



Partnerships in Care

**Working together to improve
your experience and outcomes**

January 2014



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Introducing Partnerships in Care

It gives us great pleasure to present 'Partnerships in Care', a three year Strategy aimed at improving patient and consumer experience and outcomes. We believe the title of this Strategy sums up exactly what we are trying to achieve - a partnership approach where there is trust and mutual respect and an equal relationship in terms of knowledge and power between health service staff, consumers and their family/ carers.

A true commitment to partnerships involves the active participation of consumers and carers in decision making and planning about their own health care. It also involves health care consumers, carers and their families participating in all levels of health care service planning, policy and evaluation.

A more collaborative partnership with consumers and carers not only makes good sense but it is also timely. Consumers no longer play a passive role in their healthcare experience. They want to be informed, supported and listened to so that they can make meaningful decisions and choices about their care. At a broader level, partnerships result in a more responsive and open health system, a system that is focused on joint decision making and one that is better placed to achieve high quality, safe services.

Four key areas of focus will guide our work in order to achieve our ultimate goal - for partnerships with consumers and carers to become the norm and practiced everywhere in the health service. These include Leadership and Staff, Empowerment, Feedback and Responsiveness and Environment. To achieve our goal, we have described our commitments in this Strategy including clear roles and responsibilities across all levels of the organisation.

We are excited about Melbourne Health's commitment to 'Partnerships in Care' and with strong leadership, dedication and a shared commitment, we believe this Strategy will enable the organisation to truly partner with consumers, carers and families now, and in the future.

Melbourne Health
Community Advisory Committee

NorthWestern Mental Health
Consumer and Carer Advisory Group

About Partnerships in Care

Why are partnerships important?

Evidence is building about the link between effective partnerships, good consumer experience and high quality health care. For example there is evidence that the existence of effective partnerships is associated with:

- H improved clinical outcomes including associations with decreased re-admission rates
- H decreased rates of healthcare acquire infections
- H improved delivery of preventive care services
- H improved adherence to treatment regimens
- H improved functional status¹

Delivering a high quality experience for patients and consumers is becoming more important with the rising demand and the increasing expectations on the healthcare system. Melbourne Health is committed to improving the patient and consumer experience and we have a long history of partnering with patients, consumers, carers and the community to ensure we continually provide high quality services which are responsive to the needs of the diverse community we serve.

The Melbourne Health Community Advisory Committee and NorthWestern Mental Health (NWMH) Consumer and Carer Advisory Group (CCAG) (as well as CCAG's for each local area) are high level governing committees that have provided structures to enable partnerships with consumers and carers that support continuous improvement across the organisation.

These groups, along with many other dedicated and committed consumers and carers at Melbourne Health developed this Strategy alongside staff to build on existing achievements and ensure greater accountability to prepare the organisation for truly partnering with patients, consumers, carers and families in the future.

Terminology

Across Melbourne Health there are a broad range of service areas and those involved in care have a range of preferences about what they are called including – patients, consumers, clients, individual, person, by their name, etc. Likewise some family members like to be called carers, others do not, friends/significant others are identified as family. In some documentation, consumer refers to all parties, in others it is only the person engaged in care. For the purposes of the Partnerships in Care Strategy we will utilise the words:

- patient or consumer to represent the individual involved in receiving care
- family or carer to represent the significant others, family members, friends
- community to represent groups of people who have interests in the development of an accessible, effective and efficient health service that bests meets their needs.

¹ Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care: *Quality Improvement Guide for implementing the National Safety and Quality Health Service Standards. Standard 2: Partnering with Consumers.*

Partnerships at Melbourne Health

Partnerships occur across three levels of the health service including the individual care level (also known as person centred care), the program and department level and organisational level.

A summary of how Melbourne Health partners with consumers and carers is outlined in **Figure 1**.

