

MENTAL HEALTH DRUG AND ALCOHOL SERVICE

# Information Guide for Families & Carers



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**Health**  
Western NSW  
Local Health District

Adapted from the artwork of Jasmin Sarin

This document was developed  
with input from consumers and carers

Western NSW Local Health District acknowledges the traditional custodians of the lands across our region. We acknowledge that we live and work on Aboriginal lands. We pay our respects to Elders past and present and to all Aboriginal people.

## A note about language

Language has an impact on people and the use of inclusive and contemporary language minimises stigma and changes culture over time.

After consultation, the terms used in this guide are:

1. 'person/people with lived experience' refers to a person who:
  - has had an experience of mental illness and has recovered
  - are currently experiencing mental illness and are on their recovery journey
  - has had a drug or alcohol experience and have recovered
  - are experiencing a drug or alcohol problem and are on their recovery journey
  - is carer of a person who has had or is currently experiencing a mental illness or has experience with drug or alcohol use.
2. 'patient' refers to a person who is currently in hospital
3. 'consumers and carers' may be used when referencing a group of people

## Interpreter Services

We provide a free interpreter service to people who do not speak English or who are deaf. Please ask our staff if you need an interpreter.

**Need an Interpreter?**



Ask one of our staff for help.

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# Western NSW Local Health District

Western NSW Local Health District (WNSWLHD) covers 31% of NSW. It is one of the largest LHDs in NSW with a population of 276,000 people and 13% of our residents identify as Aboriginal. The communities we serve are diverse – people live in large regional centres, rural and remote towns and villages. Mental Health Drug and Alcohol Services are made up of community and inpatient services located across the District.



# Introduction

Thank you for taking the time to read this guide. We hope you will use it to better understand your role as a carer of a person living with a mental illness or drug or alcohol dependence, learn how the public mental health system works, and find out where you can get more information and support. You may be someone who is new to caring or you may have cared for family or friends before. Whatever your experience this guide is for you.

*“Caring for someone can be challenging but it can also be very interesting and rewarding. Learning about mental illness or drug or alcohol dependence, understanding medication and treatments, building a good working relationship with clinicians, and asking questions will help you make sense of what is happening and help you to be a confident and effective carer.”*  
Helen, carer.

*“I am a young carer who looks after my mother who has mental health issues. I have been one for as long as I can remember and would not change it for the world! A young carer is similar to a carer, with the only difference is that they are under 25 years old.*

*By being part of creating this guide, I was able to make sure that carer’s views were not forgotten.”*  
John, young carer’

# Who is a carer?

'A carer is any individual who provides care and support to a family member or friend who has a disability, mental illness, drug and/or alcohol dependency, chronic condition, terminal illness or who is frail.' – Carers NSW Australia, for more information visit: [www.carersnsw.org.au/facts/who-are-carers](http://www.carersnsw.org.au/facts/who-are-carers)

Caring involves learning when, how, and how much support to offer. This will change depending on the person's needs and wants.

Some of the ways carers may provide support include:

- Emotional support such as; visiting, calling regularly, or just listening
- Providing meals, helping with cleaning, grocery shopping, caring for pets or other household needs
- Helping with appointments, paying bills, Medicare claims, remembering to take medication, and other similar tasks
- Assisting the person in their interests such as; going to the gym, the pool, gardening or going to the movies
- Advocating with health professionals to monitor physical health and potential medication side effects



## Aboriginal families and carers

Many Aboriginal carers accept caring as a normal part of family and community life and may not think of themselves as carers. WNSWLHD assist Aboriginal families, carers and kinship groups to access culturally appropriate carer supports.

The question 'Are you of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin?' is one of the routine questions that staff ask so that the service can offer culturally appropriate care and support to meet peoples needs which includes:

- Aboriginal clinicians: if the person you are caring for would like to be linked in with an Aboriginal Clinician please ask staff
- As a family friendly service we like to accommodate individual needs where possible, please talk with staff if the person you care for would like to have extended family included in family meetings and decision making
- Family and carer rooms, quiet family friendly visiting spaces are available, please ask staff how to access
- Carer supports, information and support services to assist carers are listed on pages 31-36

*"When our nephew got sick we didn't know what was happening and in our family caring for our nephew was everyone's business. It was hard sometimes, we all had different ways of caring for him but we also had to help each other so we could support him on his journey. We knew his journey was going to be hard but we were all there for him. To us he was just our nephew and we loved him."*  
Aunty Alice Williams – Wiradjuri Elder

# Recovery-oriented practice

A recovery-oriented service partners with consumers and carers in all areas of care planning, treatment and goal review (while respecting the person's consent around privacy and confidentiality).

The Mental Health Drug and Alcohol Service works within a framework of recovery-oriented practice and person centred care which includes:

- Focusing on the strengths and abilities of people experiencing mental health or drug or alcohol dependence
- Building on the person's strengths, supports, independence and healthy lifestyle
- Supporting the person's real choices and promoting the legal and human rights of the person

*“This flower represents being able to keep pushing through the rubble and grow in the face of adversity, regardless of the situation. You have the ability to let inner strength and light shine through.”*



*Kalina Davis  
Photographer from Dubbo*



# The treating team

The treating team works in partnership with the person and with consent their family and carer. These are some of the professionals that may be part of the treating team:

- **Psychiatrist**  
Is a specialist who can prescribe medication and lead clinical care, a referral is needed to see a Psychiatrist
- **Psychologist**  
Provides a range of psychological assessments and therapies
- **Registered Mental Health Nurse**  
Provides care-coordination including medication, practical support and counselling
- **Occupational Therapist (OT)**  
Assesses and works with people to improve daily functioning and independence
- **Social Worker**  
Talking therapies, living skills, assistance with Centrelink, emergency accommodation and social supports
- **Aboriginal Clinician**  
Is an aboriginal person who can provide care coordination and supports other team members to provide care that is culturally safe and responsive to the needs of aboriginal people
- **Peer Worker**  
Use their mental health and/ or drug or alcohol lived experience to support people and model hope and recovery
- **Allied Health Assistant**  
Work under the supervision of professionals to provide therapeutic and program related support
- **Diversional Therapist**  
Work with people of all ages and abilities to support leisure and recreation programmes.

