in
Behavioural Activation for
Depression**



**BEHAVIORAL
ACTIVATION**

Overcoming Depression

Behavior Activation



Incorporate activities that make you feel more positive, comfortable, and happier into your daily life

SAPHS Wellbeing Program Series 2 : Volume 1

Workbook on Coping Strategies for Trauma



SAPHS Wellbeing Resource Series 2: Volume 1 - Trauma and Coping Strategies

Acknowledgements:



SA Prison Health Services Staff / Mental Health & Research Link Nurses

Shaping the future of health with world-class care and world-class research



Government
of South Australia

Health
Central Adelaide
Local Health Network