



CARERS ACT MENTAL HEALTH FORUM 2016

“Are We There Yet?”

Untangling the Changes in Mental Health in Australia

A report on the Carers ACT Mental Health Forum hosted 6 July 2016

July 2016

Carers ACT is the peak body for mental health carers in the ACT, supporting mental health carers to inform service delivery and policy development.

Carers ACT acknowledges that modern day Canberra has been built on the traditional lands of the Ngunnawal people. We offer our respects to their Elders past and present, and celebrate the continuation of the Ngunnawal people's living culture.

Carers ACT sincerely thanks all participants in the 2016 Mental Health Forum, "Are we there yet?" who have contributed to the outcomes reported in this document

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Carers ACT would also like to thank the following organisations for their support in the 2016 Mental Health Carers Forum.



A Call to Action

As a result of discussion and recommendations from the forum, the following are presented as recommendations for the coordinated and successful implementation of the National Mental Health Reform, the NDIS and the clinical mental health service changes in the ACT.

The key recommendations and call to action summarised from the Forum are:

- 1. That key service leaders (ACT Health MHJHADS, NDIA ACT, and Capital Health Network) develop a formal collaboration to drive an integrated, holistic mental health service system.**
- 2. That a common performance evaluation framework to measure effectiveness of the three components of the mental health system be developed and implemented.**
- 3. That the ACT leverages its research position and investigate embedding e-mental health into stepped-care services.**

The forum, held on 6 July 2016, brought together local and national expertise from service providers, carers, consumers, peak body representatives, government policy makers and more.

It was established that the ACT is uniquely positioned to develop a guiding framework that other states and territories may wish to adopt and to become an innovative leader in providing a high quality, unified mental health system.

The Forum

The Forum was developed and hosted by Carers ACT and was facilitated by Janet Hopkins, Senior Consultant at ConNetica and focused on the future of mental health service systems in the ACT and nationally. The Forum featured industry experts on various topics surrounding the future of mental health in Australia;

- Mr Daniel Casey, Mental Health Australia, The National Mental Health Reform
- Mr Ken Baker, CEO National Disability Agency, The NDIS and Psychosocial Disability
- Ms Katrina Bracher, Executive Director, ACT Health MHJHADS, ACT Mental Health Changes – Infrastructure and the ACT Mental Health Act 2015
- Dr Bridianne O’Dea, Research at the Black Dog Institute, E-Mental Health

In addition, these key note speakers were joined by further industry experts for a panel discussion in the afternoon;

- Ms Gaylene Coulton, CEO at Capital Health Network
- Ms Dee McGrath, CEO at Carers ACT
- Dr Michelle Banfield, Research Fellow at The National Institute for Mental Health Research, ANU
- Mr Simon Viereck, Executive Officer at Mental Health Community Coalition ACT

Integration of Functions in a Mental Health System

Broadly, the 2016 Mental Health forum “*Are we there yet?*” identified four **functional needs** for the mental health service system.

1. The need for greater mental health outreach and education, including promotion of mental wellbeing, help-seeking behaviours and the reduction of stigma
2. Early intervention services and the potential for greater realisation of e-mental health options.
3. Clinical mental health treatment services provided by the health system, including inpatient and outpatient services managing varying levels of acuity of symptoms and appropriately trained and supported staff to assist.
4. The community sector supports in which those with enduring psychosocial disability will be supported long term to participate and work towards achieving goals of their own design

It was a consistent message from the forum that attendees and speakers wanted a mental health system that used evidence-based practice at every level and evaluated efficacy by using outcomes based measures. The main theme of discussions at the forum was for greater integration. It was clear from the presentations and discussion that all areas would need to be working in unison to provide a seamless effective support system for consumers and carers.

“How do we integrate a fragmented system? Who is coordinating it and how can each person help?” – 2016 Forum Delegate

The following diagram summarises the discussions on how the mental health system could function into the future. The forum drew attention for further clarity needed regarding which body will be responsible for each function and how clients will transition between functions smoothly. A streamlined approach will require strong direction and communication on roles and responsibilities. However, the ACT is also in a unique position based on our small population and strong research institutions to be a leader in founding an integrated framework for mental health in Australia.

