MEDIA RELEASE

Reducing COVID-19 social isolation by expanding Grow's online mental health groups

As we face uncertainty in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic, leading mental health service provider Grow Australia is rapidly expanding its online mental health groups to ease the mental stress and anxiety of people facing social isolation and financial hardship.

"With the advent of COVID-19, our online groups known as eGrow are being scaled-up to cater for what we expect to be a massive cry for help from people experiencing mental trauma due to the impact of social isolation and loss of employment," National CEO, David Butt, said today.

GROW has been leading Australia for more than six decades in peer to peer support and mutual help specifically to overcome problems of social isolation and build community for those with a mental illness and in recent years has increased the availability of its services online.

"The GROW program was designed by people with lived experience of mental ill-health and delivered by people with lived experience, and that still remains the case today.

"In today's world of social distancing and isolation, online groups can provide a sense of place, of belonging, of community and participation – and we know all these things are fundamental to resilience, good mental wellbeing, and recovery.

"Through eGROW, people going through similar experiences – living in isolation, going through fear, anxiety, distress – can come together, support each other and become a new, strong community for each other, while importantly following government guidelines of social distancing.

Delivered through video conferencing, the unique grassroots approach encourages leadership within peers, working together to develop confidence, resilience, and problem-solving strategies.

"eGrow is available for our existing members and is being rapidly scaled-up to welcome new members who want to receive mental health support and connecting with others at times most convenient and accessible to you," Mr Butt said.

"If needed, we also can develop eGROW groups specific to particular workforces and individual businesses, big and small, which are hard hit by the changes and where employers may want to set up eGROW groups to support their employees or former employees."

To support the wider community, Grow Australia is trialling 'Growing Resilience' – a no cost, two week module based program specifically designed to provide immediate support to those struggling with their mental health in this crisis.

Access to eGROW and Growing Resilience can be found at www.grow.org.au or by phoning 1800 558 268

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2 April 2020