



Statement about Lived Experience Engagement

Mindgardens Neuroscience Network is committed in all its research and service development work to the meaningful engagement of people living with mental health, drug and alcohol and neurological conditions. Mindgardens supports the transition from research and intention to positive action, while continuing on the path of listening to and learning from people with lived experience.

Mindgardens will drive and optimise effective collaboration with people with lived experience, and their carers, families and kinships groups, developing consumer-centred co-designed health-care services that deliver quality health and wellbeing outcomes for people living with mental health, drug and alcohol and neurological disorders. We recognise that lived experience knowledge and expertise are vital to improving and strengthening our work.

What is consumer and community engagement?

Consumer and community engagement is the way we collaborate with and listen to people, responding to what we hear. Engaging with consumers and community is key to Mindgardens' ability to design, develop and implement services that are fit for purpose and meet people's real needs.

“Partnerships and community are at the core of a strong and resilient preventive health system that can build and sustain capacity to promote health and prevent illness. This requires systematic recognition of – and commitment to – the critical role of consumers and communities as equal participants in health partnerships, to ensure that preventive health systems are person-centred and able to maximise health and wellbeing outcomes.”

Draft *National Consumer Engagement Strategy for Health and Wellbeing*, Australian Department of Health and Aged Care, 2023

Consumer and carer participation is: “participation by consumers and carers in formal or informal planning, delivery, implementation and evaluation of all activities associated with mental health services (voluntary or paid), as well as all processes, which affect the lives of consumers and carers, through sharing information, opinions and decision making power.”

National Mental Health Consumer and Carer Forum Advocacy Brief, 2010