

Consumer Information Sheet 4

Information for Carers, Family Members, Representatives and Support People

Guiding principles

The Act contains some guiding principles to enable the involvement of carers, family members, support people and representatives while also respecting individual consumer wishes. The Act requires people exercising responsibilities under the Act to:

- Recognise the difficulty, importance and value of the role played by families, carers, children and support persons of people with mental illness.
- Involve consumers and, where appropriate, their families and support persons in decision-making
- Recognise families, carers, children and support persons of people with mental illness as partners with mental health service providers in the provision of treatment and care to the extent that this is appropriate and consistent with their own wishes.
- Respect the wishes of families and support persons to the maximum extent possible and appropriate in the circumstances.

How can representatives and support persons become involved?

- You may request a mental health assessment from a medical practitioner by making an appointment with the GP or by contacting Access Mental Health – Helpline.
- You may be involved in the preparation of the person's treatment plan.
- You may make a complaint to the Principal Official Visitor if you have a concern.
- You may ask the Principal Official Visitor to visit the premises from which the person is being provided with services under the Act.
- You may ask the Mental Health Stream of the TASCAT (the Tribunal) to conduct a review, and, in some circumstances, you may be able to attend a Tribunal hearing. You can appear personally or be represented by an Australian legal practitioner, advocate or other person in relation to the proceedings.
- You may ask the Chief Psychiatrist to intervene directly with regard to a person's assessment or treatment.

How can parents become involved in their child's assessment and treatment under the Act?

Parents of children with mental illness, who are under 18 years of age, may give, withdraw or refuse consent to the assessment or involuntary treatment of a child if the child is not sufficiently mature to make the decision.

What rights do representatives and support persons have?

Under the Act, representatives and support persons have the right to be provided with information in a language and form that the representative or support person understands.

What information can I be given?

Under the Act:

- You may be provided with personal or confidential information about a person with mental illness if the person consents, or if the medical practitioner who is treating the person otherwise considers this to be necessary for the person's treatment or care.
- You may be notified of the person's admission to, transfer between, or discharge from hospital or a secure mental health unit.
- You may be notified of matters relevant to the person's leave from hospital or a secure mental health unit.

A parent of a child whose treatment and care is being provided under the Act also has the right to be given a copy of any documentation that is given to the child, unless the child objects to this occurring.

Representatives and support persons are encouraged to make contact with the person's treating medical practitioner and to provide the practitioner with any information that the representative or support person thinks the practitioner may need to be able to make appropriate decisions about the person's assessment or treatment.