



Person-Centred Practice Statement

Purpose

This Statement describes how the Network applies person-centred principles in its role as a consumer-led peak body. Person-centred practice in this context focuses on how consumers are supported to participate, influence, lead and engage with systems that affect their lives.

This Statement supports the Network's commitment to dignity, respect, self-determination, human rights, trauma-informed practice and recovery-oriented approaches.

Scope

This Statement applies to all interactions between the Network and consumers, including governance participation, advocacy and representation, consultations, engagement activities, partnerships and referrals.

Principles of Person-Centred Practice

The Network's person-centred approach is guided by the following principles:

- Respect for dignity, lived experience and diversity
- Consumer choice, control and self-determination
- Inclusive and accessible participation
- Trauma-informed and recovery-oriented practice
- Clear, honest and supportive communication
- Privacy, confidentiality and ethical representation

Person-Centred Practice in Action

Respectful and Supportive Engagement

The Network commits to interacting with consumers in ways that are respectful, non-judgemental and supportive. This includes:

- Recognising lived experience as valued expertise.
- Creating safe environments where consumers can express views, including disagreement, without fear of negative consequences.
- Supporting participation through clear expectations, preparation and follow-up.

Identification of Needs, Goals and Preferences

The Network identifies individual participation needs and preferences by:

- Asking consumers about access, support and communication needs.
- Being flexible about how, when and where people participate.
- Making reasonable adjustments to support meaningful involvement.

Consumers are supported to define their own goals for participation, such as governance involvement, advocacy input or consultation contribution.

Communication and Access to Information

The Network supports informed participation by:

- Providing clear, plain language information about activities, roles and processes.
- Being transparent about the purpose, scope and limits of engagement.
- Providing information in ways that meet individual needs, including alternative formats where possible.

Self-Determination and Decision-Making

The Network is committed to self-determination by:

- Encouraging consumers to make decisions about their level and type of involvement.
- Respecting boundaries, consent and the right to withdraw.

- Supporting consumers to nominate support people, advocates or representatives where appropriate.

Consumers are encouraged to influence priorities, advocacy positions and organisational decisions.

Privacy and Confidentiality

The Network protects privacy and confidentiality by:

- Gaining informed consent before sharing lived experience perspectives or stories.
- Using de-identified information in advocacy and reporting where appropriate.
- Allowing consumers to choose how their lived experience is described or shared.

Trauma-Informed and Culturally Safe Practice

The Network recognises the impact of trauma, discrimination and stigma.

Person-centred practice includes:

- Creating emotionally and psychologically safe engagement environments.
- Responding respectfully to distress or risk.
- Applying culturally safe approaches, particularly when working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities.
- Supporting Aboriginal self-determination by respecting community-defined priorities, processes and leadership.

Coordination, Referral and System Navigation

While not a service provider, the Network supports system navigation by:

- Providing information about relevant services and supports where requested.
- Connecting consumers with partner organisations when appropriate.
- Clarifying the Network's role and limits to avoid confusion or harm.

Feedback, Review and Continuous Improvement

Person-centred practice is strengthened through feedback and reflection. The Network:

- Encourages consumers to provide feedback about their experience of engagement.
- Uses feedback to improve accessibility, communication and participation practices.
- Reviews practices regularly to ensure they remain responsive to consumer needs, goals and preferences.

Governance and Review

The Board oversees this Statement. It is reviewed periodically and updated to reflect consumer feedback, best practice and changes in the mental health policy environment.

This Statement is made available to consumers, partners and stakeholders and informs staff, Board and representative practice.