

Participant and Carer Participation Policy

Policy Type	Participant and Carer Rights and Participation
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Person/Body Responsible	MHF Board
Approved By	MHF Board

Purpose

Participants and carers are recognised as having unique expertise and understanding due to direct experience or close observation of mental illness. Mental Health Foundation ACT (MHF) strongly supports effective and responsive partnerships between participants, carers and MHF staff.

The aim of participant and carer participation is to improve the quality of service delivery through participation in development, implementation, and evaluation processes, and increase the level of participant and carer satisfaction with MHF services.

This Policy aligns with the National Disability Insurance Scheme *Participant Service Charter*, which in turn is underpinned by the *Participant Service Improvement Plan 2022-23*.

Definitions

Participation – The inclusion of participants and carers in activities such as the sharing of information and opinions, planning, implementation, evaluation, and decision-making processes.

Engagement – Interaction and actions of two or more parties aimed at achieving a desired outcome.

NDIS – means the National Disability Insurance Scheme administered by the Commonwealth Government, National Disability Insurance Agency.

Policy

MHF values participant and carer participation. The MHF Board and the Chief Executive Officer will actively promote strategies to ensure the engagement of

participants and carers in the development and management of services provided by MHF.

MHF recognises a number of distinct levels of engagement and participation and will choose those most appropriate to achieving essential or expected outcomes. Forms of engagement may include:

Transparency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keeping participants and carers informed. • Using the preferred communication method of the participant/ carer. • Explaining decisions MHF makes and the right of participants and carers to appeal.
Responsive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring that MHF responds promptly to any queries received from participants and/or carers. • Giving contact details of a staff member as a participant's main support at MHF.
Respectful	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listening to what you need and how MHF can support you. • Working with you to achieve your recovery goals. • Listening to and valuing your feedback on MHF services.
Empowerment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confirming delegation of decision-making power to participants and/or carers. • Working with participants to ensure that needs are met through NDIS and other programs. • Providing participants and/or carers with opportunities to provide feedback on MHF services.
Connecting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presenting different options for how participants and/or carers can choose to connect with MHF. • Helping you to use your plan by locating supports and services you need.

Participants and carers have a right to participate and have a direct and active role in all processes that affect their lives.

Individual participants and carers with appropriate skills and expertise may be appointed to represent the interests of a larger group of participants and carers. However, a single person should not be appointed to represent the views of both participants and carers. Both a participant and a carer representative are required to represent the views of each respective group.

Participation of participants and carers is an essential component of continuous quality improvement.

Communication links between the organisation, participants and carers need to operate as effective two-way processes. Information is shared and exchanged with participants and carers to enable effective participation.

The organisation recognises the need for resources and support to enable effective participation of the participant and carer.

Opportunities are provided for the ongoing support and relevant training and education of participants and carers to assist in their effectiveness as participant and carer representatives.

References

Commonwealth Government *NDIS Amendment (Participant Service Guarantee and Other Measures) Act 2022.*

National Disability Insurance Scheme *Participant Service Charter, October 2022.*

Participant Service Improvement Plan 2022-23

Distribution and location list	
Electronic	<i>SharePoint.../Admin /Admin /Library and reference material /Policies and Procedures/ Participant and Carer Rights and Participation.</i>
Other	MHF Website

Document History				
Author	Version	Amendment	Owner	Date of Effect
Policy Manager	1.0	Document Created	MHF Board	2/4/2013
Corporate Services Manager	2.0	Document reviewed. No updates required. Person/body responsible changed to MHF Board (previously 'Stakeholder Engagement Sub-Committee'). 'Consumer' changed to 'participant'.	MHF Board	30/1/2018
Corporate Services Manager	3.0	Reviewed for currency. Updated to incorporate the NDIS Participant Charter (September 2020).	MHF Board	1/4/2022
Corporate Services Manager	4.0	Updated to reflect the new logo and the branding guidelines. Reviewed for currency. No changes required.	MHF Board	/5/2023