

Clinicians must routinely seek a consumer's consent before providing information about their condition and treatment to carers. Where consent is not given, information can only be disclosed in situations covered under section 120A of the Mental Health Act. Where carers are affected by non-consent, their needs should be addressed sensitively. Non-consent should be reviewed on a regular basis.

- Section 120A(3)(e) allows disclosure of information when it is required for further treatment. person who receives the information will be involved in providing the care.
- Section 120A(3)(ca) of the Mental Health Act 1986 allows information to be disclosed to family, primary carers and guardians if the information is reasonably required for ongoing care and the

### **Families and carers need to know about their rights under relevant legislation.**

For further information or assistance contact The Network at: [www.carersnetwork.org.au](http://www.carersnetwork.org.au)

Download the brochure and other information for carers from the website of the Rotary Club of Melbourne: [www.rotaryclubofmelbourne.org.au](http://www.rotaryclubofmelbourne.org.au)

Download the guidelines from the Department of Human Services website <http://www.health.vic.gov.au/mentalhealth/cpg>



Rotary Club of Melbourne



## **Working Together with Families and Carers of People with a Mental Illness**

This pamphlet is a project developed by the Rotary Club of Melbourne to support the Network - the Victorian peak body of organisations and groups supporting families and carers of people with a mental illness.

# Working Together with Families and Carers

This pamphlet was developed following the production of the Chief Psychiatrist's guidelines 'Working together with families and carers.' It is a guide for how families and carers can work with Mental Health Professionals in order to achieve the best outcome for consumers.

The key message of the Chief Psychiatrist's guidelines:

**Families and carers should be recognised, respected and supported as partners in providing care to the consumer**

## How can families and carers use the Chief Psychiatrist's guidelines?

### **Families and carers need to know that the guidelines were designed:**

- to provide area mental health services with a framework in which to develop clinical practice standards and consider issues relevant to working with families and carers.
- to recognise that families and carers should be engaged as early as possible in the episode of treatment and care.
- to ensure that clear and open communication and the sharing of information between clinicians, consumers, families and carers occurs regularly.

### **Families and carers need to be involved in:**

#### **Assessment**

- Families should be **interviewed and listened to** as families and carers often have knowledge that is essential information for clinicians.
- Assessment should include **developing an understanding of the clinician's** relationship with families and carers.

#### **Treatment**

- Families and carers can **play an important role in supporting people with mental illness**. The role can often be difficult and the effect of the consumer's illness on the family can be significant.
- Families and carers will often have **views and preferences that they would like the treating team to take into account** when developing a treatment plan.
- Working together with the treating team will **empower families and carers to be more effective and resourceful**. A shared understanding of the most effective management techniques will ensure the best outcome for their relatives.
- Families and carers **need to receive adequate feedback** from clinical consultations and meetings. They **need to receive timely information** (which often needs to be repeated) about mental illness, its likely causes and outcomes.

#### **Discharge**

- Families and carers need to be **involved in the process of discharge planning and the plan for continuing care** of the consumer. This includes discharge from in-patient admission or from the mental health service.
- It includes **the development of a crisis plan with a clearly identified clinical service response**.