

Participant and Carer Feedback Policy

Policy Type	Participant and Carer Rights and Participation
Version	3.0
Development Date	September 2012
Date of Review	January 2024
Date for Review	January 2029
Person/Body Responsible	Chief Executive Officer
Approved By	MHF Board

Purpose

This policy is aimed at improving services and participant outcomes through effective guidance for management of participant and carer feedback.

The Mental Health Foundation ACT (MHF) welcomes feedback, e.g. complaints, compliments, and suggestions, from participants, their representatives and others. The feedback is a valuable mechanism to improve MHF processes and services.

Management of participant and carer feedback will be consistent with requirements outlined in the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*, the *National Standards for Mental Health Services* and the *NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission – Effective Complaint Handling Guidelines for NDIS Providers*.

This Policy should be read in conjunction with the *MHF Feedback and Complaints Management Procedures*.

Definitions

Feedback – any negative, positive or constructive expression regarding our services which can lead to improvements in the operations of MHF.

Complaint - any expression of dissatisfaction with our service, where a response is explicitly or implicitly expected or legally required.

Natural Justice - means being without prejudice or bias and allowing all parties the opportunity to present their viewpoint.

Policy

MHF welcomes all feedback including complaints, as a mechanism for assuring participants, carers, families, and advocates of the MHF's commitment to addressing any concerns regarding the quality of our services, or the ability for them to meet participant needs.

MHF is responsible for addressing and resolving any complaint or dispute lodged in relation to our services.

This policy relates only to complaints made by or on behalf of participants and carers. For staff complaints refer to the *Grievance and Dispute Management Policy*.

MHF will document participant complaints and feedback, address concerns, and utilise the information from de-identified data to recognise trends and underlying concerns to improve the quality of our services.

All staff are required to:

- Provide all participants with information regarding providing feedback as part of their initial onboarding to the service.
- Encourage feedback and assist participants to raise their concerns regarding services.
- Provide information to participants and carers about how to give feedback.
- Respond courteously and confidentially to participant concerns, doing what they can to resolve them efficiently and in a timely manner, including correcting any deficiencies.
- Document and report on all feedback to enable trend analysis and quality improvement processes.
- Inform participants about relevant review and appeals processes.

Participants and Carers have the right to:

- Be actively involved and provide feedback regarding the development, planning and delivery of services.
- Confidentiality when raising concerns and complaints and to lodge anonymous feedback.
- To be listened to, and be treated with respect, and courtesy.
- Be told the ways in which they can raise concerns and make complaints and appeal decisions.
- Expect that there will be no adverse consequences for them for making a complaint, including that their service provision will continue uninterrupted until the issue is resolved.
- Have an advocate or friend with them at any point whilst providing feedback.
- Further pursue a grievance through external appeals processes.
- Be kept informed until agreement is reached, or a decision made.

Complaints may be raised with any level of management within MHF, but it is generally preferable to resolve complaints with those directly present or responsible, where this is possible.

The principles of natural justice must be followed for all parties involved in a complaint.

Any person who is the subject of a complaint has the right of reply.

It is the responsibility of the Chief Executive Officer to implement this policy.

Managers are responsible for ensuring that participant rights are respected and that the *Feedback and Complaints Management Procedures* are observed within their program's areas.

References

Able Australia	<i>Complaints and Feedback Policy, Version 4</i>
Australian Government	<i>National Standards for Mental Health Services 2010</i>
ACT Government	<i>Raising the Standards 2002</i>
Belconnen Community Service	<i>Feedback Policy and Procedure, February 2017</i>
Mental Health Foundation ACT	<i>Feedback and Complaints Management Procedures</i> <i>Participant Advocate Policy</i>
National Disability Insurance Scheme Quality and Safeguards Commission	<i>Effective Complaint Handling Guidelines for NDIS Providers</i> <i>Complaints Management and Resolution Guidance, version 2.1, September 2019</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 Participant Handbook

Document History				
Author	Version	Amendment	Owner	Date of Effect
Policy Working Group	1.0	Document Created	MHF Board	1/12/2012
Corporate Services Manager	2.0	All references to 'consumer' changed to 'participant', including policy name. EO, changed to Chief Executive Officer (CEO). Checking compliance with the <i>NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission – Effective Complaint Handling Guidelines for NDIS Providers</i> and <i>NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission – Complaints Management and Resolution Guidance</i> , and <i>UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disability</i> .	MHF Board	21/9/2021
CEO	3.0	Review following NDIS Audit	MHF Board	