



# Community Responders Toolkit 1

Project team Carla Clarence, Adele Liddle and Lucy Fraser  
in collaboration with a community of young people and health professionals.



# Introducing the roles

The first toolkit is all about roles. It draws on co-design with more than 80 people focussed on understanding what roles are needed for a community to respond to its mental health needs.

There are three parts of this toolkit:

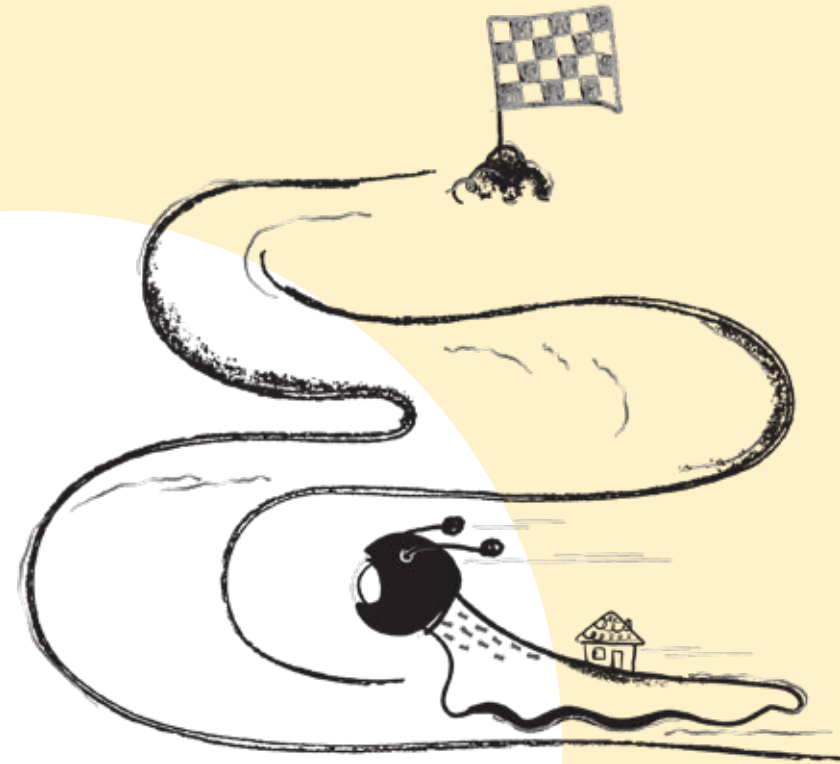
1. A description of the 10 roles needed to support the mental health of the community. This includes what each role is and does, why we need roles and more information about how these roles were developed.
2. Next is a set of worksheets for individuals and groups to reflect on their roles, and roles that might be needed around them to improve community mental health.
3. Finally, this toolkit includes a worksheet to help individuals or organisations map the relationships, resources and roles around them to strategically plan a community response to mental health.

Here are a set of roles that community can play to intentionally respond to community mental health needs. There is more information on each role over the following pages:

- **Citizen K(ind)**
- **Observer - Validator**
- **Messenger**
- **Mobiliser**
- **(Role) Model**
- **Upholder**
- **Nearby**
- **Initiator**
- **Truth**
- **Yoke**

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Common to all these roles are these fundamental ways of 'being' in a role:



- Be present
- Listen deeply, pause and reflect
- Let go of expectations
- Generate trust and be vulnerable with ourselves and others
- Acknowledge and feel grief, guilt, anxiety, despair, longing, fear, oppression, etc.
- Take accountability for ignorance, harm and judgement
- Care deeply for equity
- Have courage to move forward in the face of opposition (personal and external)
- Take time to rest and recover
- Grant ourselves and others permission to hope

# Citizen K

Embodying kindness

You never know what someone is going through. **How can I show up as kind** with those I cross paths with?



## What I see

- Many opportunities to be kind, particularly with people who are alone or isolated

## What I feel

- It feels good to be kind, it's worthwhile, it matters

## What I say

- 'G'day, nice to see you, how are you going?'

## What do I need

- Permission and encouragement
- Ways to share and build on how to keep our community kind
- Opportunities to reflect (what's the impact? When do I find this challenging?)

