

Glossary and Definitions

Carer

A person who cares for a consumer and whose life may be affected by this commitment.

Consumer

Refers to a person making use of a mental health service.

Mental Health Clinicians

Refers to any member of the mental health team including the psychiatrist, registrar, resident, nurse, occupational therapist, clinical psychologist or social worker.

Holistic Assessment

A holistic assessment looks at all aspects of a consumer's life, not just the symptoms of their mental illness. In a holistic assessment, relationships, housing, finances and work, as well as the physical, emotional, spiritual health and cultural background will all be considered.

Questionnaires / Instruments / Outcome Measures

All these terms have the same meaning.

Mental Health Inventory (MHI)

The questionnaire that adult consumers may complete.

Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ)

The questionnaire that parents and/or adolescents may complete.

What if I have other questions?

If you would like to discuss any aspect of this initiative please don't hesitate to ask a staff member who will assist you.

For additional information the following agencies may be able to assist:

ARAFMI

(Association of Relatives and Friends of the Mentally Ill)

Ph: (08) 9228 0577 Fax: (08) 9228 0440

Freecall: 1800 811 747

Carers Association of WA

Ph: (08) 9444 5922 Fax: (08) 9444 8966

Freecall: 1800 242 636

Council of Official Visitors

Ph: (08) 9226 3266 Fax: (08) 9226 3977

Freecall: 1800 999 057

Office of Mental Health

Ph: (08) 9222 4099 Fax: (08) 9222 2351

WA Association for Mental Health

Ph: (08) 9420 7277 Fax: (08) 9420 7280

Western Australian Community Advocacy Group

Ph: (08) 9221 7848 Fax: (08) 9325 7061

Telephone Interpreter Service

Call Telephone Interpreter Service (TIS) on 131450 for an interpreter and ask to speak to the Office of Mental Health on (08) 9222 4099.

Acknowledgment

This leaflet was developed by carers with the assistance of the WA Association for Mental Health.

The Department of Health sincerely appreciates their input and assistance.

Printed November 2002



Consumers, Carers and Clinicians

*working together to
improve the quality of
mental health care*



Department of Health
Government of Western Australia
Office of Mental Health

Introduction

The Department of Health is committed to the continual improvement of mental health and quality of life for people affected by mental illness. One important way to achieve this is by making thorough assessments of consumers.

As part of this assessment, the consumer you care for may be asked to fill in a questionnaire. These questionnaires are referred to as outcome measures.

What are Outcome Measures?

Outcome measures are questionnaires that gather information about a consumer.

Some questionnaires (outcome measures) will be completed by clinicians and some completed by consumers.

What is the purpose of Outcome Measures?

The use of questionnaires (outcome measures) will help mental health clinicians better understand and address consumers needs.

The information obtained from the questionnaire will be analysed and the results will be made available to the consumer.

How can I contribute?

Clinicians will be encouraged to obtain information about consumers from as many sources as possible. This may include asking carers (with the consumers permission) their opinion on what they have recently observed about the consumer. This information is vital in providing a better understanding of the needs of the consumer.

Presently there are no specific questionnaires for carers of adult consumers, however, the information that carers provide will help clinicians make a holistic assessment of the consumer.

What will the questionnaires ask?

Adult consumers may be asked to complete the Mental Health Inventory (MHI). This questionnaire was selected by adult consumers for use in Western Australia. The MHI will take 15 – 20 minutes to complete and asks questions about how the consumer is feeling.

The Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) has been selected for children and/or adolescents and is completed by either parent and/or adolescent. The SDQ asks questions about how carers and/or consumers have been feeling over the last six months.

Consumers may be offered a questionnaire to complete when they start using public mental health services, when they are reviewed by a service and/or when they are discharged from a service.

The questionnaire is meant to reflect only the consumer's feelings. Therefore, it is best if no one helps the consumer complete the questionnaire.

Consumers do not have to complete this questionnaire, but if it is completed it will provide clinicians with important information that can be used in a care plan.

What are the benefits of these questionnaires?

- As a result of better understanding consumer needs, optimum care can be given by mental health clinicians.
- Over time clinicians can learn more about the effectiveness of treatments and interventions in helping people with a mental illness.
- Clinicians have the opportunity to develop a care plan with the input of consumers and their carers.
- A long-term benefit for Western Australia is better planning for mental health services.
- Consumers will receive a holistic assessment of their psychological and social situation. The information collected from this assessment will be available to all

treating mental health clinicians. Sharing of this information will result in a more efficient service for the consumer.

How will confidentiality be maintained?

The current practices governing confidentiality and freedom of information apply to all outcome measure information.

What is happening in our State?

The use of outcome measures is common practice in mental health services throughout the world. All States and Territories around Australia are making the collection of outcome measures a part of their everyday clinical practice.

Mental Health Services in WA will start using the outcome measures in November 2002. Inpatient and community mental health services across all age groups will be involved. All clinicians in WA will be trained to use the outcome measures.

How else can I be involved in improving services for consumers?

The Department of Health is committed to consulting and involving carers at all levels (e.g. policy, planning and training). If you are interested in participating please contact WAAMH (WA Association for Mental Health) on (08) 9420 7277 or the Carer's Association of WA on (08) 9444 5922. Please see the back of this brochure for information on those indicated and other helpful agencies.

Collection of Consumer Outcome Measures is part of the Western Australian Mental Health Information Development Plan (MHIDP) initiative.