



MENTAL HEALTH
**carers
voice**

Leading change and action with, and for, mental health Carers

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April 23

E-Bulletin

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Mental Health Carers Voice

Mental Health Carers Networking and Consulting Forums

Second Exposure Draft, Mental Health (Treatment & Care) Act – 29 April

The Second Exposure Draft Amendment Bill of the Mental Health (Treatment & Care) Act is available for comment, Carers ACT will be hosting a consultation with mental health carers.

Date: 29 April
Time: 12.00pm – 2.00pm
Location: Riley Hall, Pilgrim House Conference Centre, 69 Northbourne Avenue, Civic
Cost: Free. Lunch will be provided
RSVP: Phone Rosie on 6296 9900 or email mhcarers@carersact.org.au if you would like to attend.

Important event for carers – Navigating the Mental Health System Forum followed by Well ways workshop – preparing for the NDIS and mental illness Thursday 16 May at the Rex Hotel

Navigating the Mental Health System

Knowledge about how to navigate the mental health system is a huge issue for people who have just entered the 'system', but also for those people who may be unaware of the diverse range of services and supports that are available for people living in Canberra. A panel of speakers

comprising a mental health consumer and carer, and representatives from key mental health organisations, will share information and provide resources. Click [here to read flyer](#).

Date: Thursday 16 May

Time: 9.30 – 12.30pm

Location: Conference Room 1, Rex Hotel, 150 Northbourne Avenue, Braddon (see below for parking and Action Bus details)

Cost: Free. Morning tea and a light lunch will be provided at the end.

RSVP: By 9 May. Phone Rosie on 6296 9900; or email mhcarers@carersact.org.au

Well ways workshop – preparing for the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) and mental illness

Well Ways Building a Future workshop, to ensure carers feel empowered to make decisions within the NDIS. Implemented by Mental illness Fellowship Victoria, this free three hour workshop will be delivered by a trained facilitator who has a lived experience of caring for a family member or friend with a mental illness.

Time: 1.30pm – 4.30pm

Date: 16 May

Location: Conference Room 1, Rex Hotel, Northbourne Avenue, Braddon

To register phone Kate Higgins (03) 8486 4282 or email khiggins@mifellowship.org by 13 May.

[Click here for the flyer](#).

Parking:

There are 50 parking spots at the Rex Hotel, first in first served! There is on street parking around the streets, some free, some longer stays than others. Girawheen Street East and West car parks (8 minutes walk) and 48 Mort Street Braddon (9 minute walk). Across from the Rex Corner of Northbourne Avenue and Ipima Street is an ANU student accommodation, it is permit parking, if you park there is at your own risk.

Action Bus links:

Civic to Braddon bus numbers 39, 31, and 58

Belconnen to Braddon bus numbers 31, 7 and 300

Gunghalin to Braddon bus numbers 59, 52, 58 and 56

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****WANTED** Mental Health Carer Representatives**

The Mental Health Carers Voice Program is funded by the ACT Government for mental health carers to have a greater voice. Carer representatives are remunerated for their time and their expertise and, in addition, receive a range of training and supports.

Currently, the Program has several vacancies for carer representative positions, and people with lived experience of being a mental health carer are invited to consider becoming a carer representative. If you are interested in participating, but would prefer to be a little less engaged, there are vacancies for alternate representatives for various committees. The alternate representative attends meetings when the carer representative cannot attend.

For more information about becoming a carer representative, phone Rosie Fisk on 6299 9900 or email mhcarers@carersact.org.au. More information is also available on the Mental Health Carers Voice website at www.carersvoice.com.au

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Carers Corner

A carer has submitted the following story:

Schizophrenia – learning to live “*One day at a Time*”

No one told me I would have to change when I first learnt of my son’s diagnosis of schizophrenia. My father had this too and I knew what was ahead.

I had to grieve for the beautiful boy I had raised and I did have to start on a new path – one that was very scary and a path I never wanted to go down.

But change I did. Firstly I experienced the shame and guilt. Then the dynamics in our family changed. My relationship with friends and colleagues at work changed – how could I talk about the nightmare we were living?

It was a shock to me when it was suggested to me that I had options about how to live my life. My friends helped me move forward, helped me to trust them with my secrets, to feel not so alone, to start to live again. They taught me eventually to be free spirited and to live life ***one day at a time***.