## How can I act

- With mindful awareness
- Signs I care: waving, nodding, making eye contact, smiling, showing up as warm
- I choose carefully what to say and uses kindness as an anchor for my words, knowing words can wound

## What shall I start doing?

- Intentionally practice acts of kindness every day
- Reach out to people I know, especially when I assess it's less likely that others will

# Observer - Validator

Embodying 'mattering'

## What I see

- Opportunities to learn from and see through other's experiences
- There are many different realities, perceptions, strengths and struggles

## What I feel

- Possibility in the power and potential of people around me
- Acceptance, curiosity and awe in learning about people's survival strategies
- Privileged and present
- There is no goal, solution or fixing

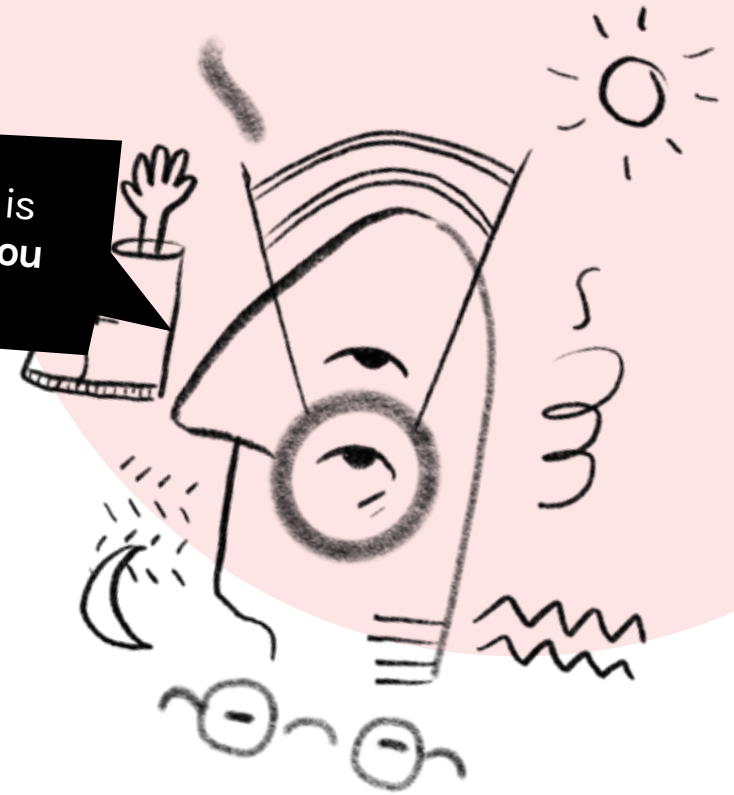
## What I say

- 'I notice' 'I feel...' 'I'm not sure'
- 'You matter.' 'Your experiences are valid.' 'What you see and feel matters.' 'You're already enough.' 'You've come so far.'

## What do I need

- Practice and confidence in listening, and if needed, asking open questions
- Courage to just be with and in people's distress
- Opportunities to debrief and check in with myself / others

What you're experiencing is valid. I see you, I believe you and believe in you.



## How can I act

- Thinks: How can I nurture connection, listen deeply and honour this person?
- When I believe in someone, I tell them. I make my support for someone known

## What shall I start doing?

- Making invitations to learn with and from people
- Talking to people with warmth and concern - like they are royalty

# Messenger

Embodying new stories

How can I spread the right words and ideas in the best way for the people around me?



## What I see

- A need for new narratives to build awareness of mental health and for addressing stigma, trauma and discrimination

## What I feel

- Humility - I don't have the answers, but I can make offers
- If people were more informed, this could inspire new action

## What do I need

- Relevant information and sources of evidence
- A collection of stories about different kinds of people in different kinds of communities
- Key messages and ideas for action
- A platform to advance these ideas

## How can I act

- Takes it on to offer and disseminate relevant information
- Reach out to more people to help them be better informed and inspire them to action

## What shall I start doing?

- Start sharing
- Create a social media space: a community Whatsapp group or Instagram page for example
- Get strategic with a communication plan organising resources, stories, messages and networks

# Mobiliser

Embodying leadership

I'm passionate about social justice and joining with others to really make a difference to mental health ...