# Working together with the treating team

It is important for families and carers to build a good working relationship with the treating team. Although they may not be able to discuss details of what is happening, they will be able to listen to your concerns and speak to you without breaching confidentiality. Some example questions you may consider asking include:

- Where can I find more information about mental illness, drugs or alcohol?
- How can I be involved in discharge planning and have a copy of the discharge plan?
- What is the medication, what does it do, are there any side effects?
- What if a dose of medication is missed?
- What other treatment options are available?
- How can I get a second opinion?
- What are the early warning signs of becoming unwell again?
- Are there any local carer support services that can help me?
- What are my rights and responsibilities?
- How can I be included in meetings concerning the person's care and treatment?
- Who do I contact if I have any concerns?
- What do I do in an emergency?
- Is there a follow up appointment?

*“Don't be afraid to speak up it can help treatment and might prevent a crisis from happening.”*

*Helen*

# Planning

In Mental Health Drug and Alcohol Services a range of plans are used to guide treatment. Some of these plans support consumer and carer partnerships with clinicians.

**A Wellness Plan** is used by the person to lead their own care, particularly in terms of symptom management, relapse prevention and crisis planning.

**Care Plans** are usually completed in partnership with the person receiving care, the clinician and sometimes the carer or family member. The care plan sets out goals of treatment and identifies supports.

**Advance Care Planning** includes thinking and talking about the person's values and the type of health care they would like to receive if they became seriously ill. There is no particular form for this discussion.

**Advance Care Directive** is the result of advance care planning and is the written record of a person's wishes preferences and instructions about future medical treatment. An advanced care directive will only be used when the person does not have capacity to decide for themselves or to communicate their wishes.

The *Making an Advance Care Directive* information booklet can be found at: <https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/patients/acp/Publications/acd-form-info-book.pdf>

# Western NSW Local Health District Mental Health Drug & Alcohol Service

Mental Health Drug and Alcohol Services are made up of community and inpatient services located across the District.

## Community Mental Health Services

Community Mental Health Services are divided into three age groups. Child & Adolescent Mental Health Service (0 – 24yrs), Adult Mental Health (25 – 64yrs) and Older Persons Mental Health (65yrs+).

### Community Mental Health can:

- Conduct a mental health assessment,
- Provide case management and a range of supports to suit the person's needs,
- Work with the person's family and carers (with the person's consent),
- Work with Psychiatrists, inpatient services and GPs to give the best care,
- Provide crisis support,
- Help with admission to an inpatient mental health unit,
- Offer support from Aboriginal Mental Health Drug & Alcohol Clinician or Trainee,
- Offer support from a Peer Worker,
- Provide support following discharge from a mental health inpatient unit.

Your local community Mental Health Service is:

Staff contact name:

Phone:

# Community Drug and Alcohol Services

**Drug and Alcohol Helpline 1300 887 000** is an intake service for referral to drug and alcohol services. The helpline clinician can also provide advice and information over the phone. Available 8.30am to 4.30pm Monday to Friday excluding public holidays.

**Community Drug and Alcohol Counselling** work within a harm minimisation framework and provide counselling by specialist drug and alcohol clinicians. Most drug and alcohol services are co-located with mental health services, supporting treatment and shared care.

**Opioid Treatment Program (OTP)** provides opiate treatment options to people who have an opioid dependence. Dosing is provided through public clinics, hospitals, or community pharmacies.

**Cannabis Clinic** offers services to people wanting to reduce or cease their cannabis use. The service is based in Orange and provides an outreach service to Bathurst.

**Substance Use in Pregnancy and Parenting Program (SUPPP)** is a coordinated approach to engaging and maintaining pregnant women in drug and alcohol treatment, providing pre and postnatal care, and parenting skills. SUPPP clinicians are based in Bathurst, Dubbo and Orange and provide support to surrounding communities.

**MERIT Program (Magistrates Early Referral Into Treatment)** MERIT is a 12 week intensive program based in Orange and Dubbo, with outreach services to Wellington, Bathurst, Oberon, Forbes and Parkes courts.

# Inpatient Mental Health and Drug and Alcohol Services

**Mental Health Acute Inpatient Units** provide short to medium term treatment options to people experiencing mental distress. The units have a range of health staff providing care to people during their stay.

LOCATION	UNIT NAME	AGE GROUP
Dubbo	Gundaymarra Adult Acute	18 – 64 yrs
Orange: Bloomfield Campus	Mental Health Intensive Care Unit (MHICU)	18 – 64 yrs
	Adult Acute	18 – 64 yrs
	Amaroo	18 – 64 yrs
	Older Persons Acute	65yrs +
	Child and Adolescent Mental Health (CAMHS) Inpatient	12 – 18 yrs

**Involuntary Drug and Alcohol (IDAT)** provides involuntary treatment for people with a severe substance dependency. A person must meet mandated criteria to be suitable for involuntary admission to this statewide unit.

LOCATION	UNIT NAME	AGE GROUP
Orange: Bloomfield Campus	IDAT	18yrs +

**Mental Health Sub Acute Units** provide a short stay residential care structured recovery program.

LOCATION	UNIT NAME	AGE GROUP
Bathurst	Panorama	18yrs +
Dubbo	Barramina	18yrs +

# Inpatient Mental Health and Drug and Alcohol Services

**State-Wide Units** provide medium to long term residential treatment and rehabilitation for people who have long lasting symptoms of mental illness.

The treating team works with people and their families/carers to improve their quality of life and support community living.