It was strange at first. I did this gradually, by practicing gratitude for all the small things in my life each day – a sunny winter morning, a butterfly outside the window, a little bird perched on a tree or a new bloom. What a surprise to discover a little happiness every day.

I let go of my fears – I said out loud that I thought my son would die. He was on heroin and his medication wasn’t working. I made amends to all the people I felt I had hurt along the journey of my son’s illness especially my daughter who had come second for so long. Just some simple words asking her to forgive me released me from the anguish I was experiencing. This simple act set us both free.

I learnt to accept that there were some things I could not change such as my son’s recovery. I had to concentrate on what I could change. I learnt that if a crisis happened, or any problem that disturbed me, to be careful not to let this hurt me. I didn’t let things get out of proportion and reminded myself to live life ***one day at a time*** or even one hour at a time if the burden was too much for me. I would ask myself if I could cope for just one more hour. I learnt acceptance. I stopped my stinking thinking and my self pity and started my own recovery. I realised I had been strengthened by my son’s illness. I knew the joy of each new day, confident that it could hold good things for me, even though these gifts were small and had to be balanced with the fragile existence ahead of me.

Like my friends we never lost hope that we could lead a serene life if we practised ***one day at a time***. I have found happiness and contentment. I feel very privileged to have been part of my son’s journey but his journey is his. I must not interfere with this unless he wants my help. I have a responsibility to be happy and to free my son of any guilt he might feel so that he too can be free to live his life – ***one day at a time***.

A carers passion for equality and inclusion by Rose Beard:

My passion for mental health issues is to speak up for those unable to speak up for themselves. I want to support people with mental health issues to be included, accepted and valued. For many years I have stood for my son who has down syndrome and a diagnosis of bipolar disorder. I now also stand for my daughter who suffers from depression and drug addiction issues. My passion is for all people with mental health issues to have a greater quality of outcomes in their life. Each person has gifts, strengths and talents to offer the world. This is my passion for equality and inclusion for people with mental health issues.

Mental health carers are invited to respond to or submit articles for Carers Corner. Please contact Rosie Fisk by phone on 6296 9900, or email mhcarers@carersact.org.au

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Carers ACT News

On Course for Carers

Create your own Life/Communication Book

Communication books or Life books are living, creative documents that have proven to be very useful tools for caring families. Life books can be functional or may tell a story. This series of practical workshops will provide the time, resources and support for carers to create a life book for themselves or the person they support. The course is presented by Annette at CIT Skills for Carers.

Date: Wednesdays 15, 19 May and 12 June (need to attend all)

Time: 10.00am – 2.00pm (lunch will be provided)

Bookings essential: To RSVP call Eleanor on 6296 9908 or email rsvp@carersact.org.au

For suggestions on future topics, please email Marie at marie.falconer@carersact.org.au

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Keeping Families Connected

The Keeping Families Connected group is a five week group run by Carers ACT for carers of family members with mental health and who may have alcohol and/or other drug dependencies. Our experienced counsellors work closely with the group to develop new strategies to cope with mental illness and how it affects family relationships.

Through weekly meetings, this program enables carers to build relationships with other carers experiencing similar situations while expanding their knowledge of mental illness. Please call 1800 242 636 to register expressions of interest.

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Mental Health Carer – Southside Support Group

This is a support group for family members and friends caring for someone living with mental health issues. The group meets on one Wednesday evening most months.

Date: 24 April, 22 May, 26 June, 24 July, 28 August, 25 September, 23 October, 27 November
Time: 6.00pm – 8.00pm
Location: Woden Smith Family, Corner of Launceston & Easty Streets, Woden
For further information please call 1800 242 636 or email rsvp@carersact.org.au
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Mental Health Carer – Northside Support Group

This is a support group for family members and friends caring for someone living with mental health issues. The group meets on the second Tuesday of each month.

Date: 14 May, 11 June (dates for second half of 2013 coming soon)
Time: 5.00pm – 7.00pm
Location: The Carers Hub, Carers ACT, 2/80 Beaurepaire Crescent, Holt
For further information please call 1800 242 636 or email rsvp@carersact.org.au
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Mental Health Carers Respite — 1800 052 222

The Mental Health Respite Program provides flexible respite and other supports to meet the individual needs of carers of people with severe mental illness, autism or intellectual disabilities and their families. Services include respite options based on needs assessments, information and referral, links to education programs, counselling, peer support, advocacy services and social and recreational activities. Please call 1800 052 222 or email mentalhealth.respite@carersact.org.au. The Mental Health Respite program is funded by the Australian Government Department of Families, Housing, Community Services, and Indigenous Affairs. For more information about supports available under this Program visit the Carers ACT [website](#).

