



# Development and outcomes of Australia's only tele-based prostate cancer specific counselling service

B Riley<sup>1</sup>, S Sara<sup>1</sup>, T Gardner<sup>1</sup>, S Chambers<sup>2</sup>, J Dunn<sup>1,3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Prostate Cancer Foundation of Australia; <sup>2</sup> Australian Catholic University, Brisbane, Australia, <sup>3</sup> University of Southern Queensland

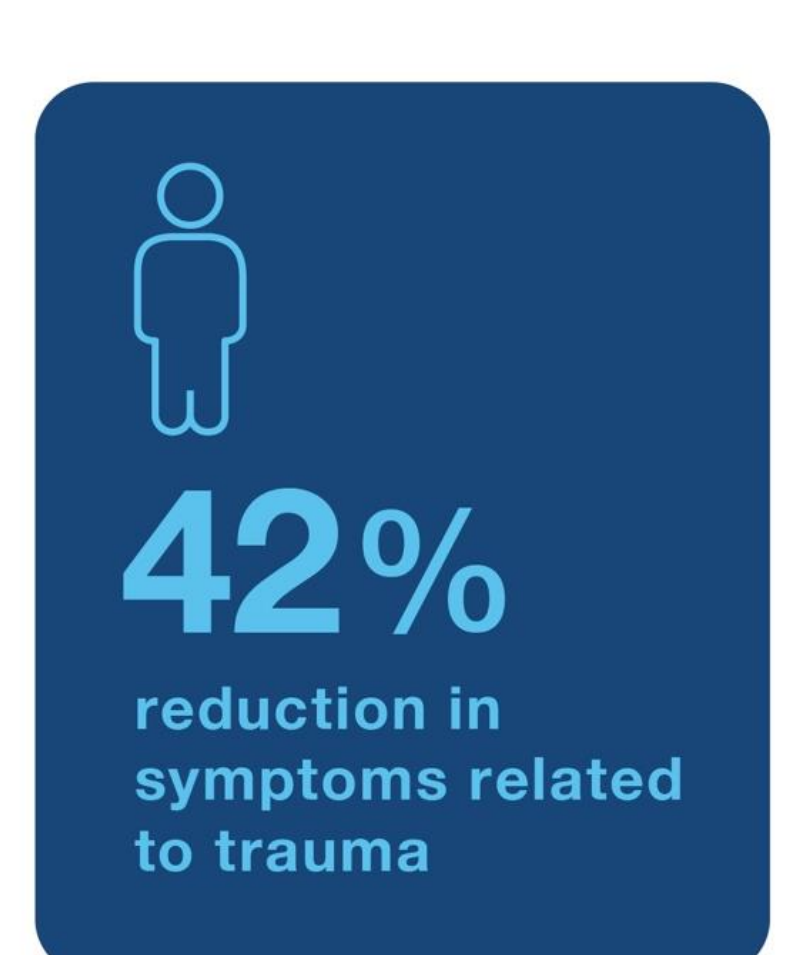
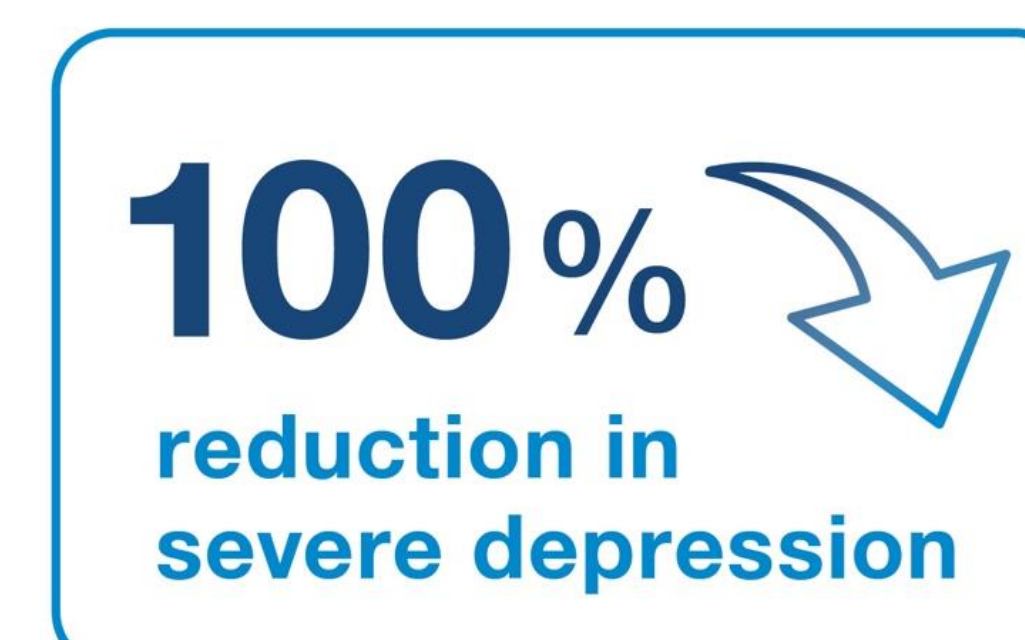
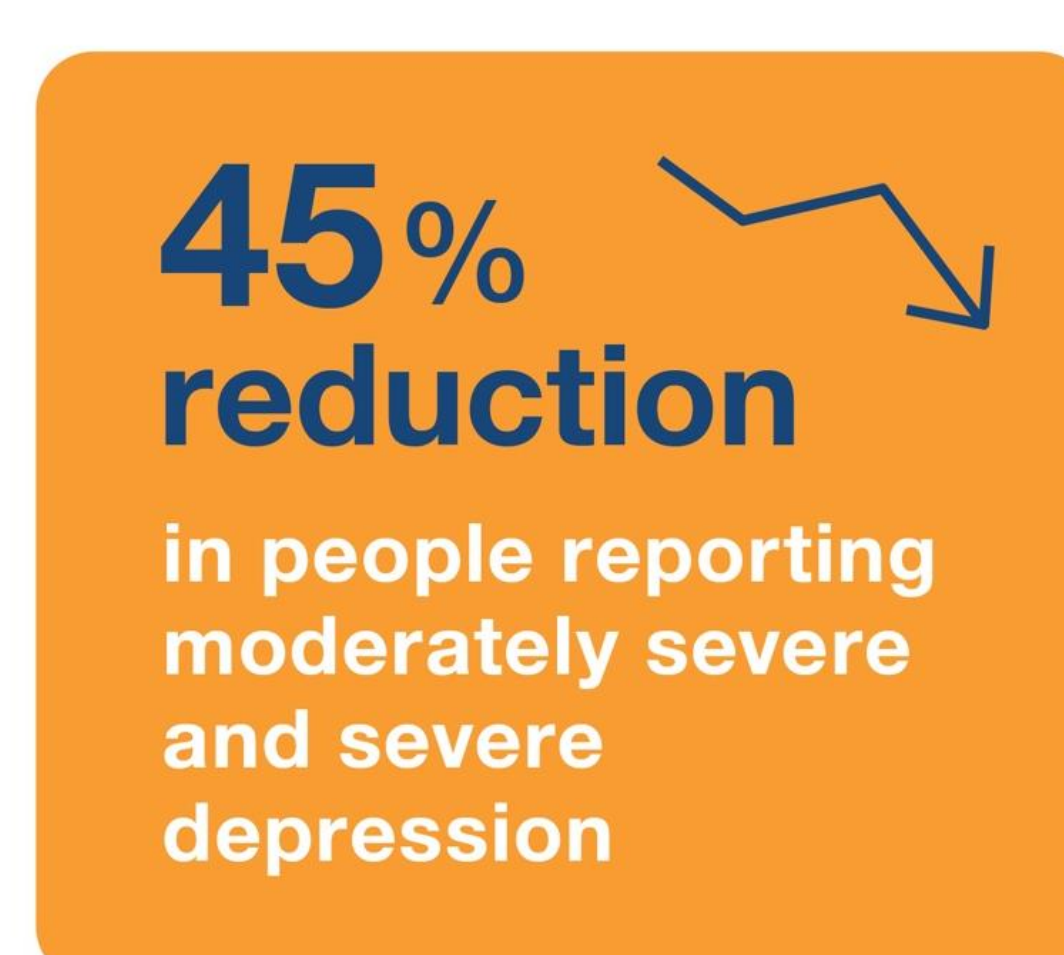
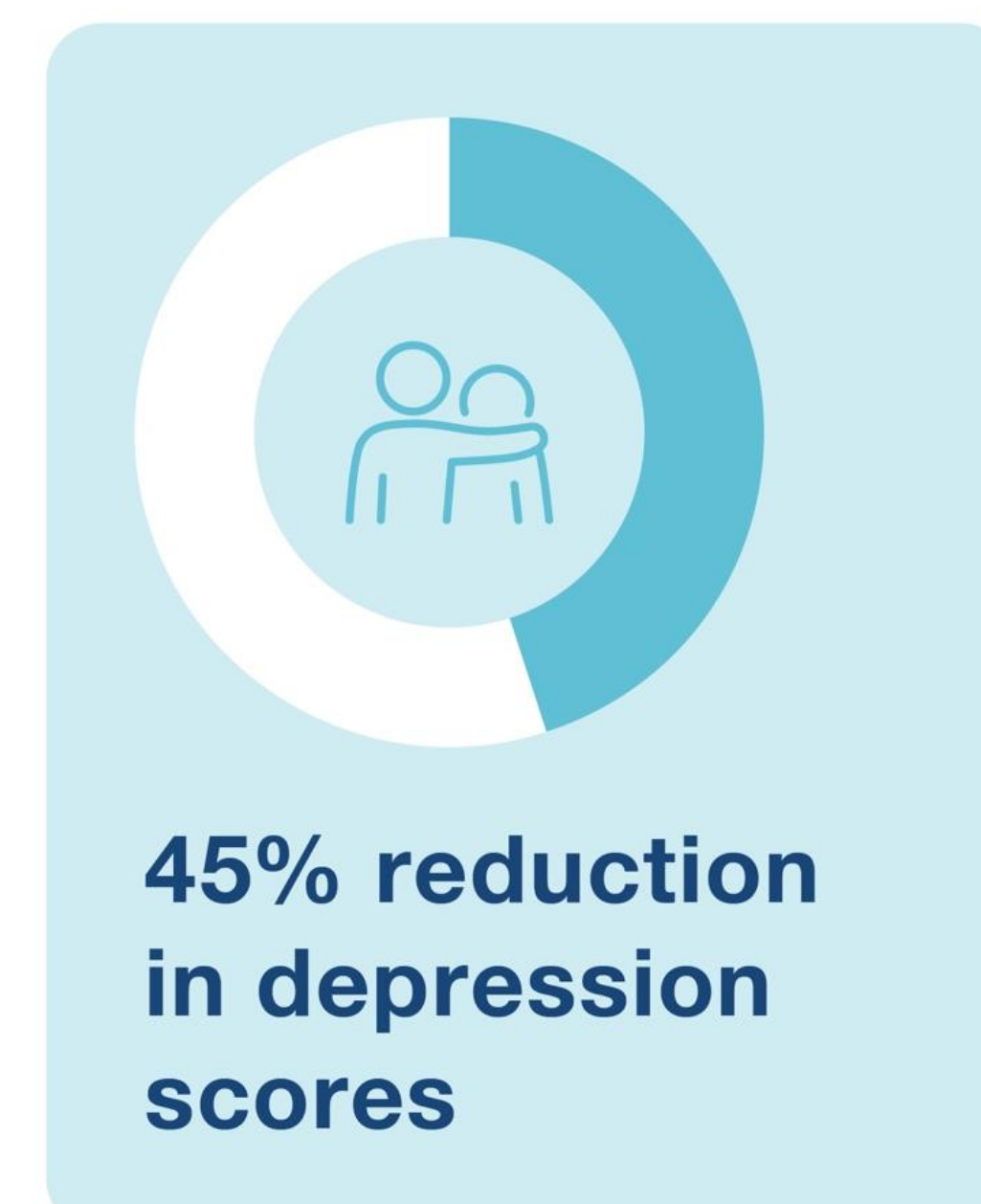
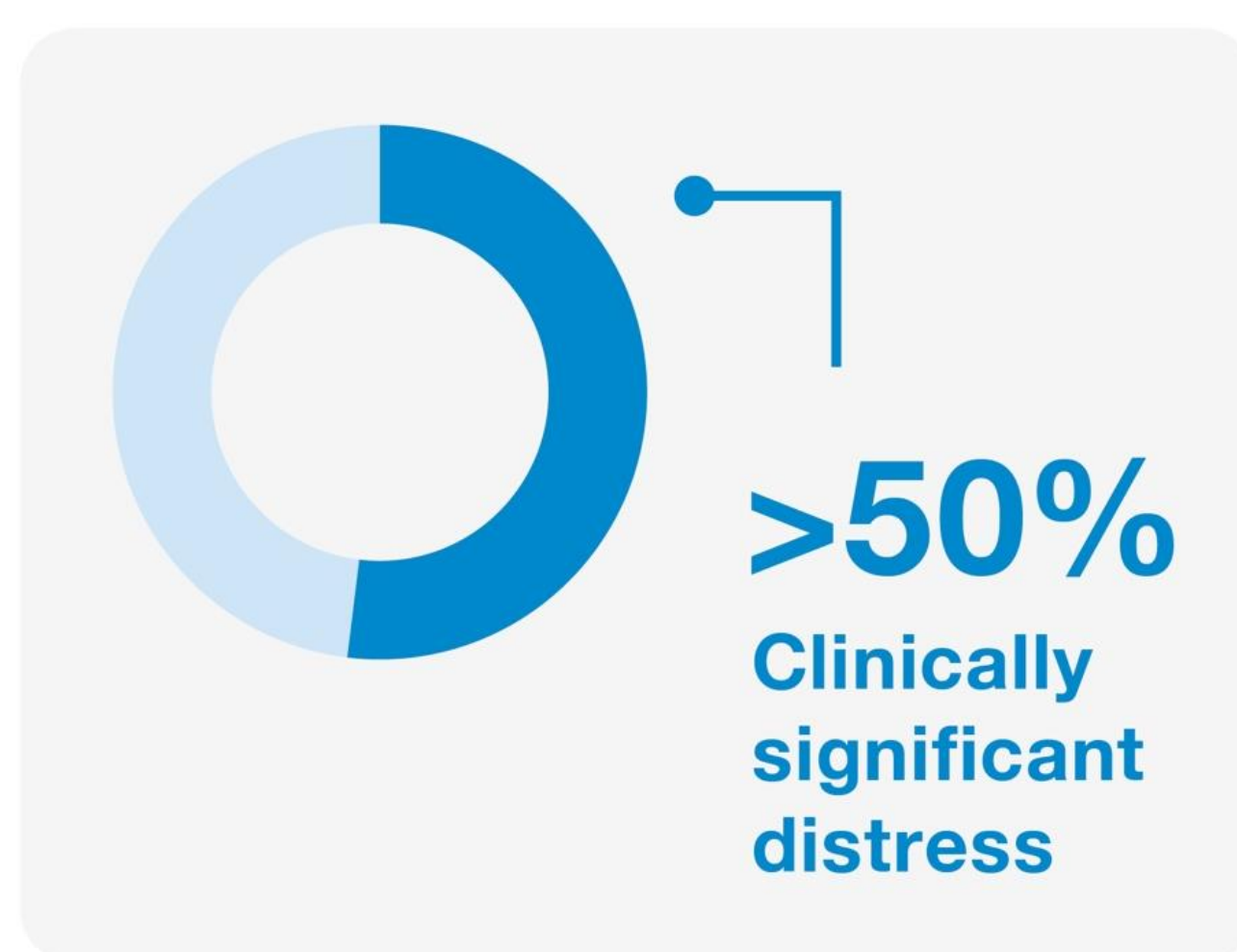
## Objectives

