

125  
YEARS  
ST VINCENT'S CARES.  
ALWAYS HAS. ALWAYS WILL.



ST VINCENT'S  
HOSPITAL  
MELBOURNE

A FACILITY OF ST VINCENT'S HEALTH AUSTRALIA

# Working with Families

**Families, carers & supporters – snapshots of  
confidentiality, privacy, information sharing & language –  
grow what you know**

Adult Mental Health Carer Consultant perspective  
Katherine Barling  
Carer Consultant

# Acknowledgement of Country

I would like to acknowledge the traditional owners of the land on which we meet today, the people of the Kulin nations and any Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people here today. I would especially like to pay my respects to the Aboriginal Elders past and present. They hold the memories and traditions, culture and hopes of Aboriginal Australia.



Lyn Briggs (Wiradjuri/Yorta Yorta)  
Celebration of the Journey, 2011

# Safety Check

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**As with all meetings, please note where you are for this session and where your nearest exit is to where you are seated.**

**If you are at a workplace, in the case of an emergency be guided by the usual protocols in the event of an emergency.**

**If you are working at home today, please maintain attention on whatever is needed there to stay safe. If you need to leave or attend to a matter where you are, please let us know in the chat, or let a colleague already in this session know if you need to leave the session.**

**Thank you.**

# On line communication protocol

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We are all familiar now with online options

Some protocols that work

- Put your microphone on mute if not speaking with the group
- Leave your camera on if feasible.. It helps to engage with you if we can see you
- If you have distortion problems with sound or video try turning the video off and see if that improves sound quality
- If you are going to leave early, please let us know

\* “brb” for “be right back” can suffice in the chat\* if you intend to be back soon

# Family Definition

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## FACPC (Family & Carer Participation Committee) Terms of Reference/St Vincent's Mental Health

### Context:

St. Vincent's Mental Health (SVMH) requires that service planning, development, delivery and evaluation includes carer participation within a quality improvement framework, and the best possible support is given to the families and carers of our clients in their caring role.

### OCP guidelines

**Family:** Family includes the consumer and those with a significant personal relationship with the consumer. This includes biological relatives and non-biological relatives, intimate partners, ex-partners, people in co-habitation, friends, those with kinship responsibilities, and others who play a significant role in the consumer's life. Some family members may identify themselves as a 'carer' in a consumer's life, others will identify more so with the characteristic of their relationship (for example, parent, child, partner, sibling).

**Family – As defined by the RCVMH – as including Family of Origin and/ or Family of choice.**

The terms 'family' and 'carer' are not interchangeable, and people may not identify with a particular term. Not all carers are family members, and family members do not always take on a caring role. Family members may, however, be valued supporters of a person experiencing mental illness or psychological distress, along with other people in that person's broader social and support network.

# Carer Consultants

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- As Carer Consultants our primary role is systemic advocacy for family oriented practice
- Multiple roles in leadership, advocacy, education and research
- A core principle of the Mental Health Act 2014 includes recognition of the role families, friends and carers play in recovery

“Carers are recognised and supported in decisions about treatment and care”

- Key transition points are to involve supporters, friends, family and carers
- Our work augments the Carer Peer Support offered to the supporters and families of consumers who access our services

# From the Royal Commission

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Out of the 2021 Victorian Royal Commission we see the following key areas to address:

Recommendation 30: Developing system-wide involvement of family members and carers

Recommendation 31: Supporting families, carers, and supporters

Recommendation 32: Supporting young carers

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Plus

- Clarification of nominated persons
- Clarification of information sharing and types of information shared to increase confidence and improve family inclusive practice
- Reducing seclusion and restraint, including chemical restraint
- Compulsory treatment orders
- Carer access to Independent Mental Health Advocacy
- Second psychiatric opinion



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# Information Sharing

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Consent

Confidentiality

Privacy

Information sharing

Boundaries

Intersection

Consumer

Clinician

Support network

(Tandem modules being developed here)

# Grow what you know....

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- Confidentiality requires us to build and maintain trust in our relationships
- We can build trust whilst keeping a door open to new ways of working that assist the consumer in the longer term by supporting their chosen supporters to better support them
- We can set up conversations that are in line with consumer wishes, no go conversations, no to current treatment or diagnostic information, yet still support supporters, family and friends to better understand how to support at different times
- We can set up meetings whereby those people a consumer chooses can come along and listen in a supported environment to how best to support, how best to offer suggestions (if at all) and what supports can be offered at different times (Case Manager, Triage, Consultant)
- We can offer supporters, friends and family the opportunity to share what they witness about consumer strengths, challenges, triggers, behavioural challenges, calming techniques and de escalation methods that have been successful

# Snapshot on language

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# Be mindful...

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## **Enmeshed/no boundaries**

**Manipulative**

**Overinvolved**

**Overprotective**

**Controlling**

**Overly anxious**

**Interfering**

**Financially controlling**

**Scared**

**Grieving**

**Fearful of the future**

**Lacking trust**

**Exhaustion**

**Dispair**

# Grow what you know.....

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- Bouverie Centre Single Session Family Consultation method
- Maram training – several levels available
- Building on successes – using all we can bring from a strength based approach to practice
- Family Audits - note where different teams did well and where there's room for growth. A continuous improvement approach will help us all to work towards better outcomes for consumers through practice that includes their community of support. Look for ways an audit can capture strengths and build on these.
- Carer Support Fund – a practical way to initiate a connection, and introduce the notion of supports for the support people (it can occur as a step too far)

# Contact

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- Please make contact with us, or the Family/Carer Lived Experience Workforce where you are
- For any questions, potential referrals or resources required for the supporters, friends, families and others who support the consumers of our services
- Resources
- Tandem
- CMHL
- Carers Vic
- Carers Gateway
- Katherine Barling [katherine.barling@svha.org.au](mailto:katherine.barling@svha.org.au)