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Counselling at Carers ACT — Supporting Family Carers — 1800 242 636

Did you know that Carers ACT can provide short-term counselling for family carers? Our counselling service can help you manage difficult situations and balance caring in your life. Qualified counsellors are located on site in Holt and Woden to provide carers with confidential and professional face-to-face and telephone counselling. Call the Carer Advisory Service to make an appointment 1800 242 636. Click here for more information on [support that Carers ACT counsellors can offer mental health carers](#).

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Carers ACT new disability ebulletin

Carers ACT have released a new ebulletin to keep carers informed and up to date with the latest news about DisabilityCare Australia. [Click here to download the disability ebulletin](#) and to subscribe.

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Carers Victoria – Current research and best practice

Keep up to date with the latest evidence based research, current trends and best practice models. Click [here to access KnowledgeNet](#).

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ACT News

Carers Skills at CIT

Medical Emergencies – a session for family carers

This session provides practical information relating to emergency situations of particular concerns to carers, things that can happen at home or when you are out and about, such as choking, seizures, CPR, burns, falls, poisoning and cuts. Note: this is not an accredited first aid course. Facilitator Lyn Kennedy is an experienced first aid trainer and CIT teacher.

Date: Wednesday 8 May

Time: 10.00am – 12.00pm

Location: DISH (Disability Information Support Hub) meeting room, Oatley Court, Belconnen

Cost: Free

To register phone 6207 3628 or email CarerSkills@cit.edu.au

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Supporting someone with Depression – a short course for family carers

These sessions are designed to provide information about depression and available supports as well as an opportunity to better understand and deal with the issues and challenges that arise when someone you love is depressed. It is also a chance to meet other people in similar situations and explore ways to keep going. Facilitator Jenny Thompson has worked in the Canberra community for over 25 years as a psychologist, counsellor and trainer.

Dates: 3 sessions (Thursdays) – 23, 30 May, 6 June

Time: 2.00pm – 5.00pm

Location: CIT Woden, 160 Ainsworth Street, Phillip

Cost: Free

To register phone 6207 3628 or email CarerSkills@cit.edu.au

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Living a healthy life with long term conditions

As a carer, do you have a chronic health condition? Or, are you caring for someone who has any condition lasting six months or longer, such as asthma, arthritis, cancer, obesity, diabetes or heart disease? This evidence based course runs for six weeks and is being conducted for CIT Skills for Carers by ACT Government Health Directorate in partnership with Arthritis ACT and SHOUT Inc. Facilitator Virginia Rasheed has been a Registered Nurse for 40 years and most of her roles have been as a nurse educator dealing with a range of chronic health conditions. A Peer Leader who has personal experience of living with a chronic condition will co-facilitate the course.

Dates: 6 sessions (Mondays) – 6, 13, 20, 27 May and 3, 17 June

Time: 2.00pm – 4.30pm

Location: Phillip Health Centre, Corinna Street, Woden

Cost: Free

To Register phone 6207 3628 or email CarerSkills@cit.edu.au

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LivingWorks Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST)

ASIST is presented by Lifeline Canberra. ASIST is a two-day interactive workshop which aims to improve participants' suicide awareness and prevention skills. The course is presented by LivingWorks-accredited facilitators, who use internationally standardised resources and materials. Participants are trained to recognise when a person may be at risk and how to respond to improve the immediate and long-term safety of the person at risk. After completing the course, participants will be able to:

- recognise the warning signs
- discuss suicide with a person at risk in a direct manner
- develop a 'safeplan' for people at risk
- help the person to keep themselves safe!

Date: 18 and 19 April

Time: 9.00am – 5.00pm

For further information or to download the registration form, visit www.act.lifeline.org.au, phone 6204 6402 or email training@act.lifeline.org.au

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Accidental Counsellor Training

The Accidental Counsellor course is presented by Lifeline Canberra. Accidental Counsellor is a two-day workshop that provides participants with fundamental skills in crisis support counselling and dealing with difficult clients and situations. The course also covers topics such as dealing with people who are angry, highly distressed, or experiencing effects of a mental illness.