LOCATION	UNIT NAME	AGE GROUP
Orange: Bloomfield Campus	Turon (female)	Age 18yrs +
	Manara (male)	18yrs +
	Macquarie (male) Forensic Unit	18yrs +
	Castlereagh (male) Medium Secure Unit	18yrs +

Unit Name:

Staff Member I can contact:

Phone:

# Visiting an inpatient unit

To maintain a safe environment some inpatient units are locked and may have conditions on visiting hours or bringing items into the unit.

When you visit your family member or friend, health staff will walk you into the unit and then walk out with you when you are ready to leave. Some things aren't allowed in the units and you may be asked to leave your personal belongings in a locker. These include cigarette lighters, handbags and phones. Cards and gifts are great to receive while someone is in hospital - check with staff before taking them to your friend or family member.

You may like to go for a walk, sit in a quiet outdoor area or spend time in the Family and Carer Room. Please ask staff if the person you wish to visit has leave arrangements and can leave the unit with you. Leave is set by the treating team in consultation with the psychiatrist and include how long the person can be away from the unit and if they are able to go into town.

**Please phone ahead to find out if children under 16 years are able to visit and visiting times for each Unit.**

## Family and Carer Rooms

Family and Carer Rooms are located in some units and are provided to allow for a quiet family friendly visiting space. Please ask staff about how to access these spaces.





# Official Visitors Program

Official Visitors are appointed by the NSW Minister for Mental Health to visit people in mental health inpatient facilities in NSW. They can assist you to talk to hospital staff, advise you about your rights and about any concerns you may have about your mental health treatment.

Official Visitors are independent from the health system and come from the community from a range of backgrounds.

They aim to safeguard standards of treatment and care, and advocate for the rights and dignity of people being treated under the Mental Health Act 2007.

Patients or carers can request to see an Official Visitor, or call 1800 208 218 between 9am and 5pm Monday to Friday, free of charge from within NSW.

For more information call 1800 208 218 or visit:

<https://officialvisitorsmh.nsw.gov.au/Pages/OVP.aspx>

# How to escalate your concerns

If you notice a worrying change in a person's condition whilst they are in hospital and you feel they need a second opinion you can escalate your concerns through the REACH process.

**Dubbo:** 0417 083 199

**Orange:** 6369 7723

## Are you worried

about a recent **change** in your **condition**  
or that of your loved one?

**If yes... REACH out.**

### WHAT IS REACH ABOUT?

**R**

We know you may recognise a worrying change in your family member or friend's condition or, you as a patient.

**E**

**1** We encourage you to engage with the nurse or doctors looking after you to share your concern.

**A**

**2** Ask the nurse in charge for a 'Clinical Review'. This should occur within 30 minutes.

**C**

**3** If still concerned make a REACH call by dialling the number below on the bedside phone or ask for the ward phone. State the ward and patient name.

**H**

Help is on its way The REACH number to call for this hospital is

**We encourage you to first speak with your treating nurse who may be able to help you to resolve your concerns.**

**R.E.A.C.H out to us**  
Because together we make a great team.



CLINICAL  
EXCELLENCE  
COMMISSION

The R.E.A.C.H program-- was developed by the NSW Clinical Excellence Commission's Partnering With Patients Program

## Discharge plan

Discharge planning includes referrals and plans put in place to support the care of a person returning to the community after a hospital admission. It links hospital treatment with community based health care. Discharge planning involves the person, the treating team, the community health service and can also include families and carers. If the person is being discharged to your home or you are the designated or primary carer you will be included in the planning.

## Leaving hospital

At the time of discharge the person leaving hospital should receive discharge documentation which can be called a discharge or transfer summary.

Information that should be included on the summary is;

- The patient's name and current contact details
- Date of discharge from hospital
- Current medication/s
- Carer's name and contact details
- Follow up health care arrangements or details of support services such as; community mental health service contact and appointment details.
- GP phone number and appointment details

The person is responsible for their own transport home. If the person is unable to get home by public or private transport, please talk with a staff member.

# NSW Mental Health Act (2007)

The NSW Mental Health Act (2007) is legislation that governs the way care and treatment is provided to people who experience a mental illness.

It aims to protect the rights of people with a mental illness while ensuring they have access to appropriate care. The Act requires the planned treatment to place as little restriction as possible on the rights and liberty of the person.

## Designated Carer

The designated carer is nominated by the person with a mental illness or identified by the treating clinician according to the Act, who has a close relationship with the person and has an interest in their welfare. The person can nominate two designated carers. When a person is admitted to a mental health inpatient unit, the nomination of a designated carer should be done as part of the admission process.

## Principal Care Provider

The principal care provider may be nominated in addition to a designated carer by an authorised medical officer if they are responsible for providing day to day support and care for the person. The principal care provider can then receive or provide relevant information about the persons care and treatment.

A carer cannot be the principal care provider if they have been excluded in writing by the person from being given notice or information.

# Information sharing with Designated Carers and Principal Care Providers

Under the NSW Mental Health Act (2007), designated carers and principal care providers are required to be notified of certain events. This includes when a person has been admitted to or discharged from a declared mental health facility, or when a person will be reviewed by the Mental Health Review Tribunal. It is important to understand the person's and your rights and responsibilities under the NSW Mental Health Act (2007).

Designated carers and principal care providers are also entitled to:

- Request information on medication and dosages currently or recently administered to the person,
- Apply for the person's discharge from a mental health facility, or appeal to the Mental Health Review Tribunal if application is refused,
- Be consulted in relation to discharge planning and subsequent treatment, and be provided with appropriate information as to follow-up care.

For more information NSW Mental Health Act (2007) Guide Book link:

<https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/mentalhealth/resources/Pages/mhact-guidebook-2007.aspx>

Most people with a mental illness get support from community mental health services or inpatient mental health services voluntarily.

## What is a schedule

In order for a person to be brought to hospital against their will, a 'Schedule 1' will be completed by an authorised person. This is a legal document that authorises a person to be transported by police or ambulance and detained in a declared mental health facility against their will so a further assessment of their mental state can be made. You may hear this referred to as 'scheduling' someone, or that the person has been 'scheduled'.

