

“The treatment, discharge planning &
post discharge checklist!”

Consumers Can Ask

A resource for consumers to assist discussion about treatment, discharge planning and post discharge support in mental health, mental health community support services and alcohol and/or other drug services

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Purpose of Resource

To help you have a helpful conversation with a service about treatment and discharge planning

This resource provides questions that may help you, the consumer, to find out about treatment and discharge planning. Some of these questions can take time to answer due to the often complex nature of mental health and alcohol and other drug issues. The questions are suggestions only and not intended as an exhaustive or prescriptive list.

The idea is to look through the resource and see if there are questions that will help you find out about treatment.

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General Tips

It's in everyone's best interests for all parties to have clear, respectful lines of communication and good relationships. Effective engagement between you and the various services involved in your care is paramount

Questions should always be asked in a sensitive and respectful manner.

If you don't get the service you expect, you have the right to ask to speak with another person at the service or to make a complaint to the agency or the Mental Health Complaints Commissioner (for complaints about public sector mental health and mental health community support services) or the Health Complaints Commissioner (for complaints about public and private sector alcohol and/or other drug services). Resolving disputes at the local level is usually best for all concerned.

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Navigation: How to Get Around This Resource

Site Map

Get around the resource by clicking on the coloured buttons on each page. Eg.

Discharge

It may be useful to have this resource open when you are speaking with services and to write down any answers you get

The Site Map button will take you to links to every page

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Definition of a Consumer

‘Consumer’ refers to people who have direct experience of mental illness or alcohol and/or other drug issues and have used or are currently using health services. Consumers are as diverse as the full range of people living in Australia. Consumers are of different genders, of various ages, from diverse cultural backgrounds, class positions and social circumstances, sexual orientations and health and illness conditions.

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Definition of a Carer

- * 'Carers' are family members and friends or peers who support someone with mental health and/or alcohol and/or other drug issues.

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Consent/Information Sharing

Consider asking these questions:

- * What information am I entitled to?
- * Are there any consent issues I need to be aware of?
- * How do I share information that I believe is relevant with the treating team?
- * How will information about me be shared?
- * Have you identified my carer(s) or other nominated persons?
- * Has my carer been asked how he/she would like to be involved?

Discharge Planning

Consider asking these questions:

- * How will I be included in the discharge planning?
- * Can you please explain why I'm being discharged?
- * Who has been involved in making the decision?
- * Are both mental illness and drug and alcohol issues being addressed in an integrated manner?
- * Has my culture and background been taken into consideration?

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Staff

Consider asking these questions:

- * How is the service staffed?
- * What are the credentials of the staff working here?
Eg. Counsellors? Other staff? What are their skills? Have they been through recovery? Credibility with treatment model?
- * Are there staff with lived experience working here?
- * How many staff will be there at any one time?
- * What is the staff to client ratio?
- * What are the staffed hours?

Strengths

Consider asking these questions:

- * Can we talk about my strengths? I'd like to build on them.
- * What decisions and choices do you think I've made about my illness?
- * What is your understanding of what is important to me in my recovery?
- * What goals do you think I have been aiming for through this service?
- * What goals have you been aiming for in relation to my treatment?

Strengths Information

- * “This model emphasises that people have strengths and an inherent capacity to learn, grow and change even when they present with vulnerabilities. Their strengths are in their passions, in their skills, in their interests, their relationships and their environments. The focus of the relationship between the mental health clinician and the consumer is on personal goals based on these strengths and finding niches in the community where these strengths can be used and valued. Through this, consumers develop their skills and a greater sense of hope and control.” (Source P.5 St Vincent’s Hospital Melbourne publication: Adult Mental Health Information for Consumers, Families and Carers)

Daily Activities

Consider asking these questions:

- * Will I be taught life skills? Eg. Chores, washing, time management, cooking, shopping, routines, hygiene, budgeting etc
- * If your service doesn't teach these can you refer me to one that does?
- * What activities will be offered? Are they mandatory or can you choose?

