

# Program management circular

Mental Health Branch



## Guidelines for the consumer consultant program

The consumer consultant program provides an important means of improving service quality and responsiveness through the involvement of consumers with direct experience of mental health services.

### What are the program objectives?

- To enable consumer perspectives to be included in all aspects of the mental health service's planning, delivery and evaluation.
- To assist in the improvement of the mental health service's responsiveness to consumer needs.
- To communicate the broad views of consumers to mental health services and other relevant services.

### How can these objectives be achieved?

#### Consumer consultants assist mental health services to:

- Develop and implement 'consumer-friendly' strategies to engage consumers and obtain and represent their views and experiences.
- Provide a coordinated approach to consumer needs through the development of an area consumer participation plan, including identification of service gaps, areas for improvement and implementation of appropriate responses.
- Provide education and information on consumer experiences, needs and support to mental health services and other community groups.
- Enable consumer input to local planning and service development activities through consumer membership on mental health service committees, working groups and advisory groups.
- Promote the dignity and rights of consumers while respecting privacy and confidentiality.

Area mental health services should provide the consumer consultant with appropriate supervision, training, and professional development opportunities that support the effective operation of the consumer consultant program.

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