

Participation and Engagement Framework

2014

tandem



representing Victorian
mental health carers

Who we are:

We are the peak body in Victoria representing carers of people with a mental illness. We promote and advocate for:

- Involvement of carers in the treatment and recovery of individual consumers,
- Participation of carers in planning, delivery and evaluation of mental health services,
- Comprehensive support for carers, including information, education and training, respite, financial support and peer support,
- Improvement in mental health services.

Values

Respect
Empowerment
Diversity
Equity

Partnership
Excellence
Innovation
Inclusion

Vision

Carers are respected and involved, their participation is valued, and they are supported in their role as carers.

Our Membership

The membership of Tandem includes carers, carer groups and networks, and organisations that support carers.

Participation and Engagement

Tandem is committed to engaging our members, families and carers in its advocacy and policy work. We utilise co-design and co-production methodologies to guide this engagement.

Codesign is an approach where service users, e.g. consumers and carers, are actively involved as partners in the design and development process. For Tandem, this means ensuring that our members, families and carers are engaged and involved in all aspects of our work. Tandem ensures that family and carer experiences are recognized, validated and central to everything we do.

Principles of codesign include:

- Family/carers are active participants throughout the co-design process from problem-setting to problem-solving.
- Family/carers participate as design partners: participating in idea generation, as well as providing feedback and opinions on existing ideas.
- Proposed ideas and solutions to concerns raised are continually evaluated on how they will impact consumers and carers and whether or not they will create meaningful and lasting change.

Coproduction is 'a relationship where professionals and citizens (e.g. carers) share power to plan and deliver support together, recognising that both partners have vital contributions to make in order to improve quality of life for people and communities'¹. At Tandem, carers are active partners in our policy and advocacy work. By working together, we are able to achieve more.

The principles of coproduction include:

- asset or strength-based approach
- building on people's existing capabilities
- reciprocity and mutuality
- engaging peer support networks alongside professional as the best way of transferring knowledge
- blurring distinctions between professionals and carers, between producers and consumers/carers of service
- facilitating rather than delivering

¹ Nef. (2013), Co-production in mental health: a literature review

At Tandem, we work hard to ensure that family and carers have the skills, knowledge and confidence to actively participate and engage with Tandem and its work.

We engage with our members and carers through:

Member meetings

We hold monthly member meetings where we provide updates on Tandem's work and opportunities for members to engage with our work; setting priorities, planning and providing feedback.

Working groups

Each year we work with our members on a variety of priorities identified by families and carers. To do this we form working groups made up of Tandem members and families/carers. Focused on specific topics or concerns these groups plan, strategize and advocate on these issues. For example, in 2014, we formed a working group for the Mental Health Community Support Service (MHCSS) reform. This working group guided and assisted Tandem to develop its priorities for advocacy and policy work during the reform process.

Policy submissions and consultations

As the peak body for carers of people with a mental illness in Victoria, Tandem develops advocacy and policy submissions with and on behalf of carers / members. We consult and engage our members in the development of our submissions, including them in all stages. For example, in 2014, when the Department of Health was conducting the consumer and carer program review, Tandem developed and engaged its members in planning and developing a response. Once all information had been gathered, a written response to this review based on all the feedback it had received in the consultations and focus groups that it initiated with its members and carers.

Public Forums

We hold three public forums each year in which we ask carers, what are their main concerns and priorities for action within any given year or policy area, e.g. the new Mental Health Act 2014. In addition to this, we speak to and engage carer support groups and networks across the state about their concerns.

Focus Groups

We hold focus groups to further deepen our understanding of particular issues or concerns of carers. For example, in our response to the PDRSS Reform Framework we held a number of focus groups across Victoria.

Surveys

We ask for feedback on particular topic areas through the use of surveys. These surveys are distributed through our membership networks.

Regular e-News

We regularly communicate to our members and the broader carer community through our fortnightly e-news. This contains information about the work of Tandem, its members and the broader carer community. We regularly post opportunities for engagement and participation within this publication.

	Inform	Consult	Involve	Collaborate	Empower
Stakeholder engagement goals	To provide balanced, objective, accurate and consistent information to assist stakeholders to understand the problem, alternatives, opportunities and /or solutions.	To obtain feedback from stakeholders on analysis, alternatives and/or outcomes	To work directly with stakeholders throughout the process to ensure that their concerns and needs are consistently understood and considered	To partner with the stakeholder including the development of alternatives, making decisions and the identification of preferred solutions	To place final decision-making in the hands of the stakeholder. Stakeholders are enabled/equipped to actively contribute to the achievement of outcomes
Promise to stakeholders	We will keep you informed	We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge your concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how stakeholder input influenced the outcome	We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in our systemic advocacy and provide feedback on how your input influenced the outcome	We will look to you for advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the outcomes to the maximum extent possible	We will implement what you decide. We will support and complement your priorities and actions
Methods of engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fact sheets • Website • e-news and bulletins 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Surveys • Focus groups • Public forums • Submissions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public forums • Focus groups • Surveys 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working groups • Joint position papers • Participatory decision-making 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joint planning • Capacity building • Delegated decisions

Source: adapted from the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) Spectrum www.iap2.org (2007)