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Aboriginal Resources

- * **Victorian Aboriginal Health Service Family Counselling Services**
- * Ph: 03 9403 3300 Fax: 03 9403 3333
- * Hours: Monday-Thursday 9am - 5pm, Friday 9am - 4pm
- * Address: 238-250, Plenty Rd, Preston, Vic
- * Access to 5 beds at St Vincent's Mental Health Acute Inpatient Service
- * If calling after hours phone St Vincent's Hospital Psychiatric Triage: 1300 558 862
- * Website: http://www.vahs.org.au/family_counselling.html

Multicultural Resources

- * Telephone Information Line 24 hrs, 7 days a week – recorded information about involuntary patients, community treatment orders, electroconvulsive therapy and the Mental Health Tribunal:

English 9679 9838	Croatian 9679 9828	Mandarin 9679 9837	Turkish 9679 9835
Arabic 9679 9825	Greek 9679 9829	Serbian 9679 9834	Vietnamese 9679 9836
Cambodian 9679 9826	Italian 9679 9830	Somali 9679 9832	
Cantonese 9679 9827	Macedonian 96799831	Spanish 9679 9833	

- * Telephone Interpreting Service 24hrs/7 days a week - Ph: 131 450
- * <http://www.mhima.org.au/resources-and-information/Translated-information/translated-mental-health-information-resources>
- * Action on Disabilities in Ethnic Communities Ph: 9480 1666
<http://www.adec.org.au>

LGBTIQ Resource

(Lesbian, Gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer)

- * **Gay and Lesbian Switchboard**
- * Volunteer organisation provides a free, confidential, anonymous **general** telephone counselling, referral and information service for Victorian and Tasmanian gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) community and its supporters
- * Hours: Mon - Thurs 6-10pm (Wed 2-10pm)
Fri, Sat, Sun & public hols 6-9pm
- * Melbourne: 9663 2939
- * Regional Victoria: 1800 184 527
- * Website: <http://www.switchboard.org.au/>

Discharge Summary

Consider asking these questions:

- * Is it possible to receive a draft of the discharge plan prior to discharge so I can have further input if need be?
- * Is there a written discharge summary?
- * Who will receive it? Eg. GP, other services, my carer?
- * Will I get a final copy?
- * Does everyone know what they need to do next?

Consumers Role in Discharge

Consider asking these questions:

- * Am I part of the discharge plan?
- * What am I expected to do? (eg medication, relapse plan, transport, making appointments etc)
- * Can we talk about it?
- * What happens if I can't or don't do those things?
- * What role will my carer be expected to play?
- * Can my carer have help in supporting me? What sort of help can they get?

Relapse

Consider asking these questions:

- * How will I know if I am relapsing?
- * What might the early warning signs be?
- * What effect does alcohol or other drug use have on the possibility of relapse?
- * What do I do if I see any of these effects?
- * Who should I contact?
- * Is there a written relapse plan?
- * Can I make a written plan about what I want to happen if I become unwell? (Eg. advance statements)

Treatment

Consider asking these questions:

- * What are the options for treatment, both clinical and non-clinical?
- * Do I need to do anything (Eg. De tox) before I can access the service?
- * Is there a waiting list? If I need more than one service will there be a waiting period for this?
- * What treatment models do you use?
- * How can I be involved in treatment planning?
- * Can you please explain the diagnosis and prognosis?
- * How might that make me behave? What sort of things should I look out for?
- * Has a dual diagnosis screen and assessment been done? What were the results?
- * What treatment have I received?
- * How do we know if the treatment is working?
- * Will I get treatment in the public or private system?
- * How much will it cost?
- * Are medication costs covered under the Pharmaceuticals Benefits Scheme?
- * Have I met the new clinician/ GP/support worker?
- * Have I agreed to this plan?
- * What will you do if I don't go to appointments?
- * Is this treatment compulsory?
- * Can you give me information on PAWS (Post Acute Withdrawal Syndrome)?
- * Can you explain how the medication works?



[More info on Medications](#)

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Rules at Treatment Services

Consider asking these questions:

- * What are the rules of the service?
 - * Will I be allowed visitors?
 - * Can I have my mobile phone with me?
 - * Is it lock in? Are you allowed to leave when you want to?
 - * Can I drink alcohol/continue to take my drug of choice with a view to reducing/stopping?
 - * Do I need to stop taking all drugs even though I only want to work on giving up one? Eg. Give up alcohol but keep smoking cannabis
 - * Will I have internet access?
 - * What personal products can I bring such as shampoo, mouthwash etc
 - * What is the policy in relation to me bringing in electrical devices? Can I listen to my own music?
 - * Can I bring cigarettes with me? Do you provide nicotine replacement?
 - * Can I wear makeup?
 - * Are there any restrictions on the types of clothing I can wear?
 - * Can I have my wallet with me?
 - * Will I be expected to share a room?
 - * What age do I need to be?
 - * Is the service co-ed (male/female/other)?
 - * Can you leave the premises?
 - * What food will be made available? Can I buy food?
 - * Will there be pay TV?
 - * How will my safety be guaranteed?
 - * What amenities will be there? Eg, gym, access to smoking area
 - * Under what circumstances would I be asked to leave?
 - * Any other rules I need to be aware of?

