

The Secretariat for the National Mental Health Consumer and Carer Forum and the National Register of Mental Health Consumer and Carer Representatives is making an important, and well-considered, change in title descriptors.

This is a move to support and recognise the power of language, as well as ensure we are at the forefront in the shift towards contemporary and inclusive language for those with an experience of mental ill-health.

We understand that the terms 'consumer' and 'carer' are considered by many to be outdated and narrow, based in the medical model and not representative of the spectrum of experiences.

As such, we are starting to address this change in language by changing our job titles from using the words 'consumer and carer' to using 'lived experience':

- Lead, Lived Experience Programs
- Manager, Lived Experience Programs
- Lived Experience Programs Officer

We acknowledge that the term 'lived experience' holds a gamut of connotations for different people, both in the literature and in the community.

In this instance, we are using this term inclusively, with the intention that we recognise all people with a lived experience of mental ill-health and their family, loved ones, and carers. This is in acknowledgement of the diversity of experience in this sector; that many people identify as a person with a lived experience of mental ill-health and as a carer of a family member or loved-one, as well as the fact that many carers also experience mental ill-health or poor mental health.

Our team seeks to adopt contemporary and inclusive language that does not marginalise or exclude.

We recognise that many do not identify with 'consumer' or 'carer' and that there is a vast array of experiences under these two terms, and many who do not identify with an either/or experience. Furthermore, we acknowledge that for some, these terms and the differences of experiences they hold, *do* further their voice and their stories. We acknowledge that this too is valid and important. This evolution in terminology is one that we take to move toward inclusivity whilst also appreciating that these terms are still in use across the sector, and are yet to be fully replaced.

We remain committed to strengthening the voices of all consumers and all carers with an experience of mental ill-health.

Our team, and Mental Health Australia, aspires to demonstrate to our stakeholders that *lived experience* is a term that is inclusive, less divisive and strengths-based, in a purposeful step to move away from terminology that minimises the human being and their experience with the mental health system in Australia.

