

Mental Health Carer Support Program

A guide to Commonwealth Respite & Carelink Centre/CarerLinks North (CRCC/CLN) services for carers of people with mental health issues in the Northern Metropolitan Region

Background

- CarerLinks North (CLN) is auspiced by Merri Community Health Service (formerly Moreland CHS)
- CLN has been operating in the Northern Metropolitan Region since 1997 and is based in Preston
- Covers seven local government areas: Darebin, Banyule, Nillumbik, Whittlesea, Yarra, Moreland, and Hume-except Sunbury (Mental health program only).

The Mental Health Respite Program

- MHRP is an Australian Government initiative
- New funding provided in 2007 to Commonwealth Respite and Carer Support Programs
- CR&CC/CLN to deliver a range of flexible respite options for carers of people with mental health issues, autism/spectrum disorders and for carers of people with an intellectual disability
- Priority target group is older or ageing parents of people with mental health issues or intellectual disability (including dual disability) who are caring for children (including adult children) at home
- Does not exclude other carers of people with mental health issues and an intellectual disability from accessing this program
- The Mental Health Team is made up of a Team Leader, two Carer Support workers and a Service Development Worker.

Services available to Carers

1. Service Co-ordination and Promotion Team

- Consists of the Carelink and the Intake services
- Intake & Information Team consists of Information and Intake workers, Client Service Officers and a Team Leader.

Services offered by information and intake workers include:

- Information on support options for carers
- Telephone assessment based on identified carer need
- Flexible funding to broker respite & other relevant services
- Emotional support to carers
- Co-ordination of referrals for relevant services
- Crisis response for carers, including emergency respite



Commonwealth Respite &
Carelink Centre CarerLinks North



2. Carer Support Workers

Carer Support Workers provide assertive outreach to carers. The worker's core function is to:

- Work with the carer to identify and explored the carer's need
- Provide information on support options for the carer's needs
- Provide short term supportive counselling
- Provide information regarding the mental health system.
- Respond to short term emotional and practical support needs
- Access funding to organise respite & other relevant supports
- Refer and link carers to a range of services

Priorities for referral to a Carer Support Worker include:

- High level of carer stress
- New carers who are isolated with limited or no supports.
- Carers in crisis situations where the carer's health is at risk
- The caring relationship and/or family system is at risk of breakdown

3. Types of respite:

- **In home respite** - where the carer may require additional in home support for the consumer
- **Out of home respite** – where a respite worker accompanies the consumer on an outing, activity
- **Facility based respite** – where the consumer accesses overnight support for a limited period of time
- **Short overnight breaks away** from home for the carer and/or consumer.
- **Group activities and outings** which support carer wellbeing.
- **Education programs/conferences** - partial funding for courses relevant to the caring role.
- **Transport assistance** - e.g. taxi voucher card, met tickets (limited availability)
- **Carer health and wellbeing activities**- such as therapeutic massage, yoga, meditation

Referral Process

Please contact our Intake team by phone or email.

Completion of SCTT form required. 'Part B' Carer referral form must include information regarding:

- Consumer's diagnosis
- Relationship of carer with the carer recipient
- Services requested i.e. in home respite.

How to contact CarerLinks North?

You can contact the service by phone, email or fax a referral.

Level 2, 110 Chifley Drive, Preston, VIC 3072

Phone: 9495 2500 or 1800 052 222

Fax: 9495 2599

After Hours: 1800 052 222

Email: clnintakeworkers@mchs.org.au

Website: www.northerncarers.org.au

Hours of operation:

Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursday and Fridays 9.00am to 5.00pm

Wednesdays: 1.00pm to 5.00pm

- An after hours crisis response service is also available.