After the person has been scheduled they will be assessed and further treatment options developed in accordance with the Mental Health Act.

## Mental Health Review Tribunal

The tribunal is an independent body made up of a community member, a psychiatrist and a lawyer who will make and review orders about the treatment and care of people with a mental illness under the provisions of the NSW Mental Health Act 2007.

Tribunal hearings are held by video conference. Carers may be able to attend hearings or provide written feedback to the tribunal prior to the hearing. The primary carer should be notified of the proposed hearing.

For more information and fact sheets visit:

[www.mhrt.nsw.gov.au/the-tribunal](http://www.mhrt.nsw.gov.au/the-tribunal)

# What type of orders can the Mental Health Review Tribunal make?

## Community Treatment Order (CTO)

A CTO authorises compulsory care for a person living in the community. It sets out the terms under which a person must accept medication and therapy, counselling, management, rehabilitation and other services while living in the community. It is implemented by a mental health facility that has developed an appropriate treatment plan for the person.

## Involuntary Patient Order

A person's involuntary stay in a mental health facility is determined by The Mental Health Review Tribunal and includes the maximum amount of time the person can be held as an involuntary patient in hospital.

The Tribunal must consider whether the person is:

- suffering from a mental illness (as defined by the Act); and
- at risk of serious harm to themselves or others.

The Tribunal will:

- take into account the person's continuing condition, including any likely deterioration; and
- consider whether care of a less restrictive kind is appropriate and reasonably available to the person

For more information [www.mhrt.nsw.gov.au/the-tribunal](http://www.mhrt.nsw.gov.au/the-tribunal)

# Guardianship

A person may need a guardian if they have trouble making their own decisions. The Guardian and Administration Board decides if a guardian needs to be appointed to make a range of personal and health decisions.

A Guardian may be an individual or the Public Trustee and Guardian.

People who are guardians can access support from the Private Guardian Support Unit on 1800 451510.

## Public Guardian

The Public Trustee and Guardian is only appointed as guardian as a last resort, for example, where an individual is unavailable, unsuitable or unwilling to be appointed or, if the willing parties are in conflict about the needs and interests of the protected person.

The Public Guardian can provide advocacy, health and welfare decisions for people under guardianship.

## Power of Attorney

A legal document where you appoint someone to manage your financial affairs should you be unable to do so or if you do not wish to do so. This may include managing your assets such as properties and shares but does not include health or lifestyle decisions.

For more information contact 1800 451510

Or visit [www.tag.nsw.gov.au/](http://www.tag.nsw.gov.au/)



# Your Health Care Rights and Responsibilities

The Australian Charter of Health Care rights describes what you or someone you care for can expect when receiving health care.

## My healthcare rights

This is the second edition of the **Australian Charter of Healthcare Rights**.

These rights apply to all people in all places where health care is provided in Australia.

The Charter describes what you, or someone you care for, can expect when receiving health care.

### I have a right to:

#### Access

- Healthcare services and treatment that meets my needs

#### Safety

- Receive safe and high quality health care that meets national standards
- Be cared for in an environment that is safe and makes me feel safe

#### Respect

- Be treated as an individual, and with dignity and respect
- Have my culture, identity, beliefs and choices recognised and respected

#### Partnership

- Ask questions and be involved in open and honest communication
- Make decisions with my healthcare provider, to the extent that I choose and am able to
- Include the people that I want in planning and decision-making

#### Information

- Clear information about my condition, the possible benefits and risks of different tests and treatments, so I can give my informed consent
- Receive information about services, waiting times and costs
- Be given assistance, when I need it, to help me to understand and use health information
- Access my health information
- Be told if something has gone wrong during my health care, how it happened, how it may affect me and what is being done to make care safe

#### Privacy

- Have my personal privacy respected
- Have information about me and my health kept secure and confidential

#### Give feedback

- Provide feedback or make a complaint without it affecting the way that I am treated
- Have my concerns addressed in a transparent and timely way
- Share my experience and participate to improve the quality of care and health services



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**AUSTRALIAN COMMISSION**  
ON SAFETY AND QUALITY IN HEALTH CARE

For more information  
ask a member of staff or visit

[www.health.nsw.gov.au/patientconcerns/Pages/your-health-rights-responsibilities.aspx](http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/patientconcerns/Pages/your-health-rights-responsibilities.aspx)

# Privacy and confidentiality

A person's carer may be an important part of their support network. Carers can have a valued role in supporting the person. They can assist with care planning and delivery, with the agreement of the person.

If you have any information or concerns about the person's situation, symptoms, medication side effects, other health changes or your safety, it's important to share this with the treating team.

The treating team is bound by the NSW Mental Health Act, so they will not be able to discuss the person's care, but they will be able to listen to you and answer some of your questions without breaching confidentiality.

The treating team can also provide general information about ways you can support your family or friend. You can also ask about a referral for yourself for carer support options.

**You can find the patient information and privacy brochure in waiting areas of our services.**

<https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/carers/Publications/patient-info-privacy-brochure.pdf>



**Patient Information and Privacy**

**A GUIDE FOR CARERS AND FAMILY**

*"Carers play a crucial role as care partners. They are often experts in the care of the person requiring care and can assist with care planning and delivery, with the agreement of the care recipient"*

(NSW Carers' Action Plan 2007–2012)



**NSW** GOVERNMENT | **Health**

# Compliments, complaints and suggestions

We value feedback

There are three ways you can provide your feedback:

- Let the treating team know
- Contact the Manager of the health facility
- Or complete the feedback form on the Western NSW Local Health District website.

<https://wnswlhd.health.nsw.gov.au/for-patients/im-seeking-post-hospital-care/leave-a-comment-or-complaint#>

The care, comfort and satisfaction of you and your family is important. Should you have any questions or concerns about treatment in hospital or in the community we want to hear about them.

