

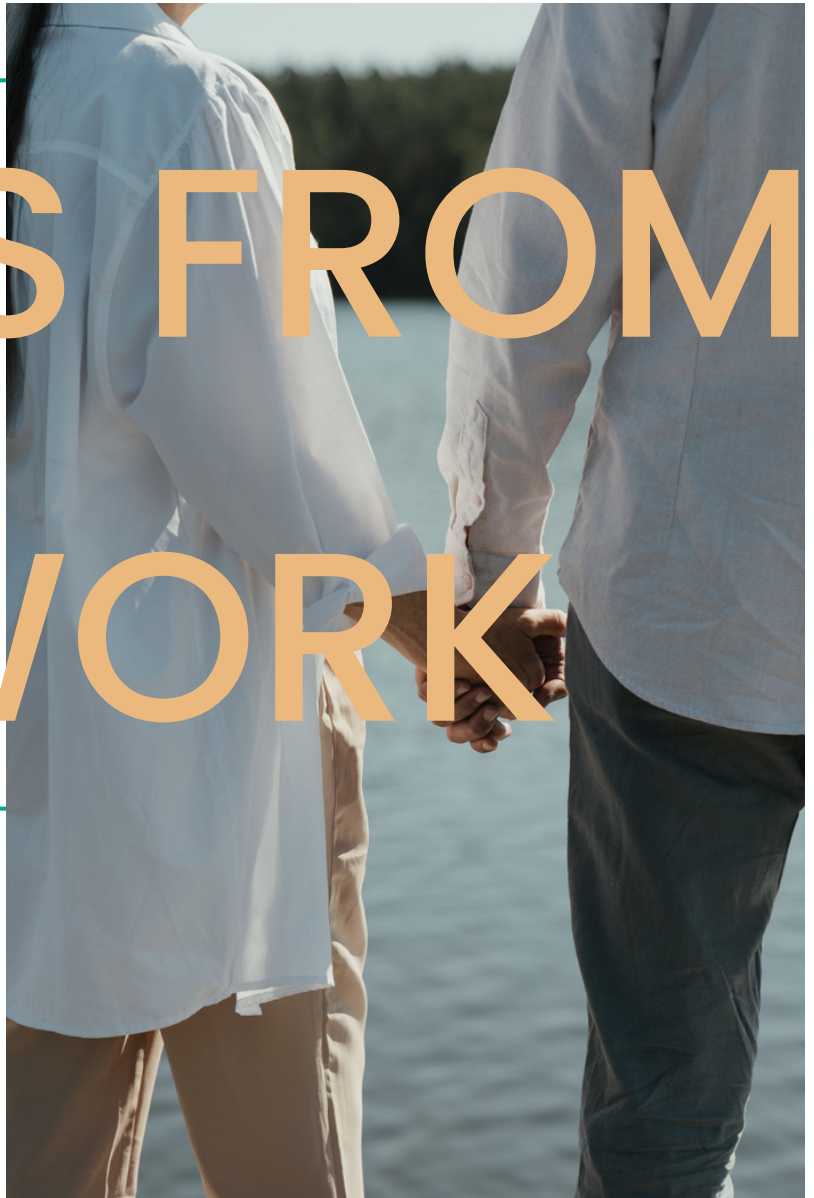
Onwards & Upwards

2023 MHCN Highlights

Keeping Connected

NEWS FROM THE NETWORK

JAN 24



VOL. 07



**Mental Health
Carers NSW**



Mental Health Carer Advocacy Network
Embedding Lived Experience and Creating Carer Communities

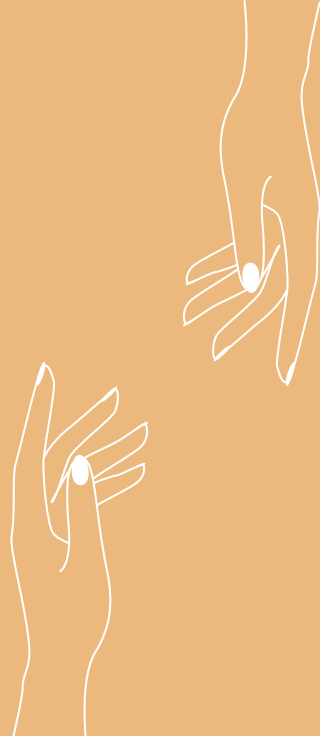


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Acknowledgement of Country

MHCN acknowledges the traditional custodians of the lands where we work and live. We pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging and acknowledge the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people that contribute to the development of NSW's mental health services, resources and MHCN's future work.

Acknowledgement of Lived Experience

We would like to recognise those with lived experience of mental health conditions in Australia. We acknowledge that we can only provide quality care through valuing, respecting and drawing upon the lived experience and expert knowledge of consumers, their families, carers and friends, staff and local communities. We acknowledge their contribution to the development of MHCN's projects, policies, training and resources.

CEO REPORT, JONATHAN HARMS



Hello mental health carers and supporters and welcome to MHCN's News from the Network for 2023!

During 2023, the MHCN team demonstrated flexibility and resilience in continuing to persevere in the face of all challenges

to advocate for the support needed for people who experience mental distress and psychosocial disabilities, ably assisted by excellent, skilled and highly committed staff and volunteers (especially our Board members), both long term and those who have had a shorter engagement with MHCN.

