

***Information sheet No 4. 21 October, 2008***  
**Australian Government Mental Health Lifecycle Package**  
**New Transition Mental Health and Family Collaborative (Townsville)**

In November, 2008 a new Australian government initiative commences in Townsville, North Queensland, to improve the ways that all medically discharging Australian Defence Force (ADF) members who experience, or are at risk of mental health problems, as well as their families, are engaged with, assisted and treated.

This initiative, the Transition Mental Health and Family Collaborative, will significantly enhance mental health and family support to the ADF Integrated People Support Model and the Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) transition services.

The initiative will be jointly led by the Australian Centre for Posttraumatic Mental Health (ACPMH), Defence and DVA. From November to December, 2008, ACPMH will orient and provide briefings on the initiative to ADF and DVA health, rehabilitation, transition and community services who work with individuals being medically discharged from Lavarack Barracks, RAAF Townsville and HMAS Cairns.

## **1. What is the Transition Mental Health & Family Collaborative?**

ACPMH will work with services using an approach called a mental health and family learning collaborative. With the support of mental health and family experts from ACPMH, teams from the participating health, rehabilitation, transition and community services will work together and learn from each other during the course of 2009 to improve inter-agency coordination and their own work practices. The teams will meet together on three occasions to jointly plan and report on the outcomes of their improvement efforts.

Services will actively participate in joint learning sessions, and have consultants from ACPMH meet with them on a monthly basis at their workplace to coach them in their efforts. This approach is designed to have minimal disruption to everyday work routines and the maximum likelihood of improved practices becoming part of everyday routines. Services will work on five priority areas to improve their practices:

- **Collaboration** Improved inter-agency collaboration.
- **Engagement** Effective engagement and communication practices.
- **Recognition** Better recognise mental health problems and related issues.
- **Families** Improved family sensitive and inclusive practices.
- **Interventions** More effective advice, support and treatment.

## 2. What will be the outcomes of the initiative?

The outcomes of the initiative, to be measured over the course of 2009, are that a progressively greater number of discharging ADF members with mental health problems and their families will:

- Be better engaged by practitioners and services.
- Have their mental health and related problems recognized earlier.
- Be better informed about mental health and related problems.
- Use more self-management strategies to help themselves.
- Seek mental health and family services more relevant to their needs.
- Experience a successful transition between providers when required.
- Be satisfied with their mental health care and family support.

## 3. When will these activities happen?

The initiative will run over a twelve month period throughout 2008 and 2009 with the following schedule:

- Orientation visits and briefings: November 2008.
- Agreements with collaborating services: November-December 2008.
- Pre-Work Phase: December 2008 - January 2009.
- First Learning Session and Action Period: February -April 2009.
- Second Learning Session and Action Period: May-July 2009.
- Third Learning Session and Action Period: August -October 2009.
- National conference for services to present findings: November 2009.
- Report findings on initiative and make recommendations about potential expansion of the initiative: December 2009

## 4. How can I find out more?

If you would like to know more about this initiative, please contact the person responsible for your area of work or interest.

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