If you're not happy about how your concern has been managed you can contact the NSW Health Care Complaints Commission (HCCC) on 1800 043 059.

## Carer Experience of Service Survey (CES)

As a carer you have the opportunity to tell the service what worked, or suggest opportunities for improvement by completing the Mental Health Carer Experience Survey.

The survey focuses on carer's experience of the service not the experience of the person being cared for.

CES is implemented across the state so you can complete a survey even if you don't live near the person you are caring for.

CES is available in paper from our services or online at:

[www.youexperience.health.nsw.gov.au/CesWebsite](http://www.youexperience.health.nsw.gov.au/CesWebsite)

**Service:**

**Mental Health Carer Experience Survey**

This survey is about your experiences, as a carer over the last 12 months. By completing this survey, you will help the service better understand how to serve your carers towards the recovery of mental health consumers. If you care for more than one person, just think of one of these people when completing the questionnaire.

**WHO IS A CARER?**  
Carers can come from many different backgrounds but they share one thing in common as carers. They feel they are doing what anyone else would in the same situation looking after their family member, partner or friend. Carers are the family member, partner or friend of someone with a mental illness which has or is also affected by that illness. Carers provide support and assistance to the person with a mental illness.

**GETTING STARTED**  
Your responses to this questionnaire are anonymous. Your responses are very important to us so we would like you to provide an answer to each question. But you can skip a question if you wish. There is space at the end of the survey for you to provide additional feedback about your experiences.

Please do not tick the box for each question, do this:

1. You are caring for a family member, partner or friend who has contact with the mental health service in the last 12 months. How often did the following occur?						
2. You understand what you could expect from the mental health services provided and your family member, partner or friend.						
3. You were given an explanation of any legal issues that might affect your family member, partner or friend.						
4. You understand your rights and responsibilities.						
5. The personal services, health and social care services were taken into consideration.						
6. You were able to obtain cultural or language support (such as an interpreter) when you needed.						
7. You were given the opportunity to provide relevant information about your family member, partner or friend.						
8. Your experience as a carer was respected.						

# Crisis Planning

It is important for you as a carer to learn to understand the signs to be concerned about, learn how to respond appropriately, and know who to contact.

In a crisis it is often hard to make decisions, so it is helpful to have a plan about who to contact and when.

The treating team will work with you and the person you care for in developing a crisis plan. The crisis plan should include early signs that could indicate that the person is becoming unwell.

## Signs someone may be in crisis

- Self-destructive or high risk behaviours, such as taking large quantities of prescribed or non-prescribed medications or participating in significant self-harm,
- Suicidal thoughts and plans,
- Talking about hurting other people,
- Persistent anxiety or not being able to look after themselves because of a depressed mood,
- Hearing voices or having false beliefs that impact on themselves or others.

## What to do in a crisis

There are a number of options depending on the urgency of the situation.

- Encourage the person to speak with their GP about a mental health care plan to access extra support.
- Call a Community Mental Health or Drug and Alcohol staff member, please call them during business hours.
- Contact the NSW Mental Health Line on 1800 011 511, go to hospital, or call Emergency Services on 000.
- Contact the Alcohol and Drug Information Service on 1800 250 015, present to hospital, or call 000.
- You may need to call the Police or Ambulance on 000 if the person is threatening to hurt themselves, threatening to harm you or others, or causing serious property damage.

**For easy reference add your contact details here**

Community Mental Health or Drug and Alcohol Service contact:

GP contact:

# Carers – looking after yourself

Caring can be a rewarding experience however it can also be physically and emotionally demanding as well as financially difficult.

Getting the right support for yourself can be very worthwhile to help you and your family adjust to change, manage your own stress and care for yourself. Some carers may only need short term support, and others may want ongoing support and social connections.

It may take time to find the right support to suit you. Carer support networks are a good way to meet other people who are walking the same path, while providing opportunities for you to develop your caring skills and confidence and keep up to date with new developments.

As a carer it's important to take time to maintain who you are outside your caring role, so you can stay well yourself and stay connected to the community.

Things which you can do to look after your own wellbeing and take time for yourself can include:

- Making sure you get regular health checks
- Eat healthy food and do some exercise like going for a walk or joining a gym.
- Socialising with your own friends, joining a club or interest group,
- Taking time out for activities you enjoy at home such as reading, cooking or craft can all help to look after our own wellbeing.

The following pages provide you with carer support information.

# Family and Carer Mental Health Program (FCMHP)

The FCMHP is a partnership between WNSWLHD and Catholic Care Wilcannia-Forbes to provide support options to people caring for someone with a mental illness. The person you care for does not need to be in our services for you to access this Program.

The Program can offer:

- Education and training
- Individual support and advocacy
- Young carer support, information and social activities
- Support groups and social activities
- Support to access services such as counselling, NDIS, housing, GP, psychiatry, psychology, respite and allied health services
- Support carers cultural and language needs

If you would like more information please contact Catholic Care Wilcannia - Forbes:

<b>Dubbo</b>	<b>6883 4600</b>
<b>Bathurst</b>	<b>6334 2033</b>
<b>Orange</b>	<b>6360 0587</b>
<b>Narromine</b>	<b>6889 4932</b>



# Family Drug Support

Provides 24 hours 7 days a week support, resources and information for families and friends of drug or alcohol users including:

- Drug fact sheets and videos,
- Information on setting boundaries, coping and dealing with conflict,
- Links to support groups.

**1300 368 186** or [www.fds.org.au](http://www.fds.org.au)

# The Carer Gateway

The Carer Gateway supports carers and families who provide personal care, support and assistance to a family member or friend who has a disability, medical condition or mental illness or who is frail aged. These supports include:

- Phone counselling,
- Connecting with other carers through online forums,
- Self guided coaching,
- Some legal information.

The Carer Gateway also has detailed information on respite care and emergency care planning.