Over 50% of callers to the Prostate Cancer Foundation of Australia's (PCFA) Telenursing Service report **clinically significant levels of distress** and emotional problems such as **uncertainty, worry, and depression**. The objective of this project was to develop and **implement a tele-based Prostate Cancer Counselling Service (PCCS)**, delivered by the PCFA, to address these **high levels of psychological distress** in men and families impacted by prostate cancer.

## Methods

A project working party was formed comprising consumer, clinical and allied health representatives (n=6) to co-design and implement the PCCS based on a stepped model of care. The service delivery model was **informed by the substantial body of research** demonstrating the **acceptability of nurse delivered psychological interventions** and **efficacy of a short-term counselling** program. Benchmarking of tele-based counselling services nationally and internationally informed referral pathways, scope of practice and policy development.

## Results



The PCCS launched in June 2022 staffed by two **nurse counsellors** and a **psychologist**. PCCS clients receive up to **five counselling sessions** and complete pre and post counselling psychological assessment using validated patient measures: Generalised Anxiety Disorder scale (GAD-7), Patient Health Questionnaire (PHQ-9) and Impact of Events Scale - Revised (IES-R). To date the PCCS has received **over 275 referrals nationally** with **45%** of clients from **regional areas**. **Primary presenting problems** include **adjustment difficulties, anxiety, depression, uncertainty, relationship distress and survivorship issues**. Comparison of pre- and post-assessment measures show a **statistically significant reduction** in GAD-7, PHQ-9 and IESR ( $P < 0.001$ ) indicating a **reduction in anxiety, depression and symptoms relating to trauma** following engagement with the PCCS. **Client satisfaction** with the service, based on survey data, is **very high** (mean  $9.4 \pm 1.7/10$ ).

## Conclusion

As **Australia's only prostate cancer specific counselling service**, PCCS has **demonstrated significant clinical effectiveness**, delivering evidence-based interventions and psychological support to those without access to locally based support services.