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Medications

Consider asking these questions:

- * Can you explain how the medication works, any side effects and any interactions it may have with alcohol or other legal or illegal drugs?
- * What should I do if I have a bad reaction?
- * What should I do if I forget to take my medication?
- * Is there a record of what medications have been tried? Has this information been shared with all the services I'm involved with to avoid any mistakes?
- * Is there a record of my reactions to past medications?
- * How often will my medications be reviewed?
- * Am I on the lowest possible effective dose?
- * Are there any alternative medications that might be suitable?
- * Can I tell you about things that have changed since being prescribed that may affect how the medication works, E.g. stopped/started/increased/decreased smoking, taking herbal supplements, etc.?
- * Are there other ways/times of taking the medication that might be more effective?
- * What treatments are available to manage side effects, e.g. medications, behavioural strategies such as exercise, diet, meditation, relaxation, self-help/support groups, etc.?

Communication of Information

Consider asking these questions:

- * How will you assess the best way for me to receive information?
- * How will you communicate information to me Eg. Through conversation, video, written material, websites, testimonials etc.
- * Are there any 'apps' or social media that you use?

Referrals

Consider asking these questions:

- * Who have you made referrals to?
- * Have they been accepted?
- * How long will the referral last?
- * Do I need to go to a GP/other service for another referral?
- * Does everyone know what they are meant to be doing?
- * Have I agreed to this?
- * Can you tell me about the services you have referred me to?
- * What do I need to do to follow up these referrals?
- * What support can you give me to attend appointments?
- * How can my family/friend/carer support me with these referrals?
- * What happens if I don't go?

Consumer Supports

Consider asking these questions:

- * Who can I contact if I need help?
- * Who do I contact if things go wrong?
- * What sort of support can I have?
- * Do I need a referral?
- * Do you have peer workers? Eg. Consumer consultants

Involving Carers in My Treatment

Consider asking these questions:

- * What is the service's philosophy about involving carers?
- * Can you explain to my carer what to expect from this service?
- * What sort of support can my carer get to support me?
- * How will my carer be involved in my treatment?
- * What if I don't want my carer involved in my treatment?
- * Can you explain addiction and mental health to my carer?

Culture

Consider asking these questions:

- * What is the service's philosophy about culturally sensitive practice?
- * How do you work with people who don't speak English?
- * What links does your service have with culturally specific services?

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Re – accessing the Service

Consider asking these questions:

- * Can I use this service again?
- * When and under what circumstances?
- * What is the process if I need to come back?
- * Who do I contact?
- * How will I access treatment after being discharged?

Relevant Emergency Contacts

Consider asking these questions:

- * Can you please give me emergency contact numbers for my area?
- * How do I know which one to call?
- * When is it the right time to call?
- * What do I do if I am not at home in an emergency?

After Discharge

Consider asking these questions:

- * If I don't follow the plan, what will you do?
- * Will I be able to contact you or ask for advice after I'm discharged?
- * If not you, who or what service should I speak with?
- * Is there a day program post discharge?
- * Are there groups you can recommend?

Risk

Consider asking these questions:

- * Have you educated me about possible risk issues?
- * Is there a risk of me overdosing?
- * What is the likelihood that my mental health condition will relapse?
- * What is the likelihood that I will relapse in relation to alcohol or other drug use?
- * Has a risk assessment been recently completed? What were the results?
- * What self harm or suicide risk exists?
- * Who can I contact if I feel I can't manage my risk issues?

Making a Complaint

- * Try and resolve complaints with the service provider initially. If this does not work you can contact:
 - * The Office of the Health Services Commissioner
 - * Ph: 1300 582 113
 - <http://www.health.vic.gov.au/hsc/complaint.htm>

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Anything Else?

Consider asking these questions:

- * Is there anything else I need to know?
- * Can you tell me where to get more information about my illness?
- * How else can I help myself once I leave here?
- * Where can I find out more?
- * What self help resources are available?

