

THE MH ECO TOOLKIT

What: The MH ECO Toolkit comprises a collection of structured methods that assist organisations to utilise consumer and carer experience to improve mental health services.

The MH ECO Toolkit enables organisations to tap into the biggest untapped resource in mental health – the consumers and their families. We offer tools that allow consumers and their carers to be recognised as producers and participants, not just receivers of systems. We offer tools that enable users to play a much greater role in helping identify needs, propose solutions, test them out and implement them together with staff.

The toolkit was developed by members of the research teams from the peak state consumer and carer organisations, who have 5 years experience in developing consumer and carer involvement tools. The peak bodies represent the voices of consumers and carers – and the tools are grounded in lived experience.

Individual tools can be used flexibly to work with consumers and/or carers and staff to address a particular issue or the whole suite of tools can be used to identify a broad range of issues that are of concern to consumers and carers at a particular service. They can be used in a range of different scenarios.

The tools enable services to:

- **Collect** data from consumers and carers – the toolkit provides questionnaires (developed by consulting consumers and carers), to organise computer assisted telephone interviews, how to run focus groups and conduct one on one interviews.
- **Identify** key issues for consumers and carers. It includes a guide for analysing data collected into broad themes and touchpoints.
- **Co-design** - turning experience into plans for action. It includes a step by step guide on how to organise collaboration and co-design groups and the roles/function of each group.
- **Implement** – the toolbox will assist organisations in the implementation of service quality improvement.

The toolkit comes with a one day training program for persons who will be implementing the toolkit in their organisation.

Who: The MH ECO toolkit will be of value to any organisation working with consumers and carers who want to utilise their lived experience of the service to improve service quality.

In particular the toolkit will be of interest to any organisation that has a commitment to improving quality experience of people accessing their mental health services

Why: The MH ECO Toolkit offers organisations many benefits:

- It offers an evidence based, action oriented, collaborative, effective and flexible set of tools.
- It offers organisations a succinct, step-by-step process for working with consumers and carers to identify issues and work on solutions – it is not an open ended process. The resulting action plans are more likely to be implemented effectively because they have been developed collaboratively, and therefore everyone owns the solution.
- It enables more efficient use of an organisation’s time and resources. New legislation and policies at national and state level require increased consumer and carer participation. The MH ECO toolkit makes it much easier for organisations to introduce new tools to do this.
- Can make a positive contribution to the accreditation process.
- Can generate outcomes beyond sharing experience and implementing action plans that improve services. It can provide a way for participants to engage with the services of which they are part, potentially contributing over time to increasing levels of self-determination, empowerment and confidence; outcomes that may also promote mental health and wellbeing.
- Increase knowledge and confidence for consumers, carers and mental health professionals in how to work collaboratively thereby effecting cultural change.
- Strengthen the consumer and carer workforce through strong personal and professional development and capacity building which is achieved through training and involvement in the development and implementation process.

Organisation	Consumers	Carers
Meeting accreditation Utilising lived experience of users as an asset Upskilling work force Agent for culture change – outcomes beyond action plans Structured approach for engaging C&C Meeting requirements of national and state legislation and policies that increasingly require consumer and carer participation.	Using sum of individual experiences to drive system improvement Lived experience - valuable resource Empowering Training Increase knowledge & confidence of consumers	Supportive, contribute to system improvement Context of improved outcomes for themselves and consumers Increase knowledge & confidence of carers Skilling opportunity

The MH ECO team are available for consultation in any part of the MH ECO process an organisation may wish to engage additional expertise and resources for.