

Aim and principles for consumer participation in mental health research

1. Aim:

To improve the mental health of the community and expand and strengthen the current mental health knowledge base through increased consumer participation in mental health research.

2. Principles:

1. The meaningful involvement of consumers at all stages of research including its conception, design, implementation, evaluation and dissemination will add value to the research.
2. The degree of consumer participation may reflect the degree to which the research impacts upon consumers.
3. Research partnerships involving consumers should be adaptable and based on understanding, respect, and shared commitment.
4. Each partnership will be sensitive to its research purposes and the expertise and experiences of the people involved and the environment in which it functions.
5. The roles and responsibilities of consumers and researchers will be clearly defined and agreed between those involved in the research and may evolve over time and the course of the project.
6. To fulfill their roles and responsibilities, both consumers and researchers need support and/or training to understand relevant aspects of research, ethics and each other's perspectives.
7. Budgets would appropriately include the cost of consumer involvement in research partnerships.
8. Resources should be provided to evaluate the research processes and contributions of consumer participation in order to foster continuing improvement of the implementation and benefits of consumer involvement.
9. Both consumer and researcher involvement will be acknowledged appropriately in research reports.

10. The results of research will be

(1) made available to research participants in an appropriate and sensitive way; and

(2) disseminated to relevant communities in a balanced and accessible manner.

11. Research organisations will have a policy on consumer participation in research.

The above material is taken from:

Griffiths, KM, Christensen, H., Barney, L., Jenkins, A., Kelly, C. & Pullen, K (2004). *Promoting Consumer Participation in Mental Health Research: A National Workshop*. Centre for Mental Health Research, Australian National University, pp 9-12