For the Policy and Advocacy Team, work has continued for the Carer Information

Resources project with the first 10 pamphlets being printed and deliveries to the Family and Carer Mental Health Program in each LHD commencing. Work on another 6 titles is progressing well with lived experience stakeholder focus groups being held to develop drafts due for completion in February. Translated versions will also be developed.

Throughout 2023, both the Carers of Forensic and Corrections Patients Network Meeting and the Mental Health Carer Connection Meeting groups have done great work connecting MHCN with carers and carers with each other, with policy work that can help improve carer's experience supporting a loved one experiencing mental distress.



MHCN has continued its work supporting the Trustee and Guardian Review, the Mental Health Alliance advocacy collaboration with BEING, RANZCP, and others now including Way Ahead in working with the enthusiastic new Minister Rose Jackson on the 'gap analysis' of services, as well as continuing to participate in parallel processes like the Legislative Council's review of community and outpatient mental health treatment and the review of NSW health funding.

"...All we wanted for Christmas was a minister with ambition for change and it seems our gift has arrived!"

MHCN has attended a number of important NSW Health Policy meetings, including the Mental Health Program Council, attended by mental health Clinical Directors of Local Health Districts and Specialty Health Networks, BEING, the MHCC and the Mental Health Commission. MHCN also participated in the Intellectual Disability and Mental Health Committee, with carers being represented by Eileen McDonald (the new CEO of Bipolar Australia).



MHCN also attended the Mental Health and Housing Agreement - Lived Experience Committee and then the State-wide MHHA Implementation Steering Committee and saw a pleasing priority being given to mental health and family and care concerns, in providing housing support, given the challenging housing conditions for all.

More recently, MHCN participated in the Safeguards Review workshop on December 11th and saw the launch of Trauma Informed Lawyering Resources (which had been co-designed in part with our Carers of Forensic and Corrections Patients Network).

MHCN also attended an advocacy meeting with Australia wide advocates on the issue of responses to mental health crisis, the 'First Responders - December Meeting' - and looks forward to supporting Mental Health Minister Rose Jackson in her ambitions to help improve this and a range of other long-standing issues in our mental health system.

There could not be a better note to end the year on; all we wanted for Christmas was a minister with ambition for change and it seems our gift has arrived!

STAFF HIGHLIGHTS 2023



Richard Baldwin
Senior Policy Officer

“Our voice is often one of only a handful that provide the mental health carer perspective.”

MHCN has been invited to provide comments or input on a range of draft documents and proposals from government departments and other organisations. We welcome these opportunities to provide a mental health carer perspective on new ideas and changes to existing systems. I have continued my role in the Policy and Advocacy team on a part time basis over the past year to take advantage of these opportunities.

These have included providing feedback to the Ministry of Health on proposed changes to the NSW Mental Health Act, and on the forms used by health professionals under the NSW Mental Health Act; providing advice to the NSW Trustee and Guardian on the review of their services, and to others. I also represented MHCN on several committees and working parties such as the NSW Mental Health Program Council, the Older Persons Mental Health Working Group, the Mental Health Living Longer project, and others.

Our team have also produced several submissions to government enquiries such as the NSW Government enquiry into mental health outpatients and community health services. Our voice is often one of only a handful that provide the mental health carer perspective. Throughout 2023, we have continued to develop information resources for carers around aspects of mental health care and treatment. This has been an exciting and demanding project and is nearing completion.

In my role as Policy Officer, I have convened monthly meetings through the Forensic and Corrections Patients Network with Erika Ballance, Family and Carer Consultant, Justice Health and Forensic Mental Health, Colleen Kosowicz, Carer Peer Network Support Officer, and Jonathan Harms, MHCN CEO. Our meetings included guest presentations on varied topics and consultations with carers:

- **Focus Group Consultation: Mental Health Training Project**, by Jennifer Chen, Program Manager, Legal Aid NSW and Dr Piers Gooding, Senior Research Fellow, Melbourne Law School, University of Melbourne Presentations + Q&A.
- **The Official Visitors Program**, by Dr Terry Kirkpatrick, Official Visitor, Official Visitors Program.
- **Review of the Forensic Mental Health Services Policy**, by Dr Vindya Nanayakkara, Co-Director Forensic Mental Health and Nikki Maloney, Director, Planning, Performance and Regulation, Mental Health Branch.
- **Designated Carer and Principal Care Provider**, by Erika Ballance, Family & Carer Consultant from Justice Health & Forensic Mental Health Network.
- **Inspector of Custodial Services Official Visitor Program**, by Beverley Ryan, Official Visitor, Inspector of Custodial Services NSW Communities and Justice.
- **Housing and Accommodation Support Initiative (HASI) Plus**, by Karen De Mar, Principal Policy Officer, Supported Living Team, Mental Health Branch, and Vanessa Clarke, Senior Policy Officer, Supported Living Team, Mental Health Branch, NSW Health.
- **Role of the Lay Advocate**, by Linda Rodrigues, Lay Advocate, Mental Health Advocacy Service of Legal Aid, NSW.

We have also conducted advocacy activities, developed resources useful for carers and incorporated time for carer updates!



Prasheela Karan
Policy Officer

“Our meetings included guest presentations on varied topics and consultations with carers.”



Alex Brown
Admin Officer

“Learning the ropes and becoming acquainted with the not-for-profit sector and Mental Health practice has been an eye-opening endeavour for me and I feel lucky to be contributing towards making a change to the system.”

After starting with MHCN in April, there have been many highlights for me to date.

