

“How To”

A brief manual
to support
Implementation

A PRACTICAL GUIDE FOR WORKING WITH CARERS OF PEOPLE WITH A MENTAL ILLNESS

Developed by the Private Mental Health Consumer Carer Network (Australia) Ltd



Private Mental Health Consumer
Carer Network (Australia) Limited

engage, empower, enable choice in private mental health

The Practical Guide for Working with Carers of People with a Mental Illness (the Guide) aims to support mental health professionals to engage and work with families, carers and significant others in a partnership approach in accordance with a number of national, state and territory policies and legislation.

Implementation of the six Partnership Standards within the Guide and use of the self-assessment tools provides evidence to Accreditation Agencies of your organisation's ability to meet the criteria for National Standards for Mental Health Services - Standard 7: Carers and some of the criteria within the National Safety and Quality in Healthcare Standards 2nd Edition. Implementing the Guide assists in driving both of these national standards in a cost-effective manner. The Guide and the self-assessment tools assist organisations to determine how they are progressing in relation to carer inclusion, provides specific operational guidance for improvement and prepares them for implementation of the Carer Experience Survey (CES).

Six demonstration projects have been undertaken across Australia and the results from these projects were analysed to identify key learnings to support other organisations with implementation of the Guide. This Manual includes an overview of some of these key learnings to support organisations with implementation. The full report, including an overview of each demonstration project is available from the online library workingwithfamiliesandcarers.com.au

Key findings include the importance of leadership and management buy-in at all levels, active management involvement and support throughout the project, and family inclusive training and supervision in creating the cultural change necessary to attain the six partnership standards outlined in the Guide. It was identified that a period of 6 – 12 months is required as a minimum to implement the necessary training and strategies to create noticeable change in practice from implementation of the Guide. The resources developed during the course of the project are included in the online library. The e-learning modules proved effective in supporting the implementation process and the self-assessment App simplifies implementation.

Having an external organisation driving the project has been equally important as it reduces the workload on an already stretched workforce and provides objectivity and impetus to the project. The demonstration projects highlighted the value of allowing adequate time for preparation and promotion and ensuring that, whilst carer inclusion is everyone's business, responsibility must be invested in one professional workstream in collaboration with the carer peer support worker, where there is one. Use of co-design involving consumers and carers working together with staff in the development of strategies to embed the partnership standards also proved valuable components of projects.

Another key learning is that carer perceptions of family inclusion may differ from those of clinicians as evidenced in one of our demonstration projects. It is important to seek both carer and health professional perceptions for baseline and post implementation data, to identify areas for improvement and to capture changes in practice.

Following the steps outlined below will give you an understanding of how your organisation rates against the six partnership standards and also provides operational strategies for improving your organisation's performance under each partnership standard. Organisations can then review their performance after implementation of the Guide. It enables you to ascertain the extent to which carers experience family inclusion before implementation of the Guide and carers' experience of improvements in family inclusive practice following implementation of the Guide.

1. Duration:

Our recommendation is that implementation of the Guide should be undertaken over a minimum of 6-12 months.

2. Preparation:

- Consider including the whole service or department.
- If possible, have an external organisation driving the implementation with project officers who are allied health professionals and have lived experience as a carer.
- Involve and ensure buy-in from Management all levels. It is important to ensure that there is a high degree of understanding of the need and value of carer inclusion and what would be involved in implementing this project.
- Consider the best timing for implementation. Due to the pressure on services, usage and uptake of the Guide might not always be possible at all times. Good times for implementation could be the introduction of a new model of care, preparation for or responding to the Carer Experience Survey (CES) or preparation for accreditation. There will always be moments where the introduction of the Guide in the service of carer inclusive culture will work, and those opportunities should be grasped.
- Review our Demonstration Project Review report including Key Learnings available from the free online library

workingwithfamiliesandcarers.com.au for examples of how other organisations have implemented the Guide, and key learnings to support your approach.

3. Collect baseline data from health professionals using the Carer Guide App:

Implement an initial pre-assessment to collect baseline data using the Carer Guide App available from carerguide.com.au. You can set up organisations so that staff self-assessments can be reported at an organisation level at any point in time, and allows for a comparison between two points in time.

4. Collect baseline data from Carers:

This could be achieved by creating a survey using tools such as Survey Monkey using similar questions to the Guide App to enable comparisons between health professional and carer evaluation of services

5. Staff Training, Supervision and Support:

We recommend staff complete the [six online modules](#) linked to each partnership standard available from workingwithfamiliesandcarers.com.au to become familiar with the Guide and identify opportunities to improve carer engagement in their practice.

Other staff training and support could include workshops or supervision session. More ideas are available from the examples in our Demonstration Project Review report. The level of training required and best approach to training will depend on the individual needs of your organisation. Clinical training and supervision will be important in creating the cultural change needed which will take time and require consistent, ongoing organisational support and leadership to attain.

6. Review, source or develop information for Carers

Staff are more likely to engage when they have activities or resources to offer – it is important that services for families and carers are provided with as much support as possible. The Demonstration Projects have achieved success in engaging with carers by using additional resources in the form of an external Project Officer who can draw together carer and consumer volunteers and working groups. This has enabled co-design of welcome packs, orientation material, posters and carer support information. In many instances, the work of families in supporting their family member is made immeasurably more difficult through hardship and lack of material support.

7. Identify Carers

Success in this area underpins implementation of all of the partnership standards. It is important that consideration is given to ways to build engagement with young carers, Indigenous and Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) family/ carers. A co-design approach to identifying barriers and creating solutions has been shown to be invaluable in addressing such problems. Data retrieval processes have also proved important to ensure that data collected in one part of the service is accessible across the service.

8. Collect post-implementation data from health professionals

Health professionals should undertake a mid or post-implementation self-assessment using the Carer Guide App to enable comparisons at an organisational level to highlight changes in practice and further learning / areas of focus for ongoing work. We recommend undertaking this at least 6 months after the baseline data has been collected and the 6 e-learning modules have been accessed, and again at 12 months. Some organisations may want to undertake self-assessments more frequently and review action plans on a quarterly basis. Organisations can extract reports to see comparison data between two points in time.

9. Collect post-implementation data from Carers

Ensure enough time has been allowed for implementation strategies, then undertake a post-implementation survey with Carers after approximately 6 or 12 months.

10. Analyse results and identify recommendations for continuous improvement

Undertake an analysis of the health professional self-assessments and carer surveys to identify key achievements, areas of strength and recommendations for future improvements.

Quick Reference Guide

1. Duration 6 - 12 months

2. Preparation

- Whole of Service
- Engage Project Officers with Lived Experience
- Get Management Buy-in
- Consider timing
- Read our Demonstration Project Review report

3. Collect baseline data from health professionals using the Carer Guide App

4. Collect baseline data from Carers

5. Staff Training, Supervision and Support

- Complete the 6 online learning modules from workingwithfamiliesandcarers.com.au
- Organise other workshops and/or supervision for staff

6. Review, source or develop information for Carers

7. Identify Carers

8. Collect post-implementation data from health professionals

9. Collect post-implementation data from Carers

10. Analyse results and identify recommendations for continuous improvement

Access free Guide Implementation resources

Access resources to support implementation including online training, fact sheets, templates, guides, legislation and more from the online library workingwithfamiliesandcarers.com.au

Tell us about your experience of implementation and expand examples of practice available to all services

Contact us at admin@pmhccn.com.au to discuss your experience of implementation and help us expand our examples of practice to support implementation.