

## Carer Policy

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| Policy Type             | Participant and Carer Rights and Participation |
| Version                 | 5.0  |
| Development Date        | 5/8/2013                                       |
| Revision Date           | January 2024                                   |
| Date for Review         | January 2029                                   |
| Person/Body Responsible | Chief Executive Officer                        |
| Approved By             | Board  |

### Purpose

Formal recognition of carers has been provided within policy and legislation by both the Australian Capital Territory and Federal governments. This policy provides carers with clear information about the rights and responsibilities in relation to those they care for receiving Mental Health Foundation ACT (MHF) services.

### Definitions

**Care relationship** – is when one person provides care to another person for one or more of the following reasons:

- the other person has a disability
- the other person has a mental disorder or mental illness
- the other person has an ongoing medical condition<sup>1</sup>
- the other person is aged and frail
- the other person may be a family member who requires support.

This relationship includes:

- parents caring for children who have additional needs
- adults caring for other adults such as an elderly parent, adult child, spouse or partner, friend or neighbour, and
- children and young people who care for a parent, sibling or relative.

**Note:** a person is **not in a care relationship** with another person if the first person provides care to the other person:

- under a contract of service or a contract for the provision of services, or

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<sup>1</sup> Examples of an ongoing medical condition include a terminal or chronic illness; chronic pain; and dementia.

- as a volunteer for a charitable, welfare or community organisation, other than an approved kinship and foster care organisation; or
- as part of a course of education or training.

## Policy

This policy recognises the rights of carers as set out in the *Carers Recognition Act 2021* (ACT) and ensures that people in caring relationships are identified, and recognised for their efforts and dedication to the person they care for. MHF assists carers to facilitate a mutual understanding and agreement between carers, those they care for and MHF staff. The goal is to achieve respect for individual rights, to privacy, choice, quality of life, self-determination, access to information and individual supports.

The carer and the person receiving care are regarded as a partnership in which each person has rights and responsibilities.

MHF ensures that its staff are trained to identify and support carers, ensuring that where appropriate they are engaged in all matters that affect them and the MHF participant.

MHF participants who access services are informed about processes for involving carers and are supported to make decisions about the extent they wish to involve or exclude carers in planning and decision-making about their individual care.

After liaising with the participant, MHF will employ a range of flexible strategies and processes to maximise the sharing of information with carers and engage with them in decision-making. This includes impersonal information about the participant's mental health condition, their treatments and ongoing care and any rehabilitation.

Advice and information services provided by MHF will assist carers to balance and sustain their caring responsibilities with other activities in their own lives.

MHF recognises the efforts and dedication of carers and the social and economic contribution they make to the community.

## Carer Rights

1. Carers have the right to be valued and treated with respect and dignity. MHF will contribute to the promotion of the role of carers in the community.
2. Carers have the right to decide whether to take on or continue their role of carer, and choose the degree or extent of care they provide.
3. Carers are provided with relevant information about appropriate care options for the person for whom they provide care, including services and community supports, enabling them to make educated decisions about essential care arrangements. This includes impersonal information about the participant's mental health condition, their treatments and ongoing care and any rehabilitation.

4. Carers' have the right to information and access to services that meet their own needs as carers, and aid them in sustaining their own health and well-being.
5. Carers have the right to be acknowledged in their role regardless of age, cultural or indigenous background, disability, or marital status.
6. Carers should have opportunities to develop their skills and knowledge to assist them in their caring role; through formal training, information strategies and learning networks.
7. Carers have the right to provide feedback including complaints, and participate in quality assurance and improvement processes.

## References

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| ACT Government  | <i>Carers' Recognition Act 2021 (ACT)</i>  |
| Carers ACT  | <i>Carers Recognition Act Your Rights</i> webpage:<br><a href="https://www.carersact.org.au/for-carers/your-rights/">https://www.carersact.org.au/for-carers/your-rights/</a><br>(accessed 28 February 2023).  |
| Commonwealth Government   | <i>Carers Recognition Act 2010</i>   |
| Hepatitis WA  | <i>Carers Policy</i>   |
| Mind Australia  | <i>Carers</i> webpage:<br><a href="https://www.mindaustralia.org.au/resources/carers">https://www.mindaustralia.org.au/resources/carers</a><br>(accessed 29 March 2023)  |
| MS Plus   | <i>Carers Strategy</i>   |
| South Australian Government,<br>Department of Primary<br>Industries and Regions | <i>Carers Policy</i> , August 2022.  |
| Victorian Government,<br>Families, Fairness and<br>Housing                      | <i>Recognising and supporting Victoria's carers:<br/>Victorian carer strategy 2018-22</i> webpage:<br><a href="https://www.dffh.vic.gov.au/publications/recognising-and-supporting-victorias-carers-victorian-carer-strategy-2018-22">https://www.dffh.vic.gov.au/publications/recognising-and-supporting-victorias-carers-victorian-carer-strategy-2018-22</a> . (Accessed 29 March 2023) |
| Western Australian<br>Department of Communities                                 | <i>WA Carers Strategy</i>  |

| Distribution and location list |  |
|--------------------------------|--|
| Electronic                     | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SharePoint.../Admin /Admin /Library and reference material /Policies and Procedures/ Participant and Carer Rights and Participation. |
| Other                          | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MHF website: <a href="http://www.mhf.org.au">www.mhf.org.au</a> .  |

| Document History           |         |  |           |                |
|----------------------------|---------|--|-----------|----------------|
| Author                     | Version | Amendment  | Owner     | Date of Effect |
| Policy Manager             | 1.0     | Document Created   | MHF Board | 18/3/14        |
| Corporate Services Manager | 2.0     | Reviewed current ACT Government carer policy for changes. No changes required. Minor grammatical changes made.                                   | MHF Board | 30/1/2018      |
| Corporate Services Manager | 3.0     | Reviewed for currency. Changed 'consumer' to 'participant'; and EO to CEO.   | CEO       | 18/1/2021      |
| Corporate Services Manager | 4.0     | Changed to match new logo and branding guidelines. Reviewed in line with the ACT Carer Recognition Act 2021 – only minor additions/changes made. | CEO       | 23/5/2023      |
| CEO                        | 5.0     | Review to align with Governance Framework  | Board     |                |