It has been a joy to work with such a friendly and welcoming team which feels more like a close-knit family rather than an office cohort. Learning the ropes and becoming acquainted with the not-for-profit sector and Mental Health practice has been an eye-opening endeavour for me and I feel lucky to be contributing towards making a change to the system.

During my time here I have dipped my toes into several projects assisting the different teams, however my greatest achievement, and what has brought me the most satisfaction to work on, would be coordinating delivery of our Information Resources Project alongside Richard Baldwin and Prasheela Karan in the PAT team. MHCN has been funded by NSW Health to create resources in the form of brochures to help equip carers as they navigate their caring journey. Phase one of this project is expected to culminate by the beginning of 2024, with the delivery of 153,000 brochures between the 18 Local Health Districts (LHDs).

In 2024, MHCN has some administrative challenges ahead which I am eager to sink my teeth into! Including our office move at the beginning of January, the recruitment of several new staff members and our accreditation renewal in June 2024.

I am thoroughly looking forward to collaborating with MHCN’s staff and working on these projects as they arise, contributing to the growth of the MHCN family.

I started as MHCN's Engagement Coordinator in August. Within this role, I have learned so much about the importance of carer lived experience and advocacy within the mental health sector.

Since joining the MHCN team, one of the key highlights has been assisting Senior Peer Trainer & Facilitator, Anne Stedman, with delivering the ILC and Carer Advocacy training sessions online and in person. Many attendees have expressed how thankful they are to have these resources available and I feel extremely privileged to work alongside Anne and engage with so many wonderful carers as they share their stories.

Throughout Mental Health Month, we hosted an online Trivia Session for carers and a Creative Workshop facilitated by art therapist, Lisa Macarthur. These events created a fun space for carers to connect with each other and I hope to organise more of these events in the future!

One of the projects that I am currently excited about is our December Peak Speaks episode with the Open Dialogue Centre. This episode is now live on MHCN's YouTube channel, [click here to view the video!](#)

While I'm extremely proud of the contributions I've made in my role so far, this wouldn't have been possible without the help from everyone on the MHCN team. I'm thrilled to be working with so many passionate mental health advocates and I'm excited to grow in such an impactful space.



Jade Curran

Engagement Coordinator

"I feel extremely privileged to work alongside Anne and engage with so many wonderful carers as they share their stories."

I have had many wonderful experiences working with Jonathan and the team at Mental Health Carers NSW since 2021 and have reflected on writing this report for some time. The highlight I have included occurred while leading the Forster Carers Group to identify issues that needed more attention within the Great Lakes area.

Using the 'Name Game' template, the top issue with 47 points was:

Issue 5: **Alternatives to the Emergency Department**

The next highest score was:

Issue 20: **Service Access/Service Navigation** with 25 points, and,

Issue 9: **Housing**, and Issue 3: **Carer Recognition, Inclusion/Exclusion Confidentiality**, which were tied on 14 points.

While the issues were not new, the passion this group brought to the table reinvigorated why I first started to do this work back in 1974. When my dad turned up to my first wedding and announced that he had finally found out what was wrong with him. "I am a Schizophrenic!", he told anyone that would listen. I was embarrassed at the time and my initial thoughts were: "Is this just another excuse for his behavior?". I have learned a lot since then, and sadly, we still have a long way to go with addressing stigma and discrimination in New South Wales and Australia.

One of the questions Professor Beverly Rachael asked me regularly between 2000 and 2006 when I was the Executive Officer with BEING (formerly the NSW Consumer Advisory Group Mental Health – Inc) was; "How will you know when your work as an advocate is finished?". This highlight reminded me of my response to her: "When I can run an issues workshop and the consumers and carers who come to the meeting tell me that there are no issues that need to be addressed within their area."

"I have learned a lot since then, and sadly, we still have a long way to go with addressing stigma and discrimination in New South Wales and Australia."



Douglas Holmes
Peer Work Facilitator

“In 2024 I am looking forward to taking our training and engagement ‘on the road’ to reach as many people as possible in rural and remote locations that struggle to access services and advocacy support.”



Anne Stedman
Senior Peer Trainer & Facilitator

Dear Readers,

Well here I am back on the saddle, training and engaging with our wonderful carers, support workers and consumers. It has been a productive year with many in-house and online training sessions, and our number of attendees and return participants growing each month. Our online training reaches carers across the state, which had always been a goal for me when I was President of the Board and now as Senior Peer Trainer and Facilitator.

One of the good things about the pandemic was our upskilling in technology and our transition to online training. This can benefit carers as they do not have to travel or take extended breaks from their caring role. I find all participants are keen learners as well as contributors to our combined knowledge and understanding of the mental health space.

As well as MHCN in-house and online training, I have also delivered MHCN information and training to a number of stakeholder organisations, where I have met many wonderful carers and people with lived experience of challenges in their lives who are looking to develop their skills to engage in peer work roles. In 2024, I am looking forward to taking our training and engagement ‘on the road’ to reach as many people as possible in rural and remote locations that struggle to access services and advocacy support.

The highlight of my year has been the successful recruiting of my second in charge – Jade Curran. Along with Alex Brown, our new Administration Officer. These awesome young women provide me with back up support and keep me up to date with the skills required in the ever evolving world of technology. Both Jade and Alex are passionate, kind and supportive people whom it has been a great pleasure to work with, as well as the wonderful carers and participants I have met throughout 2023.



2023 in Photos

Thanks for an amazing year!



Service Spotlight: Parramatta HEAD TO HEALTH

Whether you are looking for mental health support for yourself, someone you care about, or just trying to improve your wellbeing - Parramatta Head to Health is a good place to start.

