



Service Standards Statement

Purpose

This Statement sets out the agreed standards that guide the work of the ACT Mental Health Consumer Network (the Network). The Network is a consumer-led peak body that undertakes systemic advocacy, representation, consultation and leadership development to advance the rights, dignity and wellbeing of mental health consumers in the ACT.

These standards describe what stakeholders, consumers, partners, funders and the community can expect from the Network. They are designed to support accountability, quality improvement and outcome monitoring.

Scope

These standards apply to all aspects of the Network's work, including governance, advocacy, consumer engagement, consultation activities, partnerships, workforce practices and organisational operations.

Foundational Frameworks

The Network's service standards are informed by and aligned with the following frameworks and principles:

- National Lived Experience (Peer) Workforce Development Guidelines, including principles of lived experience leadership, mutuality, authenticity, empowerment and safe workplaces.
- National and ACT mental health policy directions, including recovery-oriented, person-centred and community-based approaches.

- Human rights frameworks, including the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and human rights-based approaches to mental health.
- Trauma-informed practice principles, recognising the prevalence and impact of trauma and the importance of safety, choice, trustworthiness, collaboration and empowerment.
- Recovery-oriented practice, recognising personal recovery as unique, self-defined and grounded in hope, agency and meaningful participation.

Service Standards

1. Consumer Leadership and Governance

The Network is governed and led by people with lived experience of mental health issues. We commit to:

- Ensuring consumer leadership is embedded in governance, decision-making and organisational culture.
- Supporting Board members and consumer representatives with clear role descriptions, induction, training and ongoing support.
- Valuing diverse lived experience perspectives and recognising intersectionality.

2. Meaningful Consumer Engagement and Participation

We commit to engaging consumers in ways that are meaningful, inclusive and safe. This includes:

- Providing accessible and culturally safe opportunities for participation.
- Being transparent about the purpose, scope and influence of consultations.
- Closing feedback loops by communicating how consumer input has informed advocacy and decisions.

3. Systemic Advocacy and Representation

We provide independent, evidence-informed systemic advocacy on issues affecting consumers. We commit to:

- Representing consumer priorities in policy, planning and system reform processes.

- Using lived experience knowledge alongside other evidence sources.
- Acting with integrity, independence and accountability in all advocacy activities.

4. Human Rights and Ethical Practice

We take a human rights-based approach to all our work. We commit to:

- Promoting the rights, autonomy and dignity of consumers.
- Challenging discrimination, stigma and restrictive practices in mental health systems.
- Acting ethically, transparently and in the best interests of consumers.

5. Trauma-Informed and Recovery-Oriented Practice

We recognise that many consumers have experienced trauma and marginalisation. We commit to:

- Creating physically and emotionally safe environments for engagement.
- Supporting choice, control and self-determination.
- Respecting individual recovery journeys and definitions of wellbeing.

6. Quality, Accountability and Continuous Improvement

We are committed to high quality, effective and responsive practice. We commit to:

- Monitoring outputs and outcomes relevant to our role as a peak body, including quality and timeliness of engagement and advocacy activities.
- Using consumer, stakeholder and workforce feedback to inform improvement.
- Regularly reviewing these service standards to ensure they remain relevant, evidence-based and effective.