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Other resources that might help:

- * Dual Diagnosis Resources: <http://www.dualdiagnosis.org.au/>
- * Cannabis resources: <http://ncpic.org.au/>
- * Quit: <http://www.quit.org.au/> Ph: 137848
- * Australian Drug Foundation: <http://www.druginfo.adf.org.au/>
- * Treatment questions checklist.
<http://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/about/campaigns/partnersincarecampaign/checklistforcarers.aspx>

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Find a Hospital Mental Health Service:

Find a hospital mental health service:

- * <http://www.health.vic.gov.au/mentalhealth/services/index.htm>
- * Austin Psychiatric Triage (information, assessment and referral 24 hours a day, 7 days a week) Ph: **1300 859 789**
- * Austin CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services) Ph: **9496 3620** (business hours/after hours call Psych. Triage)
- * Northern Hospital Psychiatric Triage Ph: **1300 874 243**
- * St Vincent's Hospital Psychiatric Triage Ph: **1300 558 862**

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Find a Mental Health Community Support Service (MHCSS)

Site Map

* Psychiatric Disability Rehabilitation Support Services (PDRSS) are now called Mental Health Community Support Services (MHCSS). They support people with psychiatric disability to manage their self-care, improve social and relationship skills and achieve broader quality of life via physical health, social connectedness, housing, education and employment.

* Intake assessment services for Mental Health Community Support Services Victoria:

* Neami National Ph: 1300 379 462

* EACH Ph: 1300 785 358

* ACSO Ph: 1300 022 760 (rural)

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Find an Alcohol and/or Other Drugs Service:

* DIRECT Line (Statewide alcohol and other drug counselling, information and referral) 24hrs/7days Ph: **1800 888 236** or go to www.directline.org.au/service-finder

* YoDAA is Victoria's Youth Drug and Alcohol Advice service. It is a 24 hour free helpline for young people Ph:**1800 458 685** or go to <http://yodaa.org.au/>

* Call Odyssey ReGen on **1800 700 514** for alcohol and other drugs intake service if you live in the cities of:

Banyule	Darebin	Melbourne	Moonee Valley
Moreland	Nillumbik	Whittlesea	Yarra

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Find a Carer Helpline Service:

Carer Helplines:

- * Mind Carer Helpline Ph: **1300 550 265** (9am-5pm, Monday to Friday)
- * Family Drug Help Ph: **1300 660 068** (9am to 9pm Monday - Friday) www.familydrughelp.com.au

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MAP: Intake Services by Local Government Area

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ACSO
1300 022 760
(Country Areas)
Melton

Neami National
1300 379 462
Wyndham

EACH
1300 785 358
Yarra Ranges

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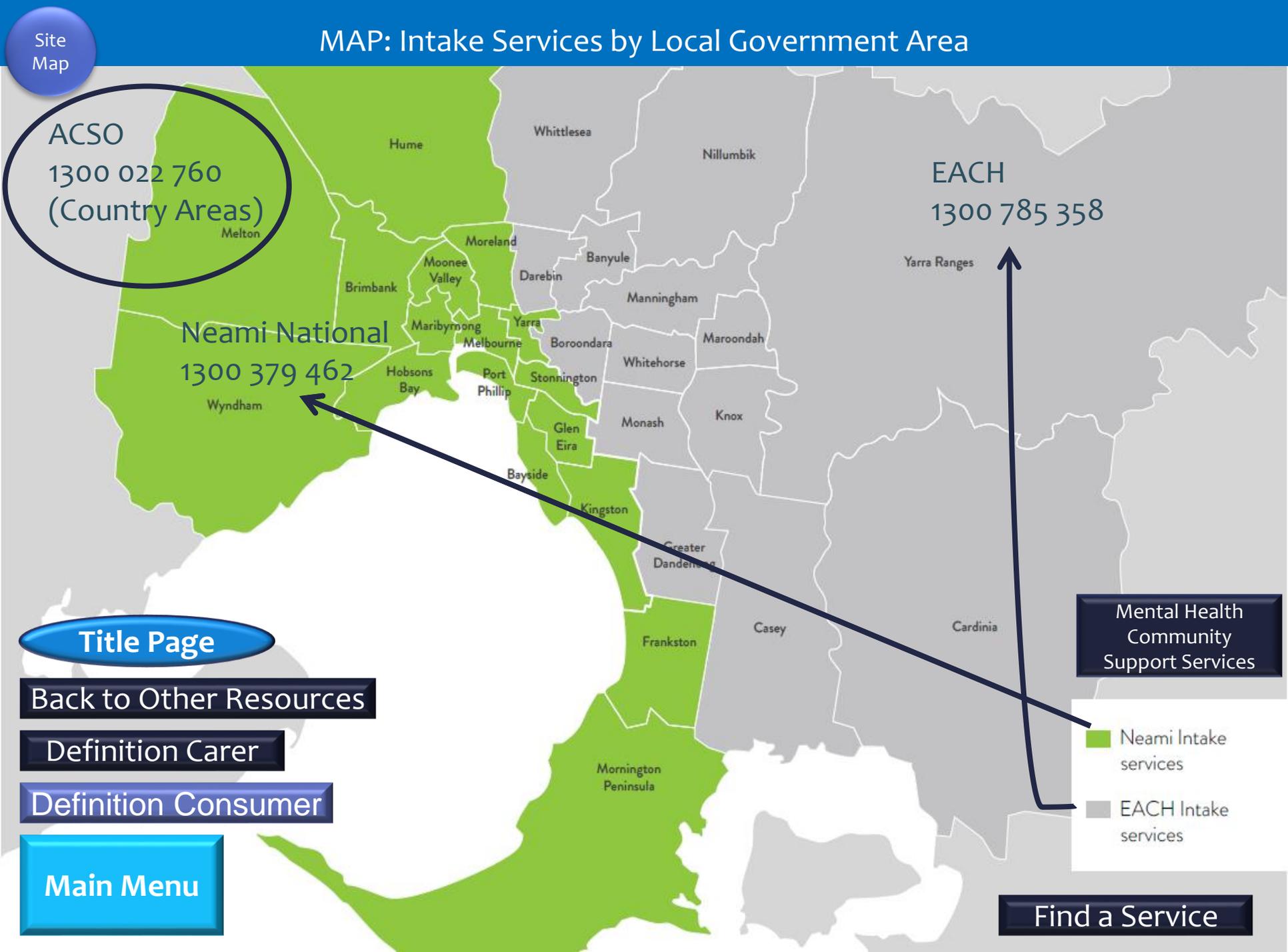
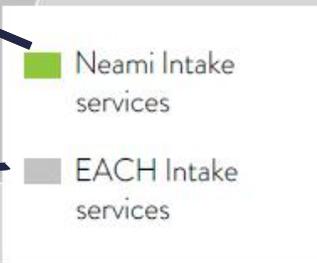
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AOD/MH/MHCSS Links