Parramatta Head to Health provides a stand-alone, multidisciplinary, collaborative service for people aged 18 years and over, experiencing moderate to high levels of mental health needs. The service is free to access, located close to public transport, and requires no referral, appointment or prior mental health diagnosis.

The purpose of Parramatta Head to Health is to assist the community members in receiving the right care, at the right time, for any mental health concerns they may be experiencing. This central hub (Parramatta Head to Health) is situated for community members and health professionals to access appropriate services recommended by a trained mental health professional.

How are Head to Health services different from other mental health support services?

Parramatta Head to Health is different from other mental health support services in that it is easily accessible. There is no cost for attending Parramatta Head to Health, nor do you need to have a Medicare card, Health Care Card or GP referral to access our services. The consumer simply drops in or calls us to find out how we can help.

- Reliable and consistent operating hours: We work 365 days a year. Opened every day. Monday to Friday 9am to 9pm Saturday,

Sunday and public holidays 3pm to 7pm. At Parramatta Head to Health, you don't need to book an appointment.

- Access to a range of supports, including: Support and advice in navigating and connecting you with ongoing local mental health services.

Immediate, short and medium-term mental health and wellbeing support.

Access to translating and interpreting services and engagement with social and community groups. We can also provide face-to-face and telehealth services.

What type of support do you provide for carers, families, and friends of those living with mental illness?

People experiencing mental health can receive support from our team of mental health professionals including:

Our Peer Support Workers:

- May use their stories of personal struggles and success in order to support enhance the wellbeing of people living with mental health issues.
- Attempt to minimize the power imbalances that could exist in service delivery and create mutuality for people living with mental health issues.

- Provide a lived example of recovery to inspire hope and frame experiences in a positive light.

Our Family and Carer Support Workers:

- Helps families and carers to build resilience and enhance the wellbeing of families and carers of people living with mental health issues.
- Provides holistic support to families and carers that is person-centred, community oriented, respectful and sensitive.
- Coordinate and deliver mental health education for families and carers.
- Encourage families/carers involvement in the development strategies which enhance choice, dignity, and independence of the person under families/carers.
- Promote the dignity and rights of families and carers of people with a mental health issue, both within the service and in the wider community.

Care Coordinators:

- Assess patient and family's unmet health and social needs.
- Develop a care plan based on mutually agreed goals with patients, family, and providers including an emergency plan, medical summary, and ongoing action plan, as appropriate.
- Monitor patient's engagement with their care plan and progress toward goals in a timely fashion, facilitating changes as needed.
- Facilitate patient access to appropriate medical and specialty providers and community support organisations.
- Provide effective communication to improve health literacy.
- Ensure effective tracking of test results, medication management, and attendance at follow-up appointments.

Allied Health Professionals:

- Provide evidence-based clinical case management, assessment, and psychological interventions to clients in the community with mental illness.
- Work as part of a multidisciplinary team to provide comprehensive, therapeutic mental health services to clients.



- Facilitate mental health service linkage and navigation, including care coordination.
- Triage, intake and assessments.

Is there a limit on how many services I can access, or for how long I can use them?

No, there is no limit on how many services one can access offered within Head to Health. However, there is a 3-month engagement period which could potentially extend if there is an indicated need. This could extend access to a period of 6 months.

During your engagement, you can access talk therapy with one of our clinicians, therapeutic supports through our peer work model, or family and carer support staff. We will support you to service navigate and find appropriate services that may compliment your engagement or support you to transition to longer term, more specialist care if we are not able to offer the required supports.



Parramatta Head to Health isn't a one and done service. You can re-engage with us and if you're requiring more specialist care, we can support you to link in with more specialist care.

Do I need to make an appointment to visit Head to Health?

- Walk-in.
- No appointment necessary.
- No Medicare card required.
- Open every day.

Can I call Head to Health on behalf of someone else?

Yes, as a support person, however, the person needing the mental health support would need to come into our service themselves. If they call our national line, the person needing the support would need to be the one answering the questions being asked over the phone.

What are the challenges unique to carers of those with mental illness and how does Head to Health to address these challenges?

Parramatta Head to Health provides a range of free services and support just for carers. Services are delivered in-person and over the phone. Our dedicated family and carer workers provide services such as: in-person peer support groups, helping carers to build resilience and enhance their wellbeing, coordinating and delivering

mental health education for carers and linking them with supportive services.

Where are you located and how can people contact you?

We have 2 referral pathways:

1. Anyone can contact or walk-in to Head to Health, whether they already have a GP mental health treatment plan or not: **Parramatta Head to Health, Ground Floor Suite 1, 150 George Street Parramatta NSW 2150.**
2. Or call the Head to Health national line on **1800 595 212**. Head to Health can help you access the local mental health services and supports that are right for you.

Parramatta Head to Health are not a crisis service. If you or someone you care for needs immediate emergency assistance, please call 000, Lifeline on 13 11 14 or Suicide Call Back Service on 1300 659 467.

To learn more about Head to Health, visit their website to access a range of tools and resources:

- [How to support someone](#)
- [Talking to someone about their mental health](#)
- [Helping someone navigate the next steps](#)
- [Looking after yourself as a carer](#)

CARER INFORMATION RESOURCE PROJECT

MHCN has received two separate grants from the NSW Ministry of Health to complete information resources for mental health carers concerning several topics.

