Author’s response to reviews

Title: Offering Mental health first aid to a person with depression: A Delphi study to re-develop the guidelines published in 2008

Authors:
Kathy Bond (kathybond@mhfa.com.au)
Fairlie Cottrill (fairliec@mhfa.com.au)
Fiona Blee (fionab@mhfa.com.au)
Claire Kelly (clairek@mhfa.com.au)
Betty Kitchener (bettyakitchener@gmail.com)
Anthony Jorm (ajorm@unimelb.edu.au)

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Dear Editor,

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the reviewers’ comments. Our revisions are noted below and in track changes in the article document.

Editor comment 1: Please, provide some data about the use and the efficacy of the guidelines developed in 2008.
Response: This has been addressed.
Page and Line number: 3/77-82

Editor comment 2: You should also highlight the shortcomings of those guidelines from a methodological and a clinical practice perspective
Response: These guidelines are not for clinical practice, but are mental health first aid guidelines for members of the public. We have made this clearer.
Page and Line number: 2/65-66
Response: The limitations have been addressed.
Page and Line number: 3/82-84

Editor comment 3: Why did you not use also academic databases such as PubMed, Scopus or Embase?
Response: Google Scholar was the only academic search engine used because it has a much broader interdisciplinary coverage than other databases and also covers grey academic literature. Our previous experience has been that searches of other databases covering research and professional literature rarely produce information relevant to lay mental health first aid strategies.

Page and line number: 4/133-137

Editor comment 4: Please provide additional details about the persons who conducted the literature search and how this process was conducted.
Response: The person who conducted the literature research has been identified.
Page and line number: 4/130
Response: We are unsure what other information you would like about the search process.

Editor comment 5: Page 6, row 6-7. Please, provide details about how the new search terms were generated.
Response: This has been addressed
Page and line number: 4/140-145

Editor comment 6: Page 6, row 8-9. It is not clear why you selected only “the first 50 websites, journal articles and books”. You should provide a methodological rationale justifying this; previous experience with this methodology may not be sufficient.
Response: This has been addressed
Page and line number: 4/152-154

Editor comment 7: Did you use specific inclusion/exclusion criteria when selecting the websites/papers/books?
Response: Lines 146-148 on page 4 explain the exclusion criteria.

Editor comment 8: Please, provide details about all the steps during which the survey statements were generated. Who generated them? How were they generated?
Response: The following sentences were added: “The first author extracted the information from the articles, websites and books and drafted survey items. The research team reviewed the original extracted text and the drafted survey items to finalise them (see Figure 2 for examples).”
Page and line number: 4/158-160

Editor comment 8: I suggest considering to add an exploratory factor analysis or a reliability analysis (Cronbach’s alpha coefficient calculation) to assess the validity of the survey
Response: We do not think that factor analysis or Cronbach’s alpha are appropriate here. We are not trying to develop measurement scales and are not hypothesising any underlying factors. The aim is to produce guidelines giving actions that a layperson could take in a mental health first aid situation. We are interested in the consensus opinions of panels of experts, rather than the reliability of individual judgments. For this reason, we have measured reliability in terms of the agreement between the professional and lived experience panels using Pearson’s r.
See Table 2.

Editor comment 10: Page 6, row 27. Please replace the paragraph heading “Collection and analysis data” with “Collection and data analysis”
Response: Done
Page and line number: 6/167
Editor comment 11: Page 7, row 27. Replace “SD 11.61” with “SD = 11.61”
Response: Done
Page and line number: 6/204

Editor comment 12: Lack of psychiatrists, geriatric physicians and primary care physicians should be highlighted as a limitation
Response: This limitation has been addressed
Page and line number: 10/404-407

Editor comment 13: In the Discussion, you should highlight more thoroughly in what you expect that the new guidelines will improve clinical practice and more broadly mental health first aid
Response: These are not clinical guidelines, they will not improve clinical practice at all. The contribution to mental health first aid has been highlighted.
Page and line number: 8/326-328

Reviewer 1 comment: The only suggestions I have are perhaps to spend a bit more time in the discussion talking about the implications for having so many more items in the guidelines (if I'm reading correctly, from 64 in 2008 to 183 in 2018). For example, could the additional nuance pose any complication to the training process? Will training be anticipated to need updated content requiring greater length of programming for those organisations that conduct MHFA? I was simply struck by such a large increase in content, which seems like an advance on one hand, but a challenge on the other. I would like to hear the authors' thoughts about this.
Response: Addressed
Page and line number: 10/383-385

Reviewer 2 comment 1: The manuscript does not provide a clear rationale for the revision other than it should be done every 10 years; no information was provided about the use and efficacy of the current guidelines to justify a revision.
Response: The rationale has been clarified.
Page and line number: 3/84-91
Response: Additional information about the use and efficacy of current guidelines now included
Page and line number: 3/77-82

Reviewer 2 comment 2: Objective was to update current guidelines in use but there is no information about the usefulness and effectiveness of the current guidelines to justify a revision. No references are cited about the effectiveness of family and friends to detect mental health problems in others.
Response: Usefulness and effectiveness of guidelines addressed.
Page and line number: 3/77-82
Response: Effectiveness of people being able to recognise mental health problems in others stated.
Page and line number: 2/70-72

Reviewer 2 comment 3: The overall design is acceptable but the combination of experienced carers with professionals is questionable. This is not a research study--it is the development of a set of first aid guidelines for non-professionals.
Response: The professional and carer panels were not combined. Carers who also had experience as a professional were asked if they would mind joining the professional panel. The one carer who did not also have professional experience joined the lived experience panel.
Page and line number: 6/208-212
Reviewer 2 comment 4: There is no rationale for selecting first 50 references during the literature search. There is a rather extensive literature on depression.
Response: This has been addressed
Page and line number: 4/152-154