

Fact sheet

Statewide Mental Health Lived Experience Register

GETTING INVOLVED

What is lived experience?

Lived experience is the knowledge and understanding you get when you have lived through something. In this case, we mean living with mental illness or being family or friends supporting someone living with mental illness.

Sometimes people call mental illness other names like 'being depressed', 'psychologically distressed' or 'messed up'. Whatever you call it, if you have lived through it, we'd like to hear from you.

Don't you mean mental health consumers and carers?

That's right. When we talk about people with lived experience, we mean people living with mental illness (sometimes called consumers) and family or friends supporting someone living with mental illness (sometimes called carers). If you feel more comfortable using those terms, that's fine - we will know what you mean, but we will still use the term 'lived experience' because we think it better explains the uniqueness and diversity of everyone's own experiences.

What is the Statewide Mental Health Lived Experience Register?

The Statewide Mental Health Lived Experience Register (we'll call it 'the Register' for short) is the way you can tell us about what is important to you when it comes to mental health and wellbeing. It is also a way of letting you know what's happening in the Office of the Chief Psychiatrist.

How do I join the Register?

So you want to be involved? Fantastic! If you have a lived experience (see definition above) then you can be a member of the Register. All you have to do is fill in a membership form. More on this a bit later.

Being a member of the Register means you can get involved in any or all of the four ways listed in the diagram above.

You can let us know how you'd like to be involved by ticking the relevant box on the membership form. For example, if you'd just like to receive information, then tick the first box on the form. The membership form is attached to this information sheet, or can be [downloaded here](#) for you to fill in.

Four ways you can use your lived experience

BE INFORMED	FEEDBACK	BE CONSULTED	BE A REPRESENTATIVE
You can get information such as newsletters and email updates	You can get asked for your input - such as surveys	You can be invited to forums about mental health issues that you are interested in	You can be invited to apply to represent lived experience perspectives on a specific topic at a meeting or forum

You can always change your mind. If you decide to change your level of involvement, you can let us know at any time and we'll change your membership to the level of involvement that you want. Or you might choose to stop being a member. That's ok too. Just contact us and we'll remove your name from the Register membership list.

I've filled in the membership form – now what?

Once we receive your completed membership form, we will add you to the Register email or postal mailing list. We will then send you regular newsletters and updates from the Mental Health sector.

Depending on what level of involvement you have chosen, we may also send you requests for your feedback, invitations to forums or opportunities for you to apply to be a lived experience representative. Your choice of level of involvement will determine how often we get in touch with you, but we aim to provide information updates on a fortnightly basis.

What is a lived experience representative?

A lived experience representative is someone who attends or contributes to a single meeting or series of meetings to provide views on behalf of people living with mental illness or family or friends supporting someone living with mental illness.

How do I become a lived experience representative?

If you would like to become a lived experience representative, just tick the fourth box on the membership form. You will then receive opportunities to apply for representative positions at meetings via an 'expressions of interest' process. This means you fill in and send us an application form describing your skills and experience and tell us why you'd like to be a representative.

We will then have a look at your application to see if your skills and experience are a good fit for the meeting that you have applied for. If so, we will ask you to come in and meet with us so we that we can get to know each other, answer any questions you may have and give you the information you need to be a representative. If not, we will let you know as soon as possible and keep you informed of other opportunities to build your skills.

How will I be supported as a lived experience representative?

We will provide you with opportunities for training and to meet other representatives to share your ideas and experiences. We will also provide reimbursement for certain lived experience representative activities so that any participating you do does not put you out of pocket.

More information about what we will pay for is in the Register Guidelines, which we can provide to you on request. Just contact us using the contact details below.

We will ask you to send us an update (we will send you a form to fill in which is usually about half a page) about what's been happening in your representative work. This way, we can hear about what's been happening and what the key issues are. We can also support you if there are any issues.

What will happen to my feedback?

When you provide feedback to us it will be used to inform mental health service and policy development. This means we may need to share your information with others, such as mental health service providers.

We will make sure you are okay with us using your information in this way, by asking for your consent to do so. We will do this before you participate in any feedback process as part of the Register, including as a lived experience representative. If we do share your information we will make sure that it will not identify you or any other person in any way.

Who can I talk to if I need more information?

You can contact us at any time if you have questions or if you would like more information about anything to do with the Register. Our details are below.

For more information

Office of the Chief Psychiatrist /
Mental Health Strategy & Planning
Lived Experience Team:

Christine Small –
Consumer Consultant Project Officer

Leanne Galpin –
Carer Consultant Project Officer

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