These projects arose from the realisation within the Ministry of Health that there was a gap in information specifically targeted at mental health carers. Also, there were no standard information resources available for carers of people receiving care under the Mental Health Act and for use within the Family and Carer Mental Health Program.

The **10 brochures** that have been produced cover the following:

- 1 – Getting someone a mental health assessment
- 2 – Carers and the Emergency Department
- 3 – Carers and the Mental Health Unit
- 4 – Carers and the Mental Health Review Tribunal
- 5 – Carers and Community Treatment Orders
- 6 – Caring at in the Community
- 7 – Carers and Private Hospitals
- 8 – Sharing Information
- 9 – Carers of Forensic Patients
- 10 – Carer Rights



Find More Information

- If the person is re-classified from 'Involuntary' to 'voluntary', or from 'voluntary' to 'Involuntary'
- If it is proposed to transfer the person to another mental health facility
- If the person has been transferred to another mental health facility
- About discharge and other planning
- Types of treatment, such as Electro Convulsive Therapy (ECT)

Reviews and inquiries⁷ by the Tribunal concerning:

- Continuing detention
- Community Treatment Orders
- The use of Electro Convulsive Therapy (ECT) for an involuntary patient
- A surgical procedure or special medical treatment for an involuntary patient

Carers also have the right to request:

- A person be detained in a mental health facility for the purpose of assessment⁸
- A person be discharged⁹ or appeal against a refusal to discharge¹⁰
- To talk to an Official Visitor
- Appeal to the Mental Health Tribunal against the refusal to discharge the consumer

More information on Carers Rights <https://mhnmhcc.org.au/chapters/9-carers-of-people-with-mental-health-conditions/9a-carers-of-people-with-mental-health-conditions-overview/>

Mental Health Review Tribunal <https://mhrt.nsw.gov.au/the-tribunal>

Mental Health Act <https://www.legislation.nsw.gov.au/#/view/act/2007/8>

Official Visitor Program <https://officialvisitorsmhnsw.gov.au/Pages/OVP.aspx>

Scan the QR code to access all brochures.

MHCN: May 2023



Information for Carers of a person with Mental Health Issues

Carers of Forensic Patients

The Mental Health Review Tribunal is responsible for deciding what should happen to a forensic patient. The Tribunal holds hearings about individual forensic patients about every 6 months.

Carers have the right to be involved in the hearings by the Tribunal and to request an extension of the period of reviews by the Tribunal¹.

Use the QR code in this brochure to access the *The Mental Health Review Tribunal brochure*.

The Tribunal can decide:

- Where a forensic patient should be detained and when they can be transferred to a new place of detention
- If a forensic patient can have leave from the place of detention
- When a forensic patient can be released to live in the community, with conditions under a forensic community treatment order
- When to release a forensic patient without conditions

For More Information

- Mental Health Review Tribunal <https://mailmhrt.nsw.gov.au/the-tribunal/#~:text=The%20Mental%20Health%20Review%20Tribunal,people%20with%20a%20mental%20illness>
- Justice Health and Forensic Mental Health Network, NSW Government <https://www.justicehealth.nsw.gov.au/>
- Mental Health Coordinating Council <https://mhnmhcc.org.au/chapters/chapter-6-mental-illness-and-the-criminal-justice-system/6a-section-mental-illness-and-the-criminal-justice-system/>
- Mental Health Advocacy Service <https://www.legalaid.nsw.gov.au/what-we-do/civil-law/mental-health-advice>

Scan the QR code to access all brochures.

MHCN: May 2023

Information for Carers of a person with Mental Health Issues

Carers of Forensic Patients

This brochure provides information for families and carers of forensic patients in the NSW criminal justice system. It contains important general information for carers.

Who is a Forensic Patient?

A forensic patient is a person:

- Who is detained after they committed a crime, and
- The court determined they had a mental health impairment or a cognitive impairment at the time of the crime and

¹ The word 'patient' is used in this brochure because this is the wording of the Mental Health and Cognitive Impairment Forensic Provisions Act 2020 (NSW).



Where You Can Find More Information

More information is available at:

- Carers Gateway telephone 1800 422 737 or <https://www.carergateway.gov.au/>
- Mental Health Carers NSW <https://www.mentalhealthcarersnsw.org/>
- NSW Health <https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/mentalhealth/Pages/default.aspx>
- Mental Health Coordinating Council <https://mhnmhcc.org.au/chapters/9-carers-of-people-with-mental-health-conditions/9a-carers-of-people-with-mental-health-conditions-overview/>
- Way Ahead <https://directory.wayahead.org.au/carers-factsheet-mental-health-legislation/>

After Assessment in the ED

When the assessment is completed, the person will be either:

- Discharged from the Emergency Department with a referral to another service if necessary to obtain continuing care for their mental illness; or
- Admitted to a mental health ward as a voluntary patient (either in that hospital or another hospital); or
- Admitted to a mental health ward against their will as an 'assessable' patient (either in that hospital or another hospital)

Scan the QR code to access all brochures.

