

DRAFT Supporting Care Relationships – a Victorian Charter

Supporting Care Relationships - a Victorian Charter is derived from the Department of Human Services policy framework, 'Recognising and supporting care relationships', available at www.health.vic.gov.au/agedcare/policies/carers.htm

Introduction - Carers play a vital role in society through the important commitment they make to the people they are caring for. In each unique situation they provide the necessary care and assistance to a family member, a friend, a person with whom they have a strong relationship to support and enhance that person's lifestyle. Carers are men and women, adults, young people and children who come from a range of social, economic and cultural backgrounds. The experience they share is participation in a care relationship. Care relationships refer to relationships based on family and/or personal connections, in which unpaid care is provided by a person or people in the relationship to another person or others in the relationship.

Recognition of and respect for the carer and the person they care for

Care relationships exist in many different forms and should be recognised and respected by relevant workforces and the general community:

- Respect for carers and the people they care for in terms of their contributions to society, their knowledge and expertise, the relationship they share and the decisions that they make about caring.
- Recognition that care relationships are dynamic and evolving and consist of individual as well as shared needs, both within and outside the care relationship.
- Recognition of individual strengths and limitations in caring capacity and the need for self determination within care roles and responsibilities.
- Respect for personal lifestyles, cultural values and diversity.

Support for all parties to the relationship as well as for the relationship itself

Care relationships should be supported so the health and well being of the carer, person needing care and the relationship are sustained through:

- Services which support both the carer and the person needing care and assist in sustaining care relationships.
- Assistance for all Victorians in navigating the health and community service system to find the information, support and services that they need in ways that are easily understood and culturally relevant.
- Encouragement of and involvement in the services being provided and developed to support carers and the people they care for.
- Education and support particularly for vulnerable carers and the broader community to improve recognition of the carer role and greater support for this role.

Participation by both carers and people receiving care

Care relationships should be supported to promote:

- Participation and partnership in care planning and care management where this is appropriate.
- Participation in planning and delivery of services for carers and the people they care for and involvement in developing these services further.

These principles capture the important aspects of care relationships that should be reflected in policy development, program development, funding and service delivery relating to carers and the people for whom they care.

The main purposes of this Charter are to:

- Guide government in developing funding and policy directions, the development of new initiatives and branch action plans.
- Enable organisations to integrate principles into their policies, program directions and service delivery.
- Support carers and the people they care for both in their relationship and their use of services.
- Provide a framework to evaluate and develop policies and services relating to care relationships.

The Charter will:

- Influence all government and community organisations to include principles of the Charter in the work they do.
- Allow carers and the people they care for to be aware of the Charter and be able to use the principles of the Charter to support their relationships.
- Encourage programs and services to monitor and evaluate the extent to which they meet the principles of the Charter.

Carers - views wanted

The Department of Human Services invites you to comment on the draft "**Supporting Care Relationships – a Victorian Charter**", on the other side of this sheet.

The charter has the principles and standards for services that provide support to carers and those they care for. Services are excited about having the charter as it helps them to focus on what carers can expect of them. And from the feedback so far, carers are excited too as the charter says what matters to carers.

We want the charter to be short and easy to understand, so people will really think about it.

We invite you to have your say on the draft charter. Please think about these questions:

➤ What do you especially like in the charter ?

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➤ What do you think could be improved in it ?

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➤ How could carers use it ?

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➤ How can we find out if it has benefits or makes a difference to carers ?

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You can write your answers down, and either:

1. **Email:** claire-anne.willis@dhs.vic.gov.au

2. **Post to:** Claire-Anne Willis
 Department of Human Services
 Placement and Support
 Level 9, 50 Lonsdale Street
 Melbourne 3000

3. **Fax:** Claire-Anne Willis on (03) 9096 9145

Or you can ring on (03) 9096 8622.

Please email, post, fax, or ring in your comments by the end of **January 2008**.
Thanks for your contributions.