- * For information on AOD Services
<https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/alcohol-and-drugs/aod-treatment-services>
- * For information on public mental health services:
<https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/mental-health/mental-health-services/services-by-type>
- * For information on community managed mental health services:
<https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/mental-health/mental-health-services/services-by-type/mental-health-community-support-services>

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Family/Friend/Carer Supports

- * Tandem (Previously called: Victorian Mental Health Carers Network) <http://tandemcarers.org.au/>
- * Carers Victoria <http://www.carersvictoria.org.au/advice>
- * Victorian Mental Illness Awareness Council (VMIAC) <http://www.vmiac.org.au/about.php>
- * Carer Links North Ph: 9495 2500
<http://www.respitenorthandwest.org.au/services-and-support>
- * Austin Mental Health Carer Consultants Ph: 9496 5000
- * St Vincent's Mental Health Carer Consultants Ph: 9231 5400
- * Link to Mental Health ACT 2014 resources:
www.health.vic.gov.au/mentalhealth/mhactreform/resources.htm

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Self Help Resources

- * AA (Alcoholics Anonymous) Ph: 1300 222 222 <http://www.aa.org.au/>
- * NA (Narcotics Anonymous) Ph: 1300 652 820
<http://na.org.au/index.php?lang=en>
- * Self Help Addiction Resource Centre Ph: 9573 1700
 - * <http://www.sharc.org.au>
- * ASSIST Self help Guidelines
 - * http://www.who.int/substance_abuse/publications/media_assist/en/
- * Centre for Clinical Interventions:
 - * <http://www.cci.health.wa.gov.au/resources/consumers.cfm>
- * YoDAA is Victoria's Youth Drug and Alcohol Advice service
 - * <http://yodaa.org.au/self-help-options>
- * SANE Australia; information on mental illness for consumers, their carers, families and others.
 - * Ph: 1800 187 263 <https://www.sane.org/>

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- * <http://www.health.vic.gov.au/mentalhealth/terminology.htm>
- * MH – Mental Health
- * MHCSS – Mental Health Community Support Services

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- * <http://www.adin.com.au/glossary>
- * AOD – Alcohol and/or Other Drugs

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This resource is the follow up to [Carers Can Ask](#) resource. I consulted with consumers and staff of mental health and drug and alcohol services and put those ideas and suggestions into this resource. The questions are suggestions only and due to the number of people that provided input into the resource I make no claim to their originality. Thank you to all consumers, carers, staff and agencies (Neami National, SHARC, Mental Illness Fellowship Victoria, Nexus , Victorian Transcultural Mental Health and YSAS) involved. Thank you to all who have contributed to this resource and I hope it is of use to consumers.

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