MHCN: May 2023

Information for Carers of a person with Mental Health Issues

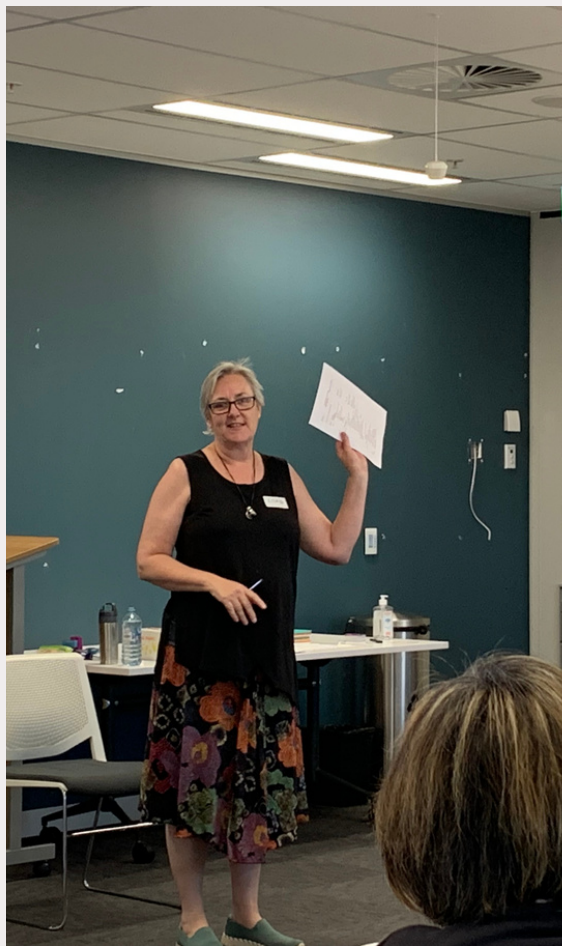
In the Emergency Department

This brochure provides information for carers on what happens in the emergency department.

Brochures are also available on how to get someone to hospital and what happens after they are admitted to a mental health facility.

[Click here to access the digital brochures via our website](#)

2023 ACTIVITIES AT A GLANCE: CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT & CARER ENGAGEMENT



18

Online and in-person training sessions & carer events

166

Training attendees (carers, family members, people with lived experience of mental health issues, staff members from other organisations, students, researchers)

331

MHCAN Members

43

Weekly Digest e-Newsletters

12

Carer Connections meetings

MHCN KITCHEN

IRISH CREAM TIRAMISU

For special events with family and friends, I like to make Irish cream tiramisu with Bailey's liqueur instead of rum or Kahlua. It adds a nice twist to such a classic dessert!



Ingredients:

- 4 large eggs yolks
- ½ cup sugar
- 1 cup heavy cream
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- 8 ounces mascarpone cheese
- 12 ounces strong brewed espresso
- ¼ cup Irish cream liqueur
- ½ cup unsweetened cocoa powder
- 8 ounces ladyfingers, about 24 cookies
- 2 ounces milk chocolate, freshly grated/shaved

Instructions:

- In a bowl, beat together the egg yolks and ¼ cup of sugar until the yolks are pale yellow in color and the mixture doubles in volume. This takes about 5 full minutes. You want the mixture to fall like ribbons from the beaters once it's ready.
- In another bowl, beat the heavy cream, vanilla extract and remaining ¼ cup of sugar until medium peaks form. Add in the mascarpone cheese and beat just until combined and the mixture is spreadable. Scoop this mixture into the bowl with the egg yolks and gently fold them together until combined.
- In a shallow bowl, whisk together the espresso and Irish cream liqueur.

- Place the cocoa in a fine mesh strainer. Sprinkle some all over the bottom of the baking dish until it's covered.
- Take each ladyfinger and dip it in the espresso/Irish cream until soaked through. Don't oversoak, as the ladyfingers may fall apart! When I do this, I dip a ladyfinger, count to 3, and then flip it and count to 3 again. Place the ladyfinger in the dish and repeat with more ladyfingers, until you have a single layer of the soaked ladyfingers.
- Spread half of the mascarpone mixture over the ladyfingers. Sprinkle on a little more cocoa powder. Repeat with remaining ladyfingers - dipping them in the espresso, then placing them in a single layer. Once finished, top with the remaining mascarpone.
- Sprinkle the remaining cocoa powder on top. Sprinkle the shaved chocolate on next. Refrigerate for at least 6 hours or even overnight.



Jade Curran
Engagement Coordinator



**Mental Health
Carers NSW**



Mental Health Care Advocacy Network
Promoting Leadership and Quality Care Connections

Watch our latest:

PEAK SPEAKS!

Open Dialogue within the
Australian Mental Health Sector

Our December edition of Peak Speaks is now available to watch online!

Hosted by MHCN's Engagement Coordinator, Jade Curran, tune in to hear Shubhangi Kaushik and Mark Hopfenbeck from The Open Dialogue Centre discuss the core outcomes and values of Open Dialogue and identify the systemic factors that support this recovery approach within Australia.

[Click here to watch view the episode!](#)



Shubhangi Kaushik
Head of Partnerships and
Programs at the Open
Dialogue Centre &
Registered Psychologist



Mark Hopfenbeck
International Open
Dialogue Trainer &
Researcher





About the Panelists:

Shubhangi Kaushik - Shubhangi is Head of Partnerships and Programs at the Open Dialogue Centre, and a registered psychologist. She has extensive experience working across various verticals of the government and non-government mental health sectors in Australia and New Zealand, at strategic and grass-root levels, with diverse groups and populations, and both in one-on-one and group settings. Her areas of expertise include working with organisations and providing consultation on strategic vision, service design, development, implementation and delivery, and project and change management.

Shubhangi is committed to enhancing the voice of lived experience and creating mental health services that are holistic and recognise the value of positive connection. She has a specific interest in organisational change and mental health system reform and is not afraid to challenge the status quo to achieve this.

