

Standard 6.

Consumers

Consumers have the right to comprehensive and integrated mental health care that meets their individual needs and achieves the best possible outcome in terms of their recovery.

(Note: The consumer standard is not assessable, as it contains criteria that are all assessable within the other standards.)

GUIDELINES

The consumer Standard is not assessable, as it contains criteria that are assessable within the other standards. The intent of gathering these criteria under one standard is to ensure that all of these elements are examined together.

Treatment of consumers (Criteria 6.1, 6.2)

Consumers of mental health services (MHS) have the right to be treated with the respect and dignity equal to any human at all times.

Consumers rights and responsibilities (Criteria 6.3, 6.4)

The consumer statement of rights and responsibilities provided on admission to the MHS and at regular intervals thereafter should include:

- consumers safety and wellbeing are upheld by the MHS
- consumers' rights to privacy and confidentiality are upheld
- consumers have the right to seek other opinions for care, assessment and treatment
- the relationships between consumers, carers, family and friends are respected and honoured
- consumers work in partnership with service providers
- language and cultural needs of consumers are addressed
- consumers complaints and grievances are addressed without compromising service provision to them
- consumers have the responsibility for maintaining their own health and welfare
- consumers respecting the rights of others
- consumers respecting the staff and treating them with dignity and respect
- consumers involvement in their treatment, care and recovery plan.

Education about rights and responsibilities should occur at admission and continue until the consumer's mental state allows comprehension of the information. Discussion about the rights and responsibilities, choice of treatment and the treatment, care and recovery plan should be clearly documented in the health record.

The MHS can help a consumer understand the information provided on their care by offering:

- interpreters
- cultural guides
- an opportunity to ask questions
- consumer advocates
- family and community involvement when appropriate.

The MHS should have a policy and procedures for offering appropriate support to consumers, their families, carers, staff and visitors immediately after a critical incident.

Relationships (Criterion 6.5)

Existing carers' relationships and the capacity, willingness and needs of the carers are key considerations when determining the most appropriate treatment and support for consumers. Individual consumer needs should be taken into account to determine what would be the least restrictive environment. The environment should enable effective treatment to occur, while ensuring safety and protection of other consumers, staff, visitors and members of the public.

Identification of clinician (Criterion 6.6)

The clinician responsible for the consumer's initial contact with the service coordinates assessment, treatment and support and/or facilitates a smooth transition of care to the appropriate service or clinician. This position could be called a case manager, care coordinator or key worker.

Partnerships (Criterion 6.7)

Each consumer participates fully in the development of the individual treatment, care and recovery plan and in the evaluation of outcomes to ensure that goals are achieved. A copy of the treatment, care and recovery plan is given to the consumer and carer wherever possible. For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander persons involvement of community and family may be essential in the development of such plans.

Informed consent (Criterion 6.8)

Consent to care is obtained by providing information about the choices of services and treatment available by ensuring this information is understood and by supporting consumers to make informed choices.

Care plans (Criterion 6.9)

Each consumer should have an individual comprehensive treatment, care and recovery plan developed in partnership with the consumer and their carers.

Access to information (Criterion 6.10)

Consumers should have access to information on the mental illness, treatment options, risks and benefits, effects and side effects, ongoing care and rehabilitation arrangements. This information should be discussed with consumers and carers with evidence of the discussion recorded in the health record.

Right to involve (Criterion 6.11)

Consumers have the right to nominate who is involved in their treatment, care and recovery planning. This does not just include carers and family members.

Exit plans (Criterion 6.12)

The consumers' exit plan should include:

- a nominated health care provider, for example, general practitioner or private psychiatrist
- shared care arrangements with general practitioner, private psychiatrists and non-government organisations, if applicable
- earliest possible involvement of the consumer's nominated service provider and arrangements for follow-up
- community resources likely to be needed
- other people likely to be involved
- other details identified by consumer and/or carers
- preferred method of evaluating the outcomes for the consumer
- plan for identifying early warning signs of relapse
- information on how to re-enter the MHS
- clear point of contact in the MHS for the most recent episode of treatment and/or support.

Consumers and their carers should be helped to identify early warning signs of relapse. Symptoms of pending relapse and an accompanying relapse management plan should be included in the exit plan.

Continuity of care (Criterion 6.13)

Arrangements for follow-up should be planned and in place before consumers leave the service and these arrangements documented in the individual health record.

The consumer is given formal introductions to various community agencies when necessary. Community based agencies and programs may include education providers, community recreation programs, paid or voluntary work, supported or other employment and consumer run support services.

Consumer records (Criteria 6.14, 6.15)

Consumers are provided with information about how to access their own health records. This should include information on who can access records on the consumers' behalf in accordance with relevant legislation. Consumer information sheets on privacy legislation are available from

➤ <http://www.privacy.gov.au>