The training runs over two days. After completing the course, participants will:

- have an understanding of and be able to demonstrate active listening skills
- understand the foundations of developing and maintaining effective and productive relationships with their clients
- be able to deal appropriately with difficult clients.

Date: 11 and 12 April or 24 and 26 April or 30 and 31 May

Time: 9.00am – 5.00pm

Cost: The standard rate for the Accidental Counsellor course is \$400 per participant, or \$360 per participant for not-for-profit organisations and pension card holders.

For further information or to download the registration form visit www.act.lifeline.org.au, phone 6204 6402 or email training@act.lifeline.org.au

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Justice of the Peace community service at ACT Libraries

A justice of the peace is now available at:

Belconnen Library every Thursday from 11.00am – 1.00pm

Erindale Library every Saturday from 11.00am – 1.00pm

Dickson Library every Friday from 11.00am – 1.00pm

They are available to assist with:

- administering of oaths or affidavits, witnessing statutory declarations and taking affirmations
- witnessing of signatures
- attesting and certifying of documents.

No appointment is necessary. This is a free service for ACT residents. [Click here for more information.](#)

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ACT Ministerial Advisory Council on Women – Survey on how women with disabilities are faring

The ACT Women's Plan 2010-2015 is undergoing a mid-term review. The ACT Ministerial Advisory Council on Women (MACW) is undertaking consultation online and in sub-groups to find out how all ACT women are faring. Julia Gilchrist, our representative on MACW will take our feedback and ensure it is part of the review.

WWDACT would be grateful if you could forward this survey to women with disabilities in your contacts <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/WWDACTfeedbackWomensPlan2013>.

There are 19 questions, but none are compulsory. Alternatively, general comment can be emailed to sudata@optusnet.com.au

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Review of the Mental Health (Treatment & Care) Act, 1994 – Consultations on the Second Exposure Draft

The ACT Government's Review of the Mental Health (Treatment and Care) Act 1994 is well advanced, with a final Amendment Bill expected to go before the Assembly later this year. The Review, undertaken by the ACT Health Directorate and the Justice and Community Safety Directorate aims to ensure Canberra's Mental Health Act will meet the needs of our community and bring Canberra's legislation into line with important mental health reforms happening here and in other Australian states and globally. A wide range of community organisations, stakeholders and interest groups including mental health consumers and carers has provided valuable input. Community feedback on the first exposure draft released late 2012 has been considered by the Review Advisory Committee and incorporated as appropriate in a second exposure draft.

The second exposure draft is now available for further public comment and submissions will be accepted until 28 May 2013.

[Click here to register for the Carers ACT carers consultation on 29 April.](#) If you are unable to attend on the 29 April please review the following schedule for other consultations: [Click here to download consultation schedules.](#)

All public comment received by 28 May 2013 will be considered by the Review Advisory Committee for the final Amendment Bill. To download copies of the Review Documents and for details of how to provide feedback please visit the ACT Government's community engagement website 'Time to Talk' website at <http://timetotalk.act.gov.au/>

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Learn about human rights and self advocacy for people with disabilities

Understand human rights for people with disabilities and how they may be applied every day. Gain confidence to support people with disabilities making their own decisions and skills to promote and support self-advocacy.

Who:

Anyone interested in learning to support people with disabilities to speak up for themselves within a human rights framework, community and support workers, family members, teachers, coaches, neighbours - you.

What:

In this course you will learn about:

- Human rights for people with disabilities, including guiding documents, conventions and law
- Advocacy, self-advocacy and supported decision making
- Balancing duty of care, dignity of risk and self-advocacy
- Skills and strategies to assist people to develop their self-advocacy skills
- Local resources & information

Time: 9:30 – 4.00pm
Date: 15 May
Location: Griffin Centre, 20 Genge St, City
Cost: \$80 per community organisation participant
\$110 per government/corporate participant

If you are interested in finding out more about the workshop, or putting your name down to do one, please complete and return the registration form on our website or call our training team on 6257 4005. [Click here for more information](#) or contact us to arrange your own workshop!

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CatholicCare Suicide Prevention Program

CatholicCare ATAPS Suicide Prevention Program provides intensive short term support over 1 – 2 months for people experiencing suicidal ideation. The service offers a number of face to face sessions and some care co-ordination to assist the individual to build protective factors and decrease acute risk factors. Click [here for more information and to find out who is eligible](#).

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MHJHDAS Smoke free environment newsletter 30

Click here to [download the latest newsletter for the smoke free environment](#).

