



The RMH Learning & Development Unit:
ACTivating Recovery Program Presents:

The Fourth Annual

ACT In Public Mental Health Forum

Join us for a highly engaging, skills-focused forum designed to provide simple and practical ways to integrate ACT-based principles into your everyday role in public mental health.

Hear from colleagues about how they adapt core ACT processes to complement their work with consumers and carers. This year's forum will focus on **self-compassion and wellbeing within our workforce**, featuring guest speakers who will share how they bring these principles into practice within their services. For our keynote speech, we will be welcoming Renate Hoffmann.

Don't miss this opportunity to connect, learn, and enhance your approach to mental health care!



The Royal
Melbourne
Hospital



**Date: Tuesday, 5th
August, 2025**

Time: 8:30-4:30

Location:
Centre of Theology
and Ministry

29 College Cres,
Parkville

**MH Staff Register
[HERE](#)**

**External
Participants
Register [HERE](#)**

Contact:
MH-Lad@mh.org.au
for more
information

“Compassion Training to Prevent Empathic Distress Fatigue and Reduce Burnout”

Keynote speech by Renate Hoffmann BA BSW Monash University

Brain imaging research reveals that compassion and empathy are different. Empathy involves sharing feelings with another. If the other is suffering or in distress, staying in the empathy zone with them can accidentally turn into empathic distress which is personal distress and fatiguing for the worker. Compassion, by contrast, is not trying to share the distressed feelings of the other but is instead focusing on how to alleviate the other’s suffering. Compassion triggers positive feelings associated with warmth, concern, reward and affiliation. Compassion motivates prosocial action. Compassion improves the wellbeing of the giver and protects against empathic distress and burnout.

The term “compassion fatigue” is now considered incorrect, it is actually “empathic distress” fatigue or “empathy fatigue”. Empathy is an important social skill and useful in many situations. But excess empathy can be harmful to healthcare workers if they keep going into empathic distress. There is great interest now in compassion training to provide healthcare workers with the skills to reduce avoidable distress and improve their wellbeing and resilience.

About the presenter:

Renate Hoffmann is a Lecturer in the Social Work Department, Monash University and is one of the facilitators on the award winning “Compassion Training for Healthcare Workers” self paced online course. Renate has been involved in the delivery of the compassion course to health professionals, paramedics, medical students and leadership. Renate is also an Accredited Mental Health Social Worker in private practice, has taught into health and mental health in the Masters of Social Work Degree and provides supervision in the Monash Uni student SW Clinic as well as involved in establishing an outreach clinic at the Frankston library.



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