



MI Fact Sheet Series

UNDERSTANDING AND MANAGING MENTAL ILLNESS

The mental health service delivery framework in Queensland

General Information

- Public and private, government and non-government, and hospital and community elements comprise the Queensland Mental Health System
- The state government is the major provider of acute services for people with serious mental illness
- The Department of Health oversees provision of authorised mental health services
- Services are primarily delivered by Health District Zones within the state (Northern, Central, Southern)
- Within each zone there are both:
 - Hospital Inpatient services
 - Community Mental Health Services
- There is also a number of statewide, regional and specialist services, for example, the Child and Youth Mental Health Service, Forensic Psychiatry, Torres Strait/ Northern Peninsula Area Community Mental Health Service
- Psychiatric Disability Rehabilitation Support Services are also provided in each region.

Adult Mental Health Services

Hospital Inpatient Services

- **Acute Inpatient Services** (wards) provide voluntary and involuntary short-term management during an acute phase of mental illness until sufficient recovery allows effective treatment in a community-based setting. Many units are located within general hospitals.

- **Secure/Extended Care Inpatient Services** provide a safe, supportive place for people with a serious mental illness whose behaviours may put themselves or others at risk. Their purpose is to provide a bed-based intensive treatment and care to clients who have unremitting and severe symptoms that inhibit their capacity to live in the community. These facilities can manage clients on an involuntary basis.

Community-based services and teams

- **Mobile Intensive Support Treatment Team (MIT)** provides treatment and support including case management for adults and young people 18 years old and over with mental illnesses. Services include consultation and liaison with other treatment agencies, referrals to other specialist agencies or services, specialised rehabilitation, assistance with living skills and crisis management. Consultation and support for families and mental health education and resource information are provided.
- **Community Mental Health Services** provide assessment, treatment, consultancy, continuing care and case management.
- **Inpatient and specialist health units** are residential services for people with serious mental illness and major psychosocial disabilities, which assist in preparation for community living.

Private psychiatric services

- Although General Practitioners (GPs) are generally in the private sector, in practice they form part of the public mental health system
- Private GPs are often the first point of contact for people with mental health problems. GPs may be more accessible than mental health specialists, likely to know about local support services and able to offer ongoing general medical treatment
- People with mental illness treated by Mental Health Services will most often be discharged to the care of GPs in their local community as soon as is practically possible. This makes having a relationship with a good GP very important
- GPs who work out of Mental Health Services work in multidisciplinary teams and are often well placed to work with people with mental health issues
- GPs are supported in their work by specialist mental health teams. These professionals provide assessment and support to people with anxiety and depression
- The most common way of seeing a private psychiatrist is through a referral from a GP, which allows the Medicare rebate to be claimed. (Fees vary, and some psychiatrists bulk bill). Especially in rural areas, private psychiatrists may not be available
- Private psychiatrists mainly provide outpatient services from their consulting rooms or inpatient services to private hospitals. They may have specialist interests (e.g. working with particular age groups or disorders, and specific therapies).

The mental health service delivery framework in Queensland continued...

- Private psychiatrists and GPs may work together with case managers and others in developing a management plan. The private sector incorporates private psychiatric hospitals, but these generally exist only in larger population centres, and they do not take people who require involuntary admission.

Psychiatric Disability Rehabilitation and Support Services

A range of services provides employment placement, support, information, day and residential programs and family respite. Some are run by not for profit organisations with government funding.

- **Psychosocial Rehabilitation Day Programs** assist people with severe psychiatric disabilities to improve their quality of life, participate in everyday activities and achieve an optimal level of independent functioning in the community. This objective is achieved through the development of social and living skills in a group context, through centre-based and community access programs.
- **Residential Rehabilitation** provides intensive psychosocial rehabilitation and support in-group accommodation prior to residents living independently.

The emphasis is on developing or regaining skills to deal with daily living activities. Emphasis is placed on developing a resident's confidence to begin or continue schooling, training or employment, as well as supporting positive contact with family and friends. Working in a group enhances self-esteem and social skills and provides important peer support. This form of rehabilitation is particularly helpful for young people who have recently developed serious mental illness.

- **Respite** provides a short-term change in environment for a client and a break for carers. It includes both formal and informal psychosocial rehabilitation components. It may involve day activities (including social and recreational), in-home support, holidays and adventure activities and residential components. Respite can be planned and/or regular and in some zones short notice respite is available.
- **Employment services** of both state and commonwealth departments provide employment placement and support to people with a mental illness. For example, in Supported Employment, a job coach may assist with learning the job and adjusting to the environment, so that people can return to work at their own pace.

Useful references

Mental Health Unit
www.health.qld.gov.au
07 3234 0608

Mental Health Association
Advice and support for consumers and carers
07 3271 5544

Legal Aid Queensland
1300 651 188

Mental Health Review Tribunal
07 235 9059

National Alliance of the Mentally Ill (USA)
www.nami.org

Schizophrenia Fellowship of Sth Qld Inc.
Fortitude Valley
www.sfsq.org.au

Schizophrenia Fellowship of Sth Qld
Gold Coast Branch, Southport
07 5591 6490

Mental Illness Fellowship of Nth Qld Inc
Hyde Park
www.mifnq.org.au

Mental Illness Fellowship of Australia
www.mifellowshipaustralia.org.au

Mental Illness Fellowship Victoria
www.mifellowship.org

Mental Illness Fellowship of Australia fact sheets

Mental health legal framework in Queensland

What can friends and family do to help a person experiencing mental illness?

Family and carer supports and services



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