



Mental Illness Fellowship of Australia (MIFA)

MIFA Siblings Project: Rationale for Survey Questions

The following are the rationale for the selection of questions used in the MIFA Siblings Project Research Study.

Section 1: Demographic Information

The support needs of siblings who have a brother or sister with a mental illness can be dependent on one's age, sex, geographical location, marital status and level of education. One aspect of this study is to explore the types of support identified by participants as well as their daily and life experiences of having a sibling with a mental illness and hence, how these relate to one's age in life, marital status and level of education. Geographical location can provide detail as to the scope and diversity of support services and resources available to participants from the area in which they live. This will assist each of the state and territory member organisations of the Mental Illness Fellowship to cater their service provision to the individual needs of their sibling population and to reduce the chance of duplication and gaps in the range of services offered.

Section 2: Sibling History Information

This section provides a snapshot of the sibling experience in relation to one's family situation, the role they hold within their family and the relationship(s) they have with their sibling living with mental illness. The experience of having a sibling with mental illness is unique and individual, however some commonalities in experiences and level of care or support provided to the sibling with mental illness have been found.

The role of participants in relation to their sibling with mental illness provides us with an understanding of sibling interactions, the level of care participants provide, and basic detail as to whether government supports have been sought and awareness of these supports.

This section also looks at the nature of the siblings' relationships with each other, their living situation and their geographical proximity to each other and how this relates to the support provided and needed by siblings.

Section 3: Your Experience as a Sibling

This section provides knowledge of the experience of having a sibling who has mental illness on the daily lives of participants. The daily challenges, life benefits and present and future concerns of participants will provide insight as what it is like to have a sibling who has

mental illness, and to identify those areas or aspects of life with which siblings need greater support or understanding.

This will allow us to review our services as to what degree we are meeting these needs as well as to provide staff in the field real-life, first-hand accounts and knowledge as to what it means to have a sibling with mental illness.

Section 4: Past Support Needs in regard to having a Sibling with a Mental Illness

This section allows participants to describe their past support needs and experiences in relation to seeking out these supports. Supports that were helpful and beneficial to participants as well as those that were not helpful can be identified. Supports that were needed but that could not be accessed for different reasons will also be identified.

This will provide MIFA and its member organisations with the knowledge of the types of supports to cater their programs and services towards, and to also work towards breaking down or removing barriers to access appropriate needed supports and services.

Section 5: Current Support Needs in regard to having a Sibling with a Mental Illness and

Section 6: Future Support Needs in regard to having a Sibling with a Mental Illness

These sections look at the current support needs of participants at this time in their lives and compare these with their anticipated support needs in the future. It will also provide understanding as to reasons for these support needs changing over time.

One aim from this study is that MIFA and its member organisations will provide services and programs that will be lifespan-specific in that they provide appropriate and needed services specific to what is going on for individuals in their life at different times in their life. In doing so, the longevity and sustainability in supports available for siblings will be promoted.