

COPMI Lived Experience Partnership Policy

Placing high value on the lived experience of mental illness



Policy Goal

COPMI and its parent body the Australian Infant Child Adolescent and Family Mental Health Association (AICAFMHA) aim to be kept informed through collaboration with a diverse group of people with lived experience on a range of issues as needed.

Principles

- The involvement of people with lived experience (including children and young people) is an essential component of strengthening the COPMI national initiative.
- The COPMI Team and AICAFMHA are inclusive of and informed by a diverse range of perspectives and voices.
- Effective communication links will be established to enable sharing and exchange of information between people with lived experience and COPMI Team members.
- The COPMI Team recognises and prioritises the need for resources and support to enable effective partnerships with people with lived experience.
- People with lived experience will be provided with information about their role/s and responsibilities if asked to participate in a COPMI related activity, which will include clearly identified expectations and paths of communication.
- Organisations that people with lived experience are already involved with will provide some support with planning and debriefing around COPMI national initiative activities. The COPMI Lived Experience Coordinator will also be available.

Purpose

This policy builds on the existing body of knowledge through reciprocal partnerships with people with lived experience. To acknowledge value and incorporate the perspectives and understandings of parents with mental illness and their families gained through their lived experience and to use the information gained to enhance knowledge, information and resources. COPMI will endeavour to engage with people from diverse populations. Ideally this will include

- parents with a mental illness
- family of a parent with a mental illness (including spouses, children, young people and adult children)
- carers of a child (under 18 years) who has a parent with a mental illness (e.g. grandparent, carer, foster carer, sibling)
- from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, Indigenous, rural, single parent, foster carer and grandparent groups
- some people will bring knowledge and experience from more than one perspective.

Expected Outcomes

The strategy will allow the COPMI national initiative to:

- Be better informed
- Gain an increased understanding of lived experience perspectives
- Incorporate these perspectives into the core body of information that informs the COPMI national initiative and its future planning.
- Support and increase valued roles for people with lived experience including young people and children within the COPMI national initiative

Opportunities for Engagement with the COPMI Initiative

There will be many opportunities to engage with the COPMI national initiative. They may include but are not limited to the following.

- COPMI e-list
- COPMI National Reference Group
- COPMI National Lived Experience Forum
- Workshops
- Focus Groups for children and young people
- Peer Reviewer for information and resources
- Peer Researcher
- Workforce development projects
- Education and training of workers
- Media and communication
- Newsletters or COPMI news items
- Groups for particular communities or interest groups
- Conference presentations
- Journal articles
- Interview panels for staff selection

Roles include but are not limited to the following:

- Being an expert in provision of the lived experience perspective
- Being a voice from a lived experience perspective to inform the work of the COPMI initiative
- Identifying the strengths within their own state or territory within the COPMI arena
- Identifying those COPMI areas that need further work or work that needs to be initiated
- Being a conduit for receiving and sharing information through formal and informal networks and contacts.

Process

People with lived experience interested in participating are asked to complete a Registration of Interest form (for further information see Get Involved at www.copmi.net.au).

Suitable candidates will form a pool of people with lived experience who have registered a desire to participate in the COPMI national initiative. People from that pool will be contacted according to the task/s required to be undertaken that match their skills and experience.

When people agree to be involved in a significant amount of COPMI work, they will be asked to sign an agreement outlining the responsibilities of the role. This will be kept at the COPMI office as a record of the agreement.

COPMI will notify people of the various opportunities to be involved via the lived experience pool, through announcements in the COPMI e-list and through various other avenues such as national and state/territory peak bodies and networks.

Reporting mechanisms and pathways will be reciprocal between participants and the COPMI team and will be clearly identified for each COPMI activity that involves input from people with lived experience.

Reporting mechanisms may be verbal, written or via email.

Remuneration

Remuneration will be paid with prior agreement and consent from the COPMI Project Manager, to individuals who make a contribution to the work of the COPMI national initiative.

Accommodation and travel that is a direct result of agreed formal participation will be arranged and paid for by AICAFMHA (e.g. meetings, conferences or workshops).

Reimbursement will also be paid for use of personal vehicles, parking and child care.

Children and Young People

Children and young people will be contacted via support programs and services they are already engaged with and these agencies will provide ongoing support around their participation, in conjunction with the COPMI Lived Experience Coordinator.

Children and young people's parents and/or guardians are required to give consent for their participation. Participation activities for children will be specifically designed with the participants' wellbeing as a priority. Children and young people will receive the same remuneration as adult participants.

Evaluation

People with lived experience will be invited to comment on any interaction that they have with COPMI.

Feedback may be channelled through the COPMI Lived Experience Coordinator, COPMI Project Manager or the team member involved in the activity or interaction.

Each focus group, workshop or forum will provide the opportunity for evaluation by participants through written and verbal feedback.

Comments and feedback can be anonymous.

References

Mental Health Council of Australia, 'Consumer and Carer Participation Policy' at www.mhca.com.au

Hamlet Trust 2007, 'Pathways to Policy: A Tool kit for grassroots involvement in mental health policy', 2007 at www.mentalhealth.org.uk

www.copmi.net.au