

Dr Leanne Craze
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Dear Dr Craze

2nd Consultation Draft: National Recovery-Oriented Mental Health Practice Framework

Carers ACT values the opportunity to provide some feedback on the 2nd Consultation Draft of the National Recovery-Oriented Mental Health Practice Framework, dated 11 July 2012. Given Carers ACT constitutional mandate to represent the voices of carers to the ACT Government and the wider community, this response focuses on the role of family or informal carers who support people with mental illness, particularly in their recovery process, and to maintain their mental health.

Carers ACT appreciates that CrazeLateralSolutions has recognised the important role that carers play in the recovery process in the 2nd Consultation Draft. Carers ACT is pleased to note that key themes raised in our submission dated 24 April 2012 as part of the first consultation phase have been incorporated into the 2nd Draft, namely:

- The need to value the perspectives of carers as 'experts' and to work collaboratively to develop care plans for people with mental illness
- Informing mental health policies and standard operating procedures by engagement with mental health carers.

The implementation of Recovery Standard (10.1) of the National Standards for Mental Health Services, as set out in the 2nd Consultation Draft, will provide substantial opportunities for mental health services to measure how well they are including carers in the recovery process. Carers ACT notes that eight of the ten criteria for this Standard recognise the importance of the carer role in all aspects of treatment, care and recovery planning.

In addition, Carers ACT supports the four suggested Domains of practice outlined in the 2nd Consultation Draft, that is:

- Person 1st and holistic

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- Enabling and supporting personal recovery
- Organisational commitment and workforce development
- Action on social inclusion and social determinants of health, mental health and wellbeing.

These Domains acknowledge and support the role of carers in the recovery process. It is also gratifying to see that the Person 1st and holistic Domain recognises the importance of family, kinship and community for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and the role of families and communities for people from immigrant and refugee backgrounds.

Carers ACT would like to make the following recommendations that relate specifically to the Domains (Question 2 in the 2nd Consultation Draft):

1. Each of the Domains provides a comprehensive list of performance indicators. However, the Organisational commitment Domain, under *Acknowledging, valuing and empowering lived experience – service users and families, staff and communities*, would be strengthened by the inclusion performance indicators that measure how an organisation is engaging with carers and families, under Behaviours, Skills, Knowledge, and Good Practice.

This would enhance, and be in line with, performance indicators being developed for other national mental health frameworks, such as the Ten Year Mental Health Roadmap, and the National Report Card on Mental Health and Suicide Prevention.

2. Two additional resources that would be helpful for the Domains and Capabilities are recommended. These are the *Carer Recognition Act* and, the *National Carer Strategy* which is being implemented by the Australian Government.

The following comments relate to your request for feedback on the ‘Supporting participation & social inclusion and action on social determinants’ in Practice Domain: Action on social determinants (3 August 2012).

In line with Carers ACT’s earlier response to the draft framework our comments focus on carers of people with a mental illness. Under the Australian Government’s Social Inclusion Strategy – *A Stronger, Fairer Australia* carers are identified as one of the priority, disadvantaged populations:

“...improving outcomes for people living with disability or mental illness and their carers.”

The Stronger, Fairer Australia Report 2010-2011 states:

Carers of people living with disability, mental illness, medical conditions and the aged are among the most disadvantaged and socially excluded in Australia:

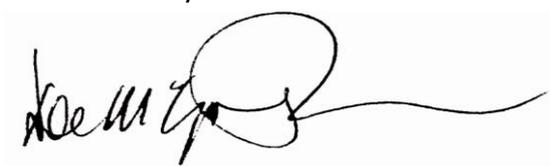
- carers are often socially isolated and disconnected from their peers as a result of a lack of alternative care;
- they are more likely to experience poor health; and
- they can suffer from increased financial and emotional stress.

Carers ACT recommends that the capability clearly identifies awareness of, and actions that respond to, carers inclusion. Examples:

1. The Core Principles refer to people with lived experience. A statement about carers should be included in this segment, as well as subsequent segments that refer to people with lived experience.
2. In Attitudes – carers also experience stigma and negative attitudes that can exist within mental health settings.
3. Under Skills – carers also identify their need for advocacy, and need resources to develop their skills to self-advocate. This can relate to their own situation and needs, or the consumer they care for.

For more information or to discuss this response please contact Doris Kordes, Mental Health Carer Policy and Representation Officer at doris.kordes@carersact.org.au or phone (02) 9296 936.

Yours sincerely



Dee McGrath
Chief Executive Officer

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