



# Information for Carers

Centre for Clinical Interventions

## Caring for someone

This brochure is for anyone who provides care and support to a partner, relative or friend while they are engaging in treatment at the Centre for Clinical Interventions (CCI). CCI recognises you play an important role in providing emotional and practical support to your loved one who is dealing with mental health problems. We appreciate your interest in learning how you can best support your loved one during their treatment at CCI.

## What to expect

CCI offers short-term treatment which aims to equip people with practical skills and strategies to manage their difficulties. Your loved one is likely to attend around ten treatment sessions (or more than 20 in the case of eating disorders), which tend to be scheduled once a week. Your loved one will work with a clinical psychologist who has specialist, postgraduate university training in psychological assessment and therapy.

Treatment is very active, and your loved one will be working hard between treatment sessions to make changes to unhelpful thinking patterns and behaviours. Most people who complete treatment will see a significant improvement in their symptoms. People who regularly attend their appointments and practice the strategies they are taught tend to get more benefit from this kind of treatment. We are always striving to improve our outcomes further.

## How to support recovery

Treatment can be challenging and people undertaking treatment often need to go outside of their 'comfort zone'. You may notice that your loved one finds treatment tasks challenging or



stressful at times. While it is not easy to see a loved one feeling stressed, this is a situation where the concept of 'short-term pain for long-term gain' applies.

It is important not to 'take over' when your loved one is trying new things. This denies your loved one the opportunity to learn for themselves and build confidence. Any support or encouragement you can offer your loved one as they make changes for themselves is very valuable.

It may be hard to adjust to your loved one making changes. It is helpful if you can avoid criticising your loved one as they start doing things differently. Remember, it will take time and practice to master new skills, so please be patient as your loved one makes positive changes.

Supporting a loved one might involve being with them while they complete treatment tasks, having supportive conversations, or just spending time together without directly talking about their treatment. What people want from their supporters differs from person to person. It is best to ask your loved one how they personally would like to be supported as they undertake the challenges of the treatment.

## Sharing information

It is natural that you may have questions or

concerns about your loved one's treatment at CCI. We are always able to provide you with general information to support you in your caring role (e.g. common symptoms of depression, helpful communication tips and information about resources and services). However, in order to respect our clients' right to privacy, information specific to their difficulties and treatment will only be shared with permission.

In extreme circumstances (e.g. when there is serious concern for an individual's safety) we may share information without permission, however this is very rare. Clients are informed if this is going to happen.

As a carer, you may have important information which you wish to share (e.g. noticing concerning changes in your loved one's behaviour). If you have concerns about how your loved one is coping, it is generally best to talk to them first, before contacting their clinical psychologist. Contacting your loved one's clinical psychologist without their knowledge may lead them to feel disempowered.

Mutual trust between a client and their clinical psychologist is very important for effective treatment. In order to maintain an open and honest relationship with clients, it is our policy to inform our clients of contact we have with their loved ones.

## What to do in a crisis

In a mental health emergency, you can take your loved one to your local hospital emergency department, or call:

### Mental Health Emergency Response Line

Perth Metro Area	1300 555 788
Peel Region	1800 676 822
RuralLink WA	1800 552 002

They will be able to help assess the situation and provide advice or assistance as necessary.

## Taking care of yourself

Supporting a loved one dealing with mental health problems can be stressful and upsetting. It is important to take time out to care for yourself. This includes:

- ▶ Taking time to relax
- ▶ Socialising
- ▶ Asking for help from others
- ▶ Getting enough sleep and eating well
- ▶ Seeking and getting support.

If you find it hard to get support from your friends and family, it might be helpful to attend a support group or get professional help (e.g. a counsellor or psychologist). Organisations such as Carers WA can provide you with information about resources and support services available for carers.

## More information

CCI runs free information evenings for family and friends of people with an eating disorder, or with bipolar disorder. Please contact us if you would like to find out more. In addition, the CCI website has free resources about various mental health problems and helpful coping strategies.

You can also contact us with questions. We recognise and appreciate the important role that carers play in our clients' lives, and will do our best to support your caring role by answering questions you may have. Please remember that we must also respect our clients' right to privacy, so there will be limits on the kind of information we are able to provide.



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This document can be made available in alternative formats on request.