
MENTAL HEALTH AUSTRALIA & THE NATIONAL MENTAL HEALTH CONSUMER & CARER FORUM

Advice to governments on evidence-informed and good practice psychosocial services

Australian governments currently have an opportunity to fund services that will result in truly transformational change for people who need support.

What is this advice to governments?

The Advice presents research evidence and views of people with lived experience of mental health challenges, carers, family and kin on the range of services Australian governments should fund to address the gap in psychosocial services outside the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).

“The evidence is clear. We know psychosocial services work. Now, let’s make investments that result in transformational systemic change that will truly support people to thrive.”

- National Mental Health Consumer and Carer Forum

What are psychosocial services?

Psychosocial services support people with mental health challenges in their personal recovery, to connect with their community and what’s meaningful for them. This can complement clinical supports, and include support for care coordination, personal recovery, accommodation, education, employment and social and community connection. Psychosocial services also enable carers, family and kin to participate in employment and engage with the community.



Why is it important now?

People across Australia are missing out on the psychosocial supports they need. Australian governments are due to report on the level of unmet need in psychosocial support outside the NDIS by March 2024. National Cabinet has also agreed to commission Foundational Supports outside the NDIS (to be jointly funded between the Commonwealth and State/Territory governments) which the NDIS Review recommended should include psychosocial supports.

What does the advice recommend?

Australian governments should use the evidence in this Advice to governments when considering design and funding of psychosocial services outside the NDIS. New psychosocial support investment should align with the Principles outlined in this paper.

Australian governments must co-design new psychosocial support arrangements with people with lived experience of mental ill-health, carers, family and kin, service providers, key academics and other key stakeholders. The information presented in this paper can form the basis for further consultation.

How was the advice developed?

Mental Health Australia and the National Mental Health Consumer and Carer Forum developed this advice through a literature scan; consultation with over 100 experts including people with lived experience of mental health challenges, carers, family and kin, researchers and service providers; and targeted surveys responded to by over 200 people with lived experience of mental health challenges, carers, family and kin.



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What's in the Advice to governments on evidence-informed and good practice psychosocial services?

Psychosocial service principles - psychosocial services should:

1. Be co-produced, or failing that co-designed, with people with lived experience of mental health challenges, carers, family and kin
2. Be human rights focussed, recovery-oriented, trauma informed, strengths based, person-led, focus on capacity building and be holistic
3. Be accessible, including: a proactive outreach component, low barriers to program entry, accessible for people with disability, delivered in a location that meets the need of the person and at no cost
4. Be inclusive and culturally safe
5. Facilitate integration of supports
6. Be time unlimited and flexible enough to respond to need and choice
7. Develop the peer and non-peer psychosocial workforce
8. Be evidence-informed, include robust evaluation and foster innovation
9. Be relational (as opposed to transactional) and, in doing so, be inclusive of carers, family and kin
10. Include supported decision making and safely support dignity of risk.

Evidence-informed and good practice **psychosocial service models** include:

- care coordination focussed models
- recovery focussed models
- accommodation focussed models
- vocation focussed models
- education focussed models
- social and community connection-focussed models
- family focussed models
- step up step down focussed models
- models that encourage choice around medication use
- models including partnerships and collaboration between psychosocial services and other services
- models integrated with drug and alcohol services
- social and emotional wellbeing models
- multicultural models.



Evidence-informed and good practice **discrete psychosocial services** include:

- peer-based psychosocial services
- physical health management
- daily living skills
- wellness recovery action plan
- mental health carer respite
- psychosocial support for young people
- psychosocial support for older people
- creative art therapies
- nature-based therapies
- animal assisted therapies
- recovery colleges
- groupwork
- sensory spaces
- time use or occupational balance
- services that link clinical services with psychosocial services.

In **implementing psychosocial services** governments should consider:

- clearly identifying lines of responsibility for funding, planning, implementation, collaboration and evaluation of psychosocial services
- ensuring appropriate mechanisms are in place for accountability and continuous improvement
- supporting the workforce required to deliver quality psychosocial services
- tailoring psychosocial services to their location and ensuring they are responsive to diversity
- ensuring funding mechanisms incentivise delivery of quality psychosocial services.



Read Advice to governments on evidence-informed and good practice psychosocial services at:

<https://mhaustralia.org/submission/advice-governments-evidence-informed-and-good-practice-psychosocial-services>