

Take action! Advocacy

How to improve the mental health system in the ACT

A problem in one person's mental health care can be a sign of a bigger issue in the mental health system. You have a right to share your experience and ideas to improve mental health care. You can be an advocate for yourself, for others, and for a better mental health system.

YOU DON'T HAVE TO DO IT ON YOUR OWN.

When people work together to improve mental health care services, laws, policies and practices, it is called systemic advocacy. There are lots of ways to get involved in advocating for better mental health care. Start by contacting one of the organisations below.

ACT MENTAL HEALTH CONSUMER NETWORK

The ACT Mental health Consumer Network is the Peak Body for Mental Health Consumers in the ACT. The Network is run by consumers, for consumers. A consumer is anyone who identifies as having lived experience of mental illness or a psychiatric disorder, or has personally used a mental health service for their own mental health needs.

The Network is funded by ACT Health to do systemic advocacy to help improve mental health services and programs so that they work for all people when they need them. The main way the Network does this is through training and supporting consumers to become Consumer Representatives. Consumer Representatives talk about the needs, experiences and perspectives of mental health consumers to government and the community. They work to improve mental health care by:

- Participating on government and non-government committees
- Participating in and assisting with research programs
- Lobbying government and mental health service providers about gaps in services; and
- Facilitating education programs for consumers and the broader community.

Phone: 02 6230 5796

Email: actmhcncn@actmhcncn.org.au

Drop in: 10am to 1pm Thursday at Griffin Centre Level 2, Room 11, 20 Genge Street Canberra City ACT 2601

More information: www.actmhcncn.org.au

CARERS ACT

Carers ACT is a not-for-profit organisation and the peak body for carers in the ACT. Its purpose is to support, connect and empower carers to maintain their caring role and personal wellbeing.

Carers are partners, spouses, children, family, friends or neighbours who assist someone who lives with disability, is frail with age, or has an ongoing mental or other illness. Carers provide informal, unpaid help with daily living activities.

Carers ACT offers a range of supports and services for carers, such as short-term replacement care when you need a break, counselling, educational workshops, social and therapeutic activities and advocacy.

Phone: 02 6296 9900

Email: carers@carersact.org.au

More information: www.carersact.org.au

MENTAL HEALTH CARERS VOICE

The Mental Health Carers Voice Program works to create a better mental health system nationally and in the ACT. Mental Health Carers Voice is the peak body for mental health carers in the ACT and works closely with carers to make positive changes to the mental health service system. They do this by making sure that the perspectives, concerns and ideas voiced by mental health carers and their families are heard by decision-makers.

Mental Health Carers Voice is auspiced by Carers ACT.

Phone: 02 6296 9900 and ask for Mental Health Carers Voice

Email: mhcarers@carersact.org.au

More information: <https://mhcv.org.au>

ADVOCACY FOR INCLUSION

Advocacy for Inclusion (AFI) is funded to represent all people with disability in the ACT. AFI provides individual disability advocacy, support for self-advocacy, systemic advocacy and training.

Phone: 02 6257 4005

In Person: Visit Room 2.02 Griffin Centre, 20 Genge St, Canberra City 2601

More information: www.advocacyforinclusion.org

HEALTH CARE CONSUMERS' ASSOCIATION

The Health Care Consumers' Association (HCCA) is the peak health care consumer organisation in the ACT. HCCA works to improve the quality and safety of health services, and advocates for health equity for people living in the Canberra region. HCCA works to improve the quality and availability of health services. It supports consumers to identify health care priorities and advocates for them to ACT Government and health services.

Phone: 02 6230 7800

Email: admin@hcca.org.au

More information: www.hcca.org.au



If you or someone you care about is experiencing a mental health crisis, contact Access Mental Health on 1800 629 354 or 6205 1065 for immediate assistance. For telephone support phone Lifeline on 13 11 14 or Beyond Blue on 1300 22 4636.

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