

A Consumer/Survivor Advocacy Toolkit

Policy Issue: Should there be a resource and advocacy toolkit available to consumers to help them deal with the mental health system?

Why is this an issue? Most consumers come to deal with the mental health system when they are vulnerable, afraid and unknowledgeable about the practices, policies and procedures of the system.

Components of the Issue:

Target Audience of the Policy: All consumers of mental health services in Canada, service providers and all levels of government

Analysis: The mental health system is a maze of sometimes interconnecting and sometimes stand-alone departments that can confuse even those working in the system. A consumer will need to know about:

1. Legislation – what legal requirements, rights and obligations does a consumer have?
2. Resources – formal and informal. What funded resources are there and where are the informal peer support resources? How do you get in touch with them?
3. Advocacy – Where do you go for help in navigating the system legally? Who do you call? What can you expect from your doctor, psychologist or psychiatrist?

Recommendation: The Canadian Coalition for Alternative Mental Health Resources

Policy Statement: It is adopted as a policy of CCAMHR that all consumers be entitled to a toolkit for resources and advocacy; and that all Canadians living with mental health issues/disorders must have access to these resources, knowledge, skills and supports in order that they may freely choose what they require within these services and systems to enable and assist with their recovery.

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- 1 -

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