## What I see

- Opportunities to be part of changing mental health for the better
- The skill to see beyond 'what is' and get others to dream and take steps towards 'what could be'
- The need to build and generate power

## What I feel

- This is about the collective - how can I join with others to co-create the future we want to see?
- Curious: how can I influence and bring others along?

## What do I need

- Tools to help with engagement
- Opportunities to collaborate
- Mentoring support
- Space to debrief

## How can I act

- Create opportunities for communities to learn together
- Translates knowledge into practical steps and ideas
- Actively promotes strategies for community wellbeing
- Connect with other mobilisers to share learning, stretch and take bolder risks

## What shall I start doing?

- Set an audacious vision
- Open up conversations to legitimise mental health experience
- Create opportunities to co-design activities that build awareness and generate change

# (Role) Model

Embodying care

How will I take care of myself today?  
I see how my self care opens up ways  
to help others...



## What I see

- Opportunity to be a living example of recovery and healing, who is willing to share what works for me and to self advocate

## What I feel

- Curious: healing is a process and I'm going to continually explore what recovery is for me
- Privileged - so it's important to pay attention to people who don't have access to the assets and gifts I have had available
- Self belief: I have something of value
- Brave, playful, reflective

## What do I need?

- Permission and encouragement

## How can I act

- Checks in on own feelings
- Takes steps to treat myself with care and concern
- Takes breaks
- Seeks support when I need to
- Breathes
- Loves
- Accepts what I can't change, works with what I can
- Asks the question: 'what do I need right now?' many times a day

## What shall I start doing?

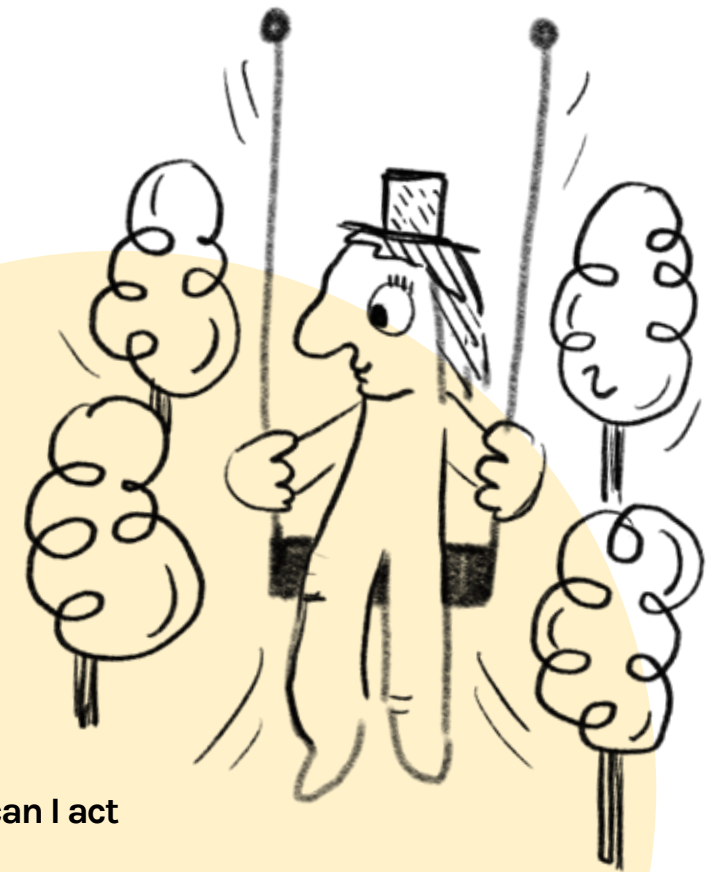
- Open out conversations about recovery and healing
- Building my understanding around what I do to take care of myself and others



# Upholder

Embodying what's important

I create and hold spaces where people can choose to name, agree on, and go for what's important...



## What I see

- We need space and support to be who we are, and to bring what we have, just as we are
- I am in your corner

## What I feel

- Humble and curious about all the diverse processes of healing and recovery
- Thinks: How can I support others to shine?
- The importance of demonstrating our collective values

## What do I need?

- Permission and encouragement

## How can I act

- Embodies advocacy and values in action
- Encourages norms around equity, inclusion and advocacy
- Holds people accountable
- Checks in and celebrates efforts

## What shall I start doing?

- Invite people into conversations about what's going on for them and what's important to them
- Creates a shared picture of what my communities name as important when it comes to connection, feeling safe and learning to be powerful
- Build a story bank of people's efforts and accomplishments

# Nearby

Embodying local

I am around if you need me, call on me for practical requests of support and we can go from there...