**1800 422 737** or  
[www.carergateway.gov.au](http://www.carergateway.gov.au)

*Stassi Austin*  
*Photographer from Cowra*





## Young Carers NSW

The Carers NSW Young Carers program aims to make a positive difference to young carers and their families through emotional support, information and referrals.

**02 9280 4744** or [www.youngcarersnsw.org.au](http://www.youngcarersnsw.org.au)

## My Aged Care

If you are 65 years or older (50 years or older for Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people), you may be eligible for aged care services. These services can help and support you, and may include:

- Domestic assistance,
- Personal care,
- Meals.

**1800 200422** or [www.myagedcare.gov.au](http://www.myagedcare.gov.au)

## NALAG

The National Association for Loss and Grief (NALAG) provides counselling and education for many types of loss, including that associated with mental illness, drug or alcohol dependence, trauma and chronic illness.

**6882 9222** or [www.nalag.org.au/grief-support](http://www.nalag.org.au/grief-support)

## 1800RESPECT

National sexual assault, domestic & family violence counselling service. Open 24 hours providing telephone and online counselling, information & referrals.

**1800 737 732** or [www.1800respect.org.au](http://www.1800respect.org.au)

# The National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)

Mental health services and the NDIS aim to work closely together to coordinate care for people with mental health conditions requiring both mental health and disability service supports. The services and supports aim to complement each other and not duplicate.

**1800 800 110** or [www.ndis.gov.au](http://www.ndis.gov.au)

## Legal Aid NSW

Legal Aid NSW provide free advice lawyers to assist with courts and tribunals across NSW.

**1300 888 529** or [www.legalaid.nsw.gov.au](http://www.legalaid.nsw.gov.au)

## Supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people

### Head to Health – Website

A resource for finding social and emotional wellbeing services and support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

<https://www.headtohealth.gov.au/supporting-yourself/support-for/aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-peoples>

# FINANCIAL SUPPORT

## Services Australia Centrelink

Carers may be eligible for financial support from Services Australia Centerlink.

### Carer Payment

The Carer Payment is an asset tested benefit and provides financial support to people who are unable to work in regular paid employment because they provide full time care to someone with a disability, mental illness or medical condition, or someone who is frail aged.

### Carer Allowance

The Carer Allowance is not asset tested and is a fortnightly income supplement for parents or carers providing daily care to a person with a disability, mental illness or medical condition, or to someone who is frail aged. Carer Allowance can be paid in addition to the Carer Payment.

**Carers line - 132 717 or visit:**

[www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/individuals/services/centrelink/carers-payment](http://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/individuals/services/centrelink/carers-payment)

# TRAVEL AND ACCOMMODATION

## Isolated Patients Travel and Accommodation Assistance Scheme (IPTAAS)

IPTAAS provides financial assistance towards travel and accommodation costs when a patient needs to travel long distances for treatment that is not available locally.

Ask staff for IPTAAS forms

**1800 478 227** or [www.iptaas.health.nsw.gov.au/For-patients](http://www.iptaas.health.nsw.gov.au/For-patients)

## Accommodation

Basic accommodation options are available for a small cost, and some may be subsidised through IPTAAS.

### Gosling Creek – Bloomfield Campus Orange

If you are visiting from out of town, basic accommodation is available for 18 years and over only.

**Phone 6369 8840 or 6369 8920**

### Ronald McDonald House - Orange

Provides accommodation for the families of children receiving treatment at the Orange Health Service.

**Phone 6363 1960** or [www.rmhc.org.au/programs/houses/nsw/ronald-mcdonald-house-orange](http://www.rmhc.org.au/programs/houses/nsw/ronald-mcdonald-house-orange)

### Macquarie Homestay - Dubbo

Provides patients and their partner or carer with accommodation while receiving treatment at Dubbo Hospital

**Phone 6885 4663** or [www.macquariehomestay.com.au](http://www.macquariehomestay.com.au)

# PHONE HELPLINES

## NSW Health Helplines

### **NSW Mental Health Line – 1800 011 511**

24 hour 7 day telephone triage, assessment and referral service staffed by mental health clinicians. Provides advice about clinical symptoms, urgency of need for care, and information about local service providers. Does not provide counselling.

### **Drug & Alcohol Helpline – 1300 887 000**

Provides referral into local drug and alcohol services. Available 8:30am – 4:30pm Monday to Friday.

## Other Helplines

### **Lifeline – 13 11 14**

National helpline for anyone experiencing a personal crisis or thinking of suicide. Trained volunteers are available 24 hours 7 days to listen and provide support and referral.

### **Suicide Callback Service – 1300 659 467**

24 hour 7 day service providing counselling, information and referral to carers and people at risk of suicide and those bereaved by suicide.

*“As a carer I have found many websites, apps and helplines to be useful. Online resources are a great way to find information on the persons’ mental illness or drug or alcohol use. I use online forums to connect with other carers going through a similar situation”. John*

# PHONE HELPLINES

## **Family Drug Support Line - 1300 368 186**

Provides non-judgmental support and information for families and friends of drug or alcohol users across Australia.

## **Alcohol & Drug Info Service (ADIS) - 1800 250 015**

Confidential and anonymous information, counselling, advice and referral service. Available 24 hours 7 days providing information such as safer injecting advice, parent advice, and detoxification.

## **Quitline - 137 848**

Resources and tools to quit smoking

## **Gambling Helpline - 1800 858 858**

Counselling, information and support 24 hours 7 days for people experiencing problem gambling.

## **National Sexual Assault, Domestic Family Violence Counselling Service - 1800 737 732 (1800 RESPECT)**

Sexual assault, domestic and family violence counselling and support services available 24 hours 7 days.

## **Health Direct - 1800 022 222**

24 hour 7 day health advice line staffed by Registered Nurses for clinical health advice.

## **Link2home - 1800 152 152**

For people who are homeless or who are worried they will become homeless, as well as for advocates acting on a person's behalf.