Mark Hopfenbeck - Mark has been involved in the world of Open Dialogue internationally for the past 20 years as a trainer and a researcher. He is also co-investigator for the largest randomised control trial into Open Dialogue currently underway in the NHS. Earlier this year, Mark moved to Melbourne and has been working closely with the Open Dialogue Centre since in promoting Open Dialogue across Australia.



Shubhangi Kaushik
Head of Partnerships and
Programs at the Open
Dialogue Centre &
Registered Psychologist



Mark Hopfenbeck
International Open
Dialogue Trainer &
Researcher



GET INVOLVED

FORUMS

One Door Mental Health



Feb 2024 – Mental Health medications and side effects.

April 2024 – How Community Mental Health Services play a role in our loved one's recovery and the services they provide.

June 2024 – How to communicate with our loved ones who are experiencing psychosis or a mental health episode.

August 2024 – A Department of Education representative will be invited to talk about services for young people who struggle with mental health at school and the options they have to support them. Headspace will also be invited to talk about their service for young people and young adults.

October 2024 – A Centrelink representative will be invited to talk about payments carers can receive and other benefits for them and their loved ones with a mental illness.

Note: Only for Carers within the following and the surrounding areas of Ashfield, Burwood, Canterbury, Concord, Lakemba, Newtown, Redfern and Camperdown.

If you are interested in attending the above carer forums, please register with One Door Mental Health on fcmhpsyd@onedoor.org.au

TRAINING

Wesley LifeForce Community Training



Wesley LifeForce delivers community and workplace suicide prevention training to educate and equip Australians with the tools to recognise and help someone who is at risk of suicide.

Their Community Gatekeeper Suicide Prevention training is offered across Australia at no fee for community members. No previous experience and/or clinical/mental health training is needed to participate in the trainings. Full-day and half-day workshops are available.

Additionally, they offer Accidental Counsellor, Mental Health First Aid and Building Resilience programs for a fee.

Simple effective interventions can make a real difference and save lives.

[Click here for more information](#) or email lifeforce@wesleymission.org.au

TRAINING

MHCN's On Demand Training Modules



Are you a busy carer? Do you find it difficult to commit to set events and activities?

We know that the caring role can be unpredictable, which is why we offer free, self-paced training modules available online.

You can access the modules anywhere, any time, and as many times as you wish!

[Check out the training modules here](#)

GET INVOLVED

CARER EVENT

School Holiday Program for Young Carers



Conquer the treetops with other young carers!

Join Carers NSW for an epic treetop adventure where you will work with other young carers to take on obstacle courses in the tree canopy that will have you swinging, leaping, climbing and flying through the forest. To see what fun is to be had at Treetops Adventure visit: <https://treetopsadventure.com.au/>

There are two upcoming adventures in January:

Treetops adventure Newcastle

When: **Tuesday, 16 January 2024**

Time: 11.00am-2.00pm

Where: Treetops Adventure Newcastle.

Cost: Free, food and drinks will be provided throughout the day.

RSVP: Email Rhianna (Carers NSW Young Carer Peer Support Worker) on Rhiannag@carersnsw.org.au or call 0461 475 942.

Treetops adventure Central Coast

When: **Wednesday, 17 January 2024**

Time: 11.00am-2.00pm

Where: Treetops Adventure Central Coast.

Cost: Free, food and drinks will be provided throughout the day.

RSVP: Email Rhianna (Carers NSW Young Carer Peer Support Worker) on Rhiannag@carersnsw.org.au or call 0461 475 942.

GET INVOLVED



Transcultural
Mental Health Centre

EXPRESSION OF INTEREST - SESSIONAL CONTRACTORS **Assyrian, Cantonese, Punjabi, Spanish-speaking Bilingual Group Leaders**

The NSW Transcultural Mental Health Centre's (TMHC) CALD Carer Support Program is seeking to recruit and contract four Bilingual Group Leaders (BGLs) from the above-mentioned communities, who are committed to working with carers of people experiencing mental health conditions, through the facilitation of support groups and running of education programs and activities in the local community.

Selection Criteria

- Demonstrated ability to effectively communicate in one of the above languages and English.
- Demonstrated understanding of own cultural background and the needs of own community.
- Understanding of the needs of mental health carers and consumers.
- Demonstrated ability to liaise and work with own community and a variety of stakeholders, including community organisations, government and non-government organisations.
- Experience in facilitating group education and activities.
- Sound organisational skills.
- Relevant qualifications and/or equivalent experience in mental health, adult education, teaching, health, or welfare.
- A current NSW driver's licence.

Successful applicants will be required to undergo a National Criminal Check, attend induction training and commit to working with carers for a minimum of 12 months. Priority will be given to candidates who are currently working part-time or not working.

Expression of interest should include the following information:

- Application letter addressing the above selection criteria
- Current resume, with two referees
- Evidence of qualifications
- Agreement to obtain professional & public indemnity insurance.