## What I see

- That practical help can be useful, and a starting point to get your needs met, if you want to, around more emotional matters

## What I feel

- Sometimes we just need a hand
- I have skills, times and energy
- I can share with others
- That sometimes a practical task can spark an important conversation

## What do I need

- Good relationships so I can connect people with other good souls
- Practical tools and resources

## How can I act?

- I show up when people ask
- I'm also often visible and around the peripheries when people don't ask... just in case

## What shall I start doing?

- Let people know what I'm around and what I can do if it's helpful
- Being visible (but not intrusive)
- Build a living 'tool shed' for your local communities

# Initiator

Embodying courage

I know **small talk can make a big difference.** And sometimes you just need one person to start something great...



## What I see

- As much as I can, I purposefully notice those around me
- People possibly in need of connection

## What I feel

- Positive relationships matter
- There are conversations that will only happen because you initiate them
- Equity starts as an idea

## What I say

- Starts up conversations. Opens with: 'Hey, how's your day so far? What about this weather?'
- Can I share the seed of an idea with you? I would love to know what you think?

## What do I need

- Tools to help with engagement

## How can I act

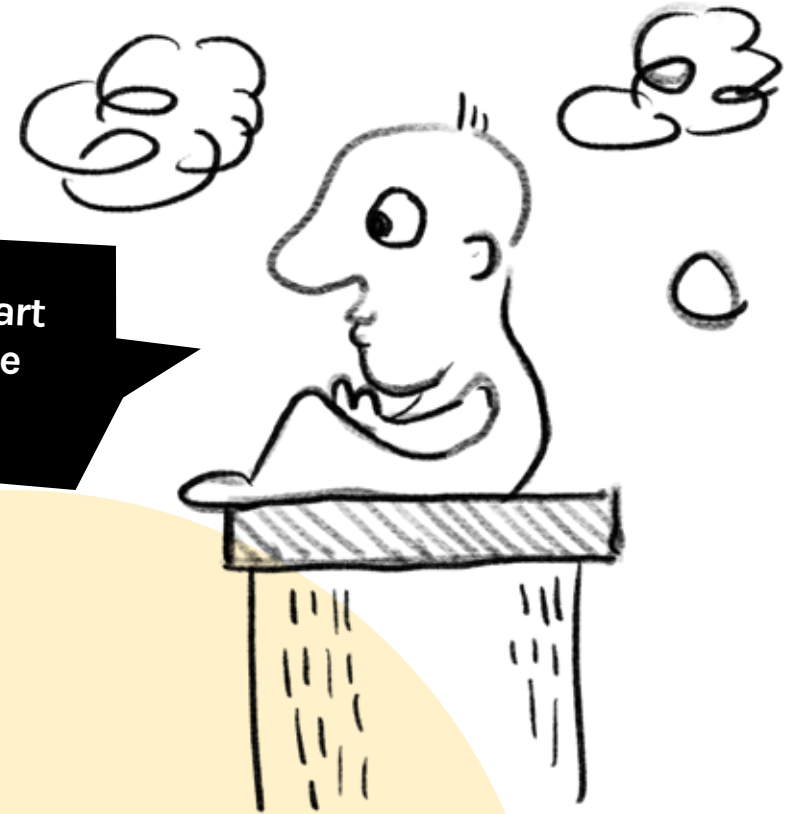
- I am brave and reach out to others, even strangers

## What shall I start doing?

- Start up conversations
- Share ideas and gets others on board to make prototypes of things that I think could be useful for my communities; continually gets feedback to refine

# Truth Teller

Embodying realness



I speak my truth and this is part of my story that I hope may be helpful for you ...

