



wellways helping families & friends find better ways

The adult mental health service system in South Australia

General Information

- Public and private, government and non-government, hospital and community elements comprise Mental Health Services in South Australia
- The state government is the major provider of acute services for people with severe mental illness
- Services are primarily provided through the public hospital system and organised under regional or specialty services comprising (eight metropolitan centres and 25 rural centres). Mental Health Services provide inpatient, hospital-based, and community mental health services for all age groups across the spectrum of mental health care – from emergency response to less urgent mental health consultations
- The usual way to contact a mental health service is via a visit to your local General Practitioner. Your GP will refer you to either a private mental health professional or your local public mental health service
- Mental Health Services in South Australia provide a range of specialised mental health services to adults who are developing or experiencing mental health problems or disorders
- There is also a number of statewide, regional and specialist services, for example, Assessment & Crisis Intervention Service (ACIS) (24 hours), rehabilitation and recovery services and services for people with severe and persistent needs.

Adult Mental Health Services

Hospital Inpatient Services

- **Consultation Liaison Psychiatry** provides assessment, consultation and referral regarding the patients of the general Emergency Departments.

- **Acute Inpatient Units** provide care for people requiring hospitalisation. They operate 24 hours a day and care is provided by a multidisciplinary team. These units are located within acute general hospitals. Both individual care and attention as well as a comprehensive activities program designed to meet a range of individual needs are provided. New patients are referred, where appropriate, for follow up by community mental health and other services.

Secure/Extended Care Inpatient Services

provide a safe, supportive place for people with a serious mental illness whose behaviours may put themselves or others at risk. Their purpose is to provide bed-based intensive treatment and care to clients who have unremitting and severe symptoms, which inhibit their capacity to live in the community.

Community-based services and teams

- **Assessment & Crisis Intervention Service (ACIS)** provides a single point of first contact with the public mental health system and is available 24-hours a day, seven days a week. Referrals are accepted from any source. This team can provide community-based mobile response, crisis assistance, initial assessment and admission to in-patient units
- **Mobile Assertive Care Service** Provides intensive and medium term support to people with a severe and chronically disabling mental health illness or disorder. The service is available over seven days and can provide intensive, mobile, community-based management,

specialist care regarding self care, medication and treatment options, close liaison with other support services, linkage and advocacy with external agencies or services and carer support and education

- **Community Treatment Teams** are teams that provide a community based multidisciplinary case management and consultancy service to people with a mental illness or related disorder. Emphasis is given to assisting people with mental illness to develop skills in self-care and independent living in their own environment, thus encouraging them to become fully integrated members of the community
- **Mental health professionals** include mental health nurses, psychologists, social workers, occupational therapists and psychiatrists. Mental health professionals will assess and diagnose people's condition and develop a treatment plan with them. They will also work closely with the GP, family members and other health providers.

Private psychiatric services

- Although General Practitioners (GPs) are generally in the private sector, in practice they form part of the public mental health system
- Private GPs are often the first point of contact for people with mental health problems. Your GP will refer the person to either a private mental health professional or the local public mental health service

The adult mental health service system in South Australia *continued...*

- People with mental illness treated by Public Mental Health Services will most often be discharged to the care of GPs in their local community as soon as is practically possible. This makes having a relationship with a good GP very important
 - The most common way of seeing a private psychiatrist is through a referral from a GP, which allows the Medicare rebate to be claimed. (Fees vary, and some psychiatrists bulk bill). Especially in rural areas, private psychiatrists may not be available
 - Private psychiatrists mainly provide outpatient services from their consulting rooms or inpatient services to private hospitals. They may have specialist interests (eg working with particular age groups or disorders, and specific therapies)
 - Private psychiatrists and GPs may work together with the Community Team in assisting people to develop skills in self-care and independent living.
- **Psycho-social rehabilitation day programs** are a centre-based psychiatric disability support service which assist people with severe psychiatric disabilities to improve their quality of life, participate to their maximum extent in social, recreational, educational and vocational activities and live successfully at an optimal level of independent functioning in the community. Programs also provide community access, community development and outreach support. Diamond House is such a service in SA.
 - **Residential rehabilitation** provides medium to long-term transitional accommodation with rehabilitation support prior to a client living independently in his or her own accommodation. Support is provided at the facility. The level of support and supervision varies among programs.
 - **Home-based outreach support** is a psychiatric disability support service providing support to clients living in their own homes.
 - **Mutual support/self help information/advocacy** are peer based support, information and social action services for both people with a mental illness and carers.
 - **Planned respite care** provides a short-term substitute for usual care on an individual or group basis, especially to provide a break to carers. The range of service options includes residential, non-residential community activities, in-home, and individually-tailored respite.

Psychiatric Disability Support Services (PDSS)

A range of services provides employment, placement, support, information, day and residential programs and family respite. Some are run by not for profit organisations with government funding. Service providers include the Mental Illness Fellowship of SA Inc (MIFSA), Obsessive Compulsive Disorders Support Service (OCDSS), Panic Anxiety Disorder Association Inc (PADA), Children of mentally ill consumers (COMIC), Eating Disorder Association of SA Inc (EDASA), GROW, NEAMI, Life Without Barriers, Diamond House Clubhouse and Mental Health Resource Centre.

Useful references

- Assessment & Crisis Intervention Service (ACIS)
Statewide Emergency Crisis
131 465
- Rural & Remote Emergency Triage and Liaison
131 465
- Department of Health
www.health.sa.gov.au
08 8226 6278
- Multicultural Mental Health Access Program
08 8243 5611
- Ngaanyatjarra Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Women's Council Aboriginal Corporation (NPY Women's Council)
08 8950 5452
- National Alliance of the Mentally Ill (USA)
www.nami.org
- Mental Illness Fellowship of South Australia Inc
08 8221 5160 www.mifsa.org
- Mental Illness Fellowship of Australia
www.mifa.org.au
- Mental Illness Fellowship Victoria
www.mifellowship.org
- ### Mental Illness Fellowship of Australia fact sheets
- Mental health legal framework in South Australia
- What can friends and family do to help a person experiencing mental illness?
- Family and carer supports and services