## **Butterfly - Let's talk eating disorders 1800 334 673**

A free helpline to support anyone concerned by eating disorders or body image issues, whether you need support for yourself or someone you care about.

# PHONE HELPLINES

## **Kids Helpline – 1800 55 1800**

24 hour 7 day confidential support and counselling service for kids aged 5 – 25 years. Provides advice for a wide range of issues including family, friends or school, abuse, mental illness, drug and alcohol use, homelessness and suicide.

## **QLife – 1800 184 527**

Telephone and online service available 3pm – 12am 7 days providing counselling and referral for people who identify as LGBTIQ+. Provides information and advice to family or friends.

## **ParentLine – 1300 1300 52**

Telephone counselling, information and referral service for parents and carers of children ages 0 to 18. Available 9am – 9pm on Mon – Fri and 4pm – 9pm on Sat and Sun.

## **MensLine – 1300 789 978**

24 hour 7 day telephone and online support, information and referral service for men with family and relationship concerns.

## **My Aged Care – 1800 200 422**

Australian Government's access line for aged care services for people over 65 years of age or Aboriginal people over 55 years of age

# Online Forums

SANE provides fact sheets on mental illness and treatments. SANE also hosts carers and consumer forums providing safe anonymous discussions for people living with or caring for someone with mental health issues. The forums are monitored 24 hours 7 days by mental health professionals.

[www.saneforums.org](http://www.saneforums.org)

## Apps

**BrainyApp:** Designed by Alzheimer's Australia, guides you on how to live a brain-healthy lifestyle and shows that what is good for your heart is also good for your brain.

**Hello Sunday Morning – Daybreak:** helps to manage and reduce alcohol consumption with the support of an online community, health coaches and tailored activities.

**Smiling Mind:** App and web-based program developed by a team of psychologists. Targeted programs at ages from 7 years to adult. Based on the concept of mindfulness.

**ReachOut WorryTime :** An app to help control everyday stress and anxiety by giving you a place to store worries, and alerting you when it's time to think about them.

**Youth Beyond Blue Check-in:** Steps on how you would approach someone if concerned about their mental health.

**BlackDog Snapshot:** general overview of your mental health, aims to point you in the right direction for assistance and help monitor your mood over time.

## Carer Websites

**Mental Health Carers NSW – [www.mentalhealthcarersnsw.org](http://www.mentalhealthcarersnsw.org)**

Peak body for mental health carers offering support and information to family and carers.

**Carers Gateway – [www.carergateway.gov.au](http://www.carergateway.gov.au)**

Practical advice and support for carers.

**Young Carers NSW – [www.youngcarersnsw.org.au](http://www.youngcarersnsw.org.au)**

Young Carers NSW website provides young carers with information and support.



## Websites

### **Reach Out** - [www.au.reachout.com](http://www.au.reachout.com)

Digital self helps tools and tips for young people and their parents to get through everyday issues and tough times.

### **Headspace** - [www.headspace.org.au](http://www.headspace.org.au)

A one-stop shop for young people aged 12 – 25 years who need help with mental health, physical health (including sexual health), alcohol and other drugs or work and study support.

### **SANE Australia** - [www.sane.org](http://www.sane.org)

Fact sheets, publications and videos about mental illness, treatments and support for carers and people living with a mental illness.

### **Way Ahead** - [www.directory.wayahead.org.au](http://www.directory.wayahead.org.au)

Directory of mental health and community services in NSW

### **Project Air** - [www.projectairstrategy.org](http://www.projectairstrategy.org)

Provides information and fact sheets about personality disorders and supports available.

### **Hearing Voices Network** - [www.hearing-voices.org](http://www.hearing-voices.org)

Information and support about hearing voices and seeing visions.

### **Embrace Multicultural Mental Health** - [www.mhima.org.au](http://www.mhima.org.au)

Provides information and resources for people from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds.

### **Beyond Blue** - [www.beyondblue.org.au](http://www.beyondblue.org.au)

Online counselling and support from 4pm to 10pm, 7 days a week, as well as a directory of e-mental health services and therapies.

## Websites

### **Family Drug Support** - [www.fds.org.au](http://www.fds.org.au)

Provides information on LGBTIQ+ mental and physical health, and programs and services in locations across NSW.

### **Your Room** - [www.yourroom.health.nsw.gov.au](http://www.yourroom.health.nsw.gov.au)

A place to get facts about alcohol and other drugs

### **NSW Health Mental Health** - [www.health.nsw.gov.au/mentalhealth](http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/mentalhealth)

A comprehensive list of services, programs and legislation.

### **Head To Health** - [www.headtohealth.gov.au](http://www.headtohealth.gov.au)

Australian Government digital gateway for finding mental health information, services and resources.

### **Australian Indigenous HealthInfoNet** - [www.healthinfonet.ecu.edu.au](http://www.healthinfonet.ecu.edu.au)

Comprehensive information about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health and wellbeing.

### **ACON** - [www.acon.org.au](http://www.acon.org.au)

Provides information on LGBTIQ+ mental and physical health, and programs and services in locations across NSW.

### **Disability Advocacy NSW** - [www.dsa.org.au](http://www.dsa.org.au)

Advocacy and help with the NDIS for people difficulties accessing services.

### **InsideOut** - [www.insideoutinstitute.org.au](http://www.insideoutinstitute.org.au)

Rethinking eating disorders from the InsideOut, dedicated to improving the lives of people with eating disorders and those who care for them.