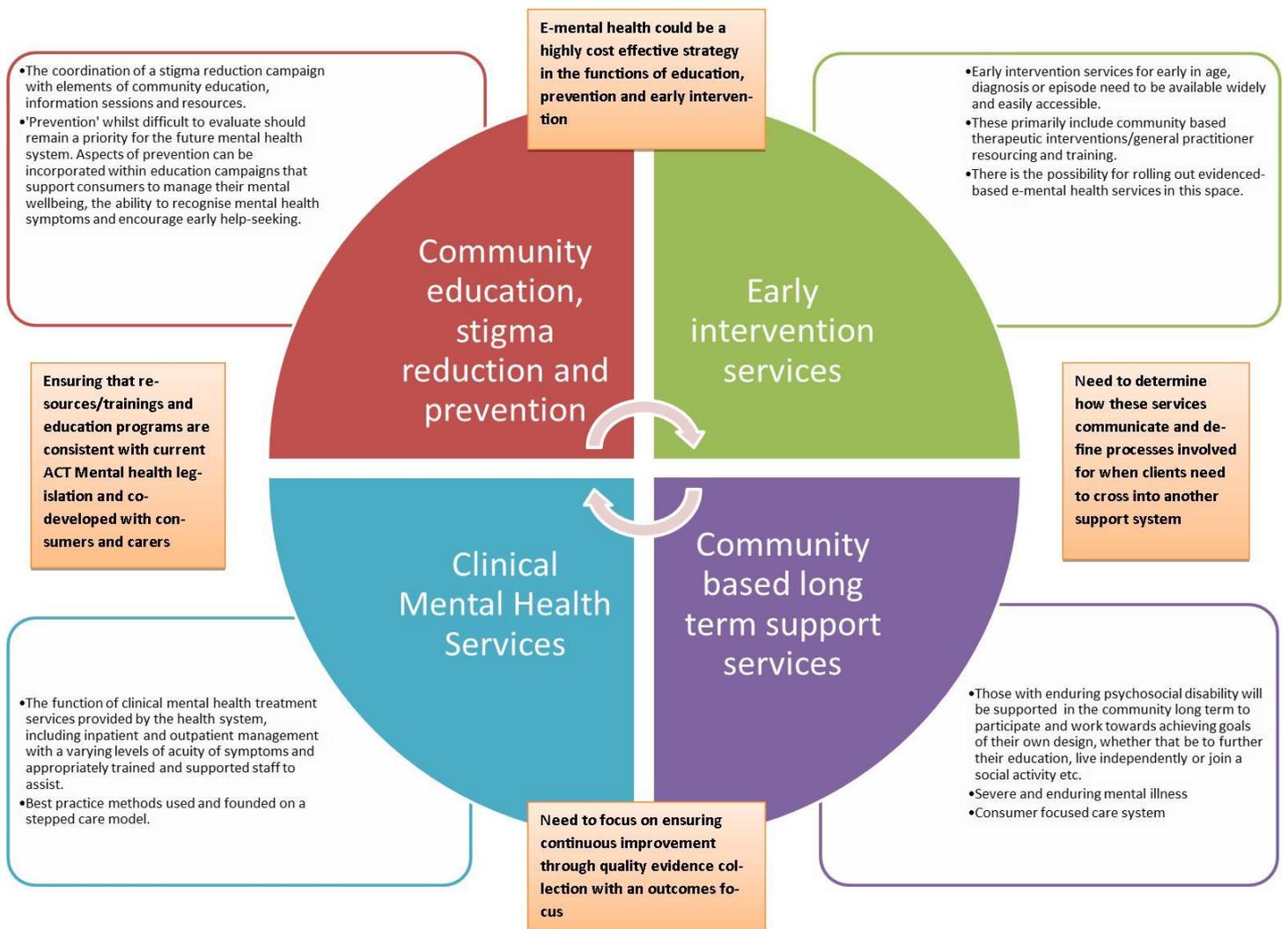


Figure 1: Mental Health System based on functions

“We have still a lot to do to reach goals. We are not there yet.” Forum Delegate 2016

Conclusions and Future Directions

The forum held on Wednesday 6 July 2016 brought together local and national expertise from service providers, carers, consumers, peak body representatives, government policy makers and more. The ACT is uniquely positioned to build a guiding framework that other states and territories may choose to follow and to be an innovative leader in providing a high quality, unified mental health system.

The key recommendations and call to action summarised from the Forum are:

1. That key service leaders (ACT Health MHJHADS, NDIA ACT, Capital Health Network) develop a formal collaboration to drive an integrated, holistic mental health service system.
2. That a common performance evaluation framework to measure effectiveness of the three components of the mental health system be developed and implemented.
3. That the ACT leverages its research position and investigate embedding e-mental health into stepped-care services.

To progress these actions, Carers ACT recommends that government include input from mental health carers, mental health consumers and service providers to ensure a holistic and comprehensive approach from all key perspectives.