## What I see

- The magic of lived experience
- That stories offer powerful, instant connection

## What I feel

- My experiences are valid and important
- I'm hopeful that my story will be useful for others
- Sometimes it takes one of us to speak and then others feel they can open up

## What I say

- 'I am not coping as well as I'd like to be right now' - 'What I learned in this situation was ...' - 'I remind myself that things will be OK when I remember...' - 'This is what I did to survive'

## What do I need

- Opportunities to share my lived experience of mental health challenges and recovery
- Permission to be who I am and contribute on my terms
- People to name and seek it out if my voice, or other voices, are missing from decision making

## How can I act

- I seek permission to share and hear stories
- I am willing to say unpopular things

## What shall I start doing?

- Journal my experiences
- Craft and share thoughts and opinions and experiences with others

# Yoke

Embodying connection

I link and unite members of the community to get involved in things that they might enjoy...



## What I see

- Connection and being part of things, having a purpose, is super important for us humans

## What I feel

- I'm excited by the prospect of connecting the dots with and for people so they can participate in more of what they love

## What do I need

- Co-ordination support
- Links to groups
- A way for people to let me know they are interested in connecting
- Tools to promote this idea

## How can I act

- Builds connection by identifying, promoting and joining together people, places, ideas, groups and activities
- Shares principles around participation

## What shall I start doing?

- Identify and promote opportunities for my communities to make, connect and participate with each other

# Beginning a community response

## This mix of strengths to start

When communities are innovating, or responding to a new challenge, our co-design group felt these are the roles critical to getting things going: 'the sourdough starter of social innovation'



Initiator



Mobiliser



Yoke



# Role Reflection Tool: Collective

For people to collectively identify a need and act.

What roles do you need to bring together to get new community action started? Circle the key roles you might need to bring together:



**Citizen K(ind)**



**Observer - Validator**



**Messenger**



**Mobiliser**



**(Role) Model**



**Upholder**



**Nearby**



**Initiator**

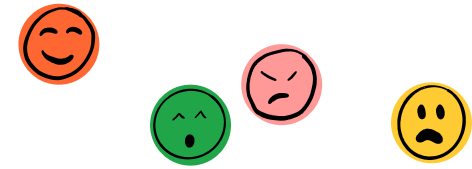


**Truth**



**Yoke**

# Role Reflection Tool: Collective



What kinds of community do these roles work best in?

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Where are these communities?

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Who 'owns' the response?

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When might these roles get in the way?

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What do we need to pay attention to about power and privilege?

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What else would you add?

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# Role Reflection Tool: Institutions

For a systems approach

Circle the roles you see being played in systems  
your community is wanting to influence:



**Citizen K(ind)**



**Observer - Validator**



**Messenger**



**Mobiliser**



**(Role) Model**



**Upholder**



**Nearby**



**Initiator**

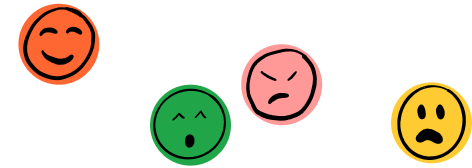


**Truth**



**Yoke**

# Role Reflection Tool: Institutions



How are these roles useful from a systems perspective?

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What roles are already strong?

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What roles are missing but needed?

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What observations do you make about the wider systems you connect with and your roles in them?

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How might your reflections inform this set of roles?

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What would need to shift for these roles / framework to influence practice, processes, policy, decision making and storytelling?

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Where is the best place to start? Why?

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# Eco-map

Mapping your resources



An ecosystem map is a way to plot your community and the connections and social resources within it. It might help you to find themes, engage effectively and full appreciate your community.

## Instructions

1. Put yourself in the centre of the page (draw a stick figure or write your name).
2. Add bubbles and write or draw the people, families and groups that you know of in your community.
3. Reflect on your map and the connections you have.

## As you reflect, you could ask yourself:

- What communities are you part of, or would like to be part of?
- Why are they important to you?
- Who is in these communities and what roles do they play? What are their values?
- Who are the allies and partners of these communities?
- Who is aligned with your values?
- What conditions have been created within these communities that support community action?
- Where is the diversity in your map?
- Where is diversity missing?
- Where are the hives of activity?
- Where do you see opportunities to generate change?
- What patterns do you see?
- What other insights emerge for you?
- What is interesting to map over time?
- What surprised you about this map?
- What did you learn about yourself?
- Where does care and connection show up on your map?
- What's a sentence or two that defines your sense of purpose for now and the roles you want to play?

# Eco-map of

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Write your name, neighbourhood, system...



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