# Mental Health Drug and Alcohol Service Phone Numbers

## Inpatient Units

Dubbo Gundamarra Adult Acute Unit .....	6809 8400
Orange Bloomfield Lachlan Building Switch.....	6369 8000
Orange Mental Health Intensive Care Unit (MHICU).....	6369 7677
Orange Adult Acute (AA) .....	6369 7651
Orange Child & Adolescent Mental Health Unit (CAMHS).....	6369 7315
Orange Older Persons Mental Health (OPMH).....	6369 7504
Orange Involuntary Drug & Alcohol Treatment (IDAT).....	6369 7701
Orange Amaroo .....	6369 7598

## Sub-Acute Units

Bathurst Panorama.....	6330 5809
Dubbo Barraminya .....	6809 8450

## Statewide Units

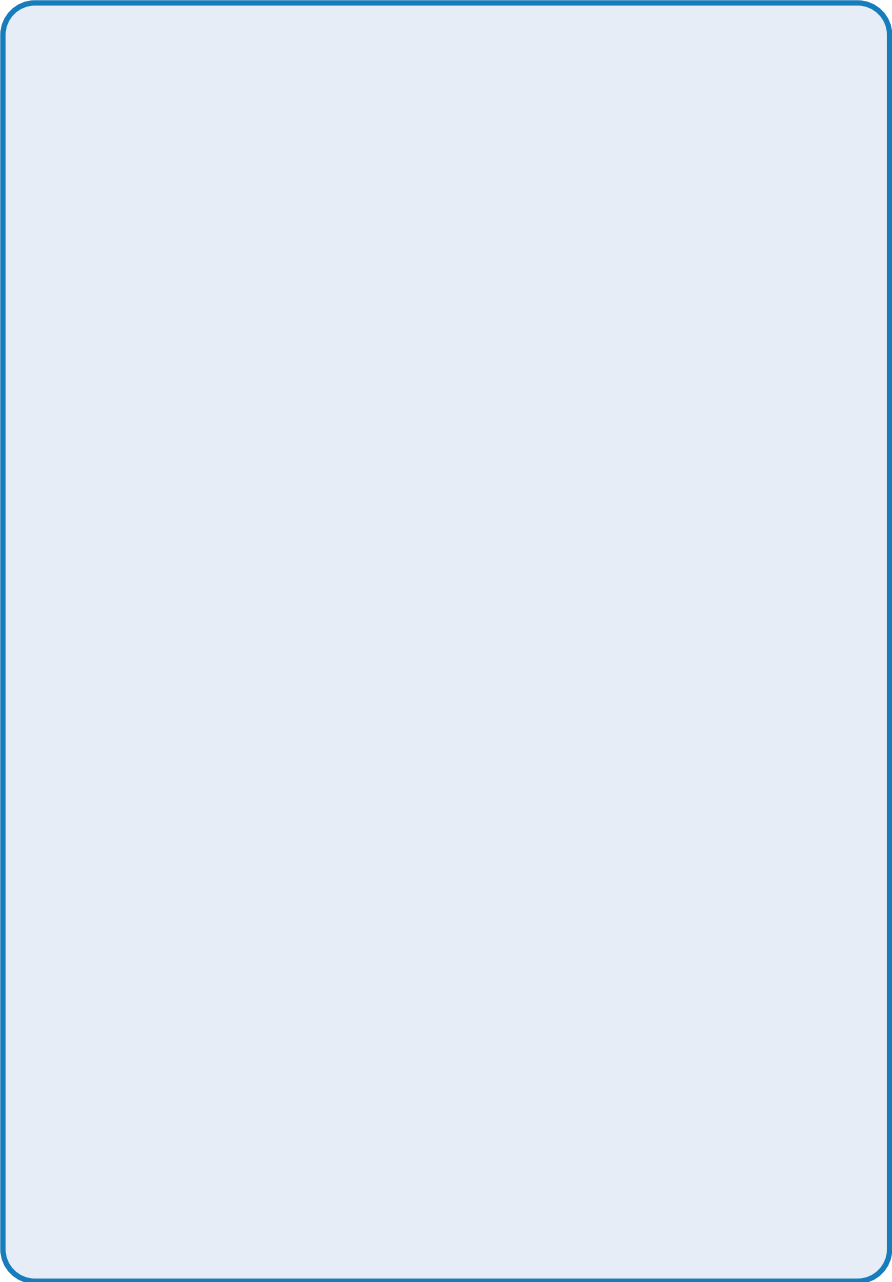
Orange Turon.....	6369 8956
Orange Manara .....	6369 8958
Orange Macquarie .....	6369 7567
Orange Castlereagh .....	6369 7533

# Mental Health Drug and Alcohol Service Phone Numbers

## Community Mental Health Drug and Alcohol Services

Bathurst.....	6330 5850
Bourke .....	6870 2600
Coonabarabran .....	6849 1600
Cowra.....	5338 5700
Dubbo .....	6881 4000
Forbes .....	6850 7300
Lightning Ridge.....	6820 5700
Mudgee .....	6371 9700
Orange Child & Adolescent Mental Health .....	6369 7320
Orange Curran Centre .....	6369 2030
Orange Drug & Alcohol Service, Kite Street .....	6393 4800
Orange Likemind.....	6311 1700
Parkes .....	6861 2570
Wellington.....	6845 5500
NSW Mental Health Line .....	1800 011 511
Drug and Alcohol Helpline .....	1300 887 000
Alcohol & Drug Information Line .....	1800 422 599

# Key contacts and helpful information



## Acknowledgments

WNSWLHD Mental Health Drug and Alcohol Services are committed to partnering with carers to provide information about resources and service delivery.

Thank you to everyone who helped inform the contents of this guide, especially the carers who shared their experiences of caring.

## Disclaimer

Thankyou for taking the time to read this guide, we hope you find it a useful resource. This guide does not intend to be exhaustive nor is it an endorsement of services included, but rather a list of available options. The information included is not a replacement for seeking professional care or advice.

## Guide to Mental Health Drug and Alcohol Services

A comprehensive resource for people who access Mental Health or Drug or Alcohol Services, which compliments the Information to Families and Carers Guide.

**For further information about the availability of services and resources for carers or to provide feedback please contact:**

**Western NSW Local Health District  
Mental Health Drug & Alcohol  
Family & Carer Coordinator  
6881 4000 or 0419 869 961**



Scan here to get your copy of the  
Mental Health Drug and Alcohol Service's  
Guide Book



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