



MI Fact Sheet Series

UNDERSTANDING AND MANAGING MENTAL ILLNESS

The mental health service delivery framework in Western Australia

General Information

- Public and private, government and non-government, and hospital and community elements comprise the Western Australian Mental Health System
- The state government is the major provider of acute services for people with serious mental illness. The Department of Health, Mental Health Division oversees provision of public mental health services. Services are provided through community mental health units, hospitals and community health centres
- A variety of non-government organisations also provide services
- Mental Health Services are delivered within areas in the state (27 metropolitan areas and 16 rural areas). Each area provides a multi-disciplinary team approach and provide both Hospital Inpatient services and Community Mental Health Services
- There is also a number of statewide, regional and specialist services, for example Centre for Clinical Interventions, Bentley Mental Health Services First Psychosis Liaison Unit, Aboriginal Psychiatric Service, Crisis Care – Family & Children's Services, Forensic Psychiatry.

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

- **Psychiatric Emergency Team (PET)** provides a 24-hour service which assesses people for hospital admission and referral to the appropriate Community Mental Health Clinic. This service 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
- 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). Private psychiatrists may not always be accessible, especially in rural areas

The mental health service delivery framework in Western Australia continued...

- Private psychiatrists mainly provide outpatient services from their consulting rooms or inpatient services to private hospitals. They may have specialist interests (eg working with particular age groups or disorders, and specific therapies)
- Private psychiatrists and GPs may work together with case managers and others in developing a management plan.

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. The Mental Illness Fellowship of WA, ARAFMI, GROW and Carers WA all provide such services.

- **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. The Lorikeet Clubhouse is one such program and is run by the Mental Illness Fellowship of WA.

- **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.
- **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 Illness Fellowship of Australia
www.mifellowshipaustralia.org.au

Mental Illness Fellowship Victoria
www.mifellowship.org

Office of Mental Health
www.health.wa.gov.au
1800 220 400

Psychiatric Emergency Team (PET)
1300 555 788

Rural WA Freecall
1800 676 822

Mental Health Law Centre
08 9328 8266
www.mhlcwa.org.au

Mental Health Review Board
www.mhrbwa.org.au

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

ARAFMI – Association of relatives and friends of the mentally ill
1800 811 747

Mental Illness Fellowship of WA Inc
08 9228 0200

Schizophrenia Fellowship
Albany and District Inc
08 9842 2204

Mental Illness Fellowship of Australia fact sheets

Mental health legal framework in Western Australia

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

Family and carer supports and services



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