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Local Government
Association

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FREE COURSE FOR FAMILIES DEALING WITH AOD DEPENDENCY RETURNS TO REGION

An award-winning course for families supporting someone with a drug or alcohol dependency will run again in the Limestone Coast, amid continued demand for AOD services.

Brought to the region by Substance Misuse Limestone Coast (SMLC), *Stepping Stones* is an intensive four-day course run by a skilled Family Drug Support Group Leader.

The therapeutic course was first run in November 2019 and SMLC Project Coordinator Sophie Bouchier said there was high demand for the course locally.

"The course aims to increase confidence and competence around substance use in family units," she said. "It really helps families to be able to manage themselves and their relationships with their family member or friend who is using.

"It will be a safe space to get a better understanding of what people are going through, come away equipped with better self-care skills and also, hear from other people in similar situations.

"After last time, we actually had a waitlist so we thought that it would be a great course to run again in our region to see whether we could support families better and in a way that they can take home to continue their support."

The additional support for families comes after an SMLC survey revealed a steep rise in home alcohol use during the pandemic. The survey also revealed a rise in methamphetamine and other drug use.

"Lockdown was a difficult time for a lot of people and the data reflects that. What we may be seeing now is the aftereffects of that use and the impact on families," Ms Bouchier said.

The course will be run at Mount Gambier's UniSA campus over two weekends in August this year.

Ms Bouchier said previous participants had left overwhelmingly positive feedback about the course.

"The testimonials speak of changes in family dynamics, a deeper understanding of what people are experiencing and also use words such as 'life-changing'," she said.

Any interested community members should contact Sophie Bouchier by the first week in August to register, with limited space available.

"We only have room for a limited number from across the Limestone Coast region but if there is the demand for it, we will certainly look at running the course again," Ms Bouchier said.

“The aim is to utilise our funding to bring programs or courses to the region that other agencies are not funded for or don’t have the staffing to accommodate.”

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Media contact: SMLC Project Officer Sophie Bouchier | M: 0429 342 175 | E: sophiebourchier@smlc.com.au