Enquiries and applications should be addressed to:

Mrs Chanboramy (Ramy) Var
Coordinator CALD Carer Support Program
Transcultural Mental Health Centre
Locked Bag 7118,
PARRAMATTA BC NSW 2124
Tel (02) 8838 2120
Ramy.Var@health.nsw.gov.au

Closing Date: Friday 19 January 2024

GET INVOLVED

TRAINING

Stay Connected When Emotions Run High

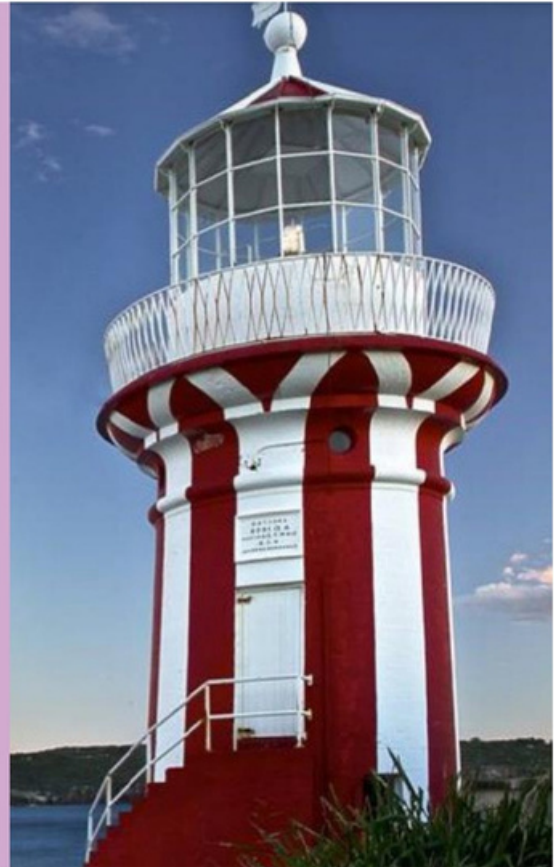
An intervention for Families & Carers

This **FREE** workshop will provide you with additional communication skills to support someone (12+ years) who experiences any of the following:

- Relationship difficulties.
- Changing emotions and strong overwhelming feelings that can make communication difficult.
- Sometimes behaves in a way that makes them a danger to themselves or others.

(Diagnosis is not necessary as the frameworks and relationship strategies introduced should be helpful to all.)

Workshop presented by,
Dr Annemaree Bickerton & Toni Garretty
*Family & Carer Mental Health Team,
 Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District.*



Details: Tuesday 13th February 2024
9:30am- 3:30pm (Please arrive between 9am and 9:15am for registration).

Venue: Port Kembla Golf Club
 Golf Place, Primbee NSW

Cost: FREE for Families & Carers
 (Morning Tea & Lunch provided)

Registration Essential. Please ensure you register your attendance via the QR code or link. Registration will be confirmed through Eventbrite.

This workshop will be strictly adhering to COVID-19 rules and regulations, specified by the NSW Health Department.

Scan the QR Code to register



<https://www.eventbrite.com.au/e/staying-connected-when-emotions-run-high-port-kembla-tickets-772698059697>

Registration is essential – please ensure your registration is confirmed and bring your e-ticket to the workshop.

For enquiries please email:
familyandcarer@stride.com.au

Proudly sponsored by:



GET INVOLVED

sponsored by  Randwick City Council
a sense of community

MAD PRIDE FESTIVAL

Join us in Kensington Park Community Centre on January 20th, and 21st, and let's 'Make A Difference'

This year marks our 21st anniversary and we are thrilled to commemorate this milestone with the Randwick community.

Join our community of like-minded individuals who are passionate about promoting mental well-being. Be inspired by captivating stories, connect with others, and empower yourself through various interactive activities.

On Saturday, expect live performances, exhibitions and workshops and on Sunday, the addition of face painting and poetry corner.



Book your ticket now!



- Live performances
- Art exhibitions
- Workshops
- Face painting
- Poet's corner

MAD PRIDE stands for **Movement Against Discrimination**

**20-21 JAN
2024**

**KENSINGTON PARK
COMMUNITY CENTRE**
1 Day Lane, Kensington

**FROM
1:30-5PM**



Wayahead®



Expression of Interest for Organisations & Carer Groups: MHCN Training Sessions

If your staff or the carers you engage with are interested in capacity building and contributing towards systemic improvements, our experienced Senior Peer Trainer and Facilitator, Anne Stedman, can visit your organisation to provide a training session.

Our training and education program consists of 8 co-designed courses that aim to inform and empower mental health carers, family members, clinicians and friends of people experiencing a mental illness:

- Purposeful Storytelling
- The Caring Journey
- Healthy Boundaries
- Carers & Advocacy: Foundations
- Navigating Carer Support Systems
- Inclusive Care Planning
- Users Guide to the NSW Mental Health System
- Recovery Oriented Practice



Mental Health Carers NSW

Anne will engage and inspire your workers and clients to increase their knowledge of carer supports and identify a range of capacity building opportunities to utilise their experiences, with a strong emphasis on maintaining personal wellbeing whilst supporting others.

If your organisation or group is interested in MHCN coming out to deliver a training session, please contact Jade Curran at: mhcnadmin@mentalhealthcarersnsw.org

For further information on each training course, visit our website here: <https://www.mentalhealthcarersnsw.org/learn/training-and-education/>



Sign up to our weekly e-news!

Our weekly e-newsletter is full of all the latest information, events and news at MHCN and around NSW for mental health carers, delivered right to your inbox every Tuesday afternoon!

**CLICK HERE TO
SUBSCRIBE**



**CONTRIBUTE TO OUR
COMMUNITY**

WE APPRECIATE YOUR FEEDBACK

**Send Us Stories, Ideas &
Artwork**

MHCNadmin@mentalhealthcarersnsw.org



**Mental Health
Carers NSW**



Mental Health Carer Advocacy Network
Embedding Lived Experience and Creating Carer Communities