National & International News and Research

beyondblue and MHIMA – Engaging CALD Communities Online Forum: Invitation to Participate

Are you working in the area of mental health providing services or support to people from

culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds? *beyondblue* and MHiMA are pleased to invite you to participate in an online forum which will take place from 10 – 30 April 2013. This forum has been developed to explore issues related to engaging people from CALD backgrounds to reduce the impact of mental health issues. The forum will also provide opportunities for information sharing and collective learning across a range of disciplines, workplace settings and locations within Australia.

To register your interest and become a member of this online forum, please click on the 'Forum Registration' box on the MHiMA homepage at: www.mhima.org.au. If you have any queries, please contact Amy Baker: amy@mhima.org.au or (08) 8302 2643.

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Report highlights the need to address multiple disadvantages and challenges faced by young carers

A Federal Government commissioned report by Rob Bray of the Australian National University's Social Policy, Evaluation, Analysis and Research Centre provides multi-faceted and sometimes disturbing insights into the characteristics, experience and post-care outcomes for young carers receiving Carer Payments and Carer Allowances.

Young carers are children and young people up to the age of 25 who care for a relative, partner or friend who is frail aged or who has an illness, disability, mental health or alcohol or other drug issue. In Australia approximately 340,000 children and young people have caring responsibilities. Of these 20,363 received financial assistance in the form of Carer Payments and Carer Allowances during the period covered by the survey.

“This report reminds us that many children and young people with caring responsibilities are living with great socioeconomic disadvantage,” said Dr Tim Moore President of Carers Australia. Click here to [read the Carers Australia media release](#). Click here to [download the full report](#).

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YDAS research project

YDAS received funding through the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) Practical Design Fund to carry out a living-options research project. The research looks at practical housing and support options that make it possible for young people with disabilities to move to more independent living situations.

They want to hear from young people (and their families) about what they want and need to feel confident about their living situation. They invite you to fill out an online survey.

If you have a disability, click here: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/9Q2FKDR>

If you are the parent or guardian of someone with a disability (including psychosocial), click here: <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/9RKJZW3>

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Boost in support for people with mental illness and their carers

Australians with severe mental illness, their families and carers will have greater access to support services and other practical assistance locally in their communities due to new Australian Government funding. In the ACT there will be increased Personal Helpers and

Mentors, and Carers ACT will provide services for mental health carers in North Canberra. Click here to see the [successful Personal Helpers and Mentors and Mental Health Respite Carer Support Providers, including Carers ACT](#). Click here [to read the full media release](#).

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The National LGBTI Health Alliance Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Project

The National LGBTI Health Alliance Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Project will be in Canberra from Thursday 2 to Saturday 4, May 2013 to provide training programs on LGBTI mental health and suicide prevention.

- Rainbow Blues: Depression and Anxiety in LGBTI people (Thursday)
- The Suicide Closet: Effective suicide interventions for LGBTI people (Friday)
- From Dying to Thriving: Suicide in LGBTI people and what we can do about it (Saturday)

Organisations and individuals with an interest in LGBTI mental health are encouraged to be part of these workshops. More information on workshops and how to register can be found at <http://www.lgbthealth.org.au/mindouttraining>. Registration is essential for all workshops.

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In the media

- [Beds deleted as mental health plans revised](#)
- [Mental health plans an 'appallingly managed process': Opposition](#)
- [Australian First: \\$25 million National Centre for Cognitive Decline opened](#)
- [What can we learn from Indigenous culture about mental health?](#)
- [Tony Abbott to cycle through region on Pollie Pedal](#)
- [Youth Week Launch of National Youth Awards](#)
- [New partnership to make work places mental health friendly](#)
- [Report highlights disadvantage among indigenous offenders](#)
- [Expert slams Manus detention centre](#)
- [Using technology to boost mental health GenYs](#)
- [Sleep disorders linked to depression in young women](#)
- [Regions ready for key Mental Health Initiative](#)
- [Winter blues identified as mental health issue](#)
- [\\$7.9 million for partnership projects to improve the health of Australians](#)
- [Treatment of mental health needs a sound application](#)

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If you or someone you know may be at risk of suicide contact Lifeline 131 114, beyondblue 1300 224 636, or Salvo Care Line 1300 363 622.

The opinions expressed in this E Bulletin do not necessarily reflect the opinions and views of Carers ACT.

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