Figure 1

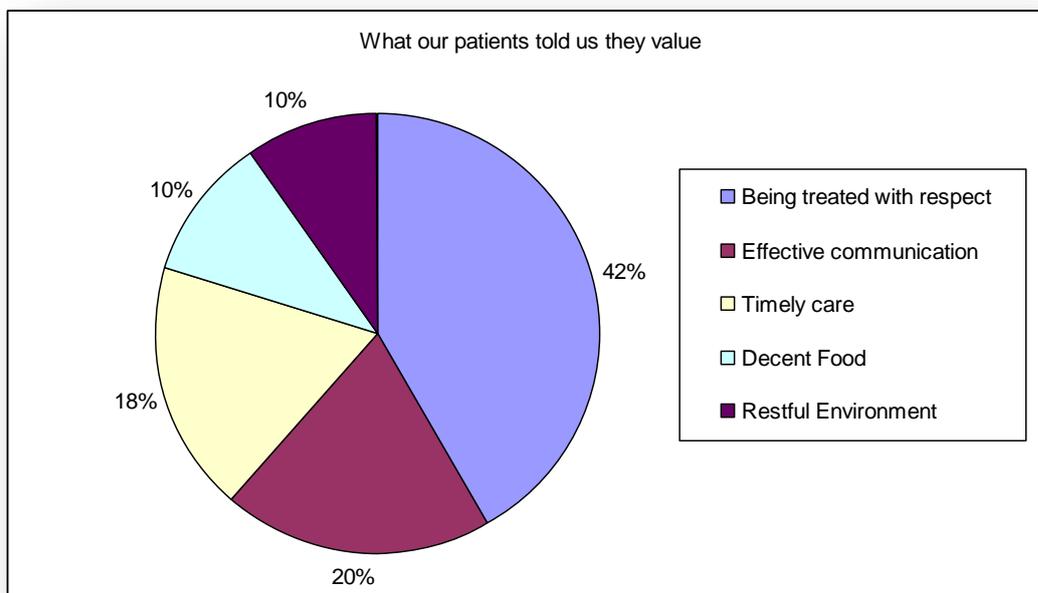
Level	Description	Examples
Individual Level <i>(also known as person centred care)</i>	This level is about consumers being actively involved in their own care and treatment and supporting family/carers to be included and supported wherever possible.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partnering with patients, consumers and carers in their care plan and treatment • Informing consumers and carers of their rights and responsibilities • Engaging consumers and carers in advance care planning. • Decision aids and tools to support shared decision making. • Systems and processes to ensure carers are key partners in care e.g. Visiting Hours Policy
Program/ Department Level	This level is about staff on the wards and in departments working in partnership with consumers and carers to improve health outcomes and the quality and safety of services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consumer and carer involvement in decision making about safety and quality e.g. committees, focus groups, auditing, patient interviews. • Consumer and carer involvement in the development and review of patient information. • Consumer and carer participation in Root Cause Analysis Working Groups to review incidents. • Consumer and carer involvement in the design and/or re-design of services
Organisational Level	This level focuses on how partnerships with consumers and carers and can be influential at the organisational level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consumer and carer participation on Governance committees. • Consumer and carer involvement in the analysis of safety and quality data. • Consumer and carer involvement in recruiting and training the clinical workforce. • Consumer and carer involvement in strategic and operational planning.

The various examples above demonstrate that consumer and carer participation at Melbourne Health has moved beyond information sharing and consultation to a partnership approach that is both effective and responsive. We want to build on this success and ensure we continually improve the quality of services we provide in line with the National Safety and Quality Health Service Standards (NSQHSS), in particular Standard 2 which describes the systems and strategies to create a consumer centred health system. This includes creating new opportunities for engaging consumers and carers across all levels of Melbourne Health and evaluating the outcome to increase the body of evidence on the effectiveness of participation in improving the quality and safety of health care.

What do patients, consumers and carers need and want?

In 2012, we undertook a 'Board to Bedside Consultation' exercise on the meaning and practice of Person Centred Care. We collected the views of over 300 consumers (patients/carers, residents, clients and family members) about what matters most to them when receiving healthcare. The results are outlined in **Graph 1**.

Graph 1



This feedback mirrors the findings of numerous healthcare consumer studies by revealing that interpersonal aspects of care delivery are those most valued by patients, carers and their families. In addition to the Board to Bedside Consultation, a workshop was held with consumers, carers and community members in July 2013 to inform this Strategy. Participants told us that they care about their experience of care as much as clinical effectiveness and safety. They want to feel informed, supported and listened to so that they can make meaningful decisions and choices about their care. They want experience care and treatment that is:

Positive	Welcoming	Respectful	Comforting
Reassuring	Empathetic	Compassionate	Informative
Caring	Helpful	Kind	Supportive
Safe	Understanding	Valuing	Empowering

Melbourne Health cannot deliver care that addresses the above needs and preferences of consumers and carers without seeking out, listening to, responding to and engaging consumers and carers across all levels of the health service system.

What we want to achieve

This Strategy is driven by the desire to make our care better for patients, consumers, carers and their families. It sets out clear expectations to support what patients and consumers want and will help us to:

- Put patients and consumers at the heart of everything we do
- Partner with patients, consumers, carers/families and the community in their own care and in service planning and development.
- Focus on making improvements that really matter to our patients and consumers

Our ultimate goal is to develop a culture that places your experience at the heart of everything we do, where “partnering with patients, consumers and carers” is the norm and practiced everywhere in the health service.

Based on evidence and the knowledge of our own strengths and weaknesses, our efforts will focus on four key areas (Figure 2):

1. Leadership & Staff

To build the capacity for staff, patients, consumers and carers to work together across Melbourne Health.

2. Empowerment

To support patients, consumers and carers to be empowered to meaningfully engage in decision making about their own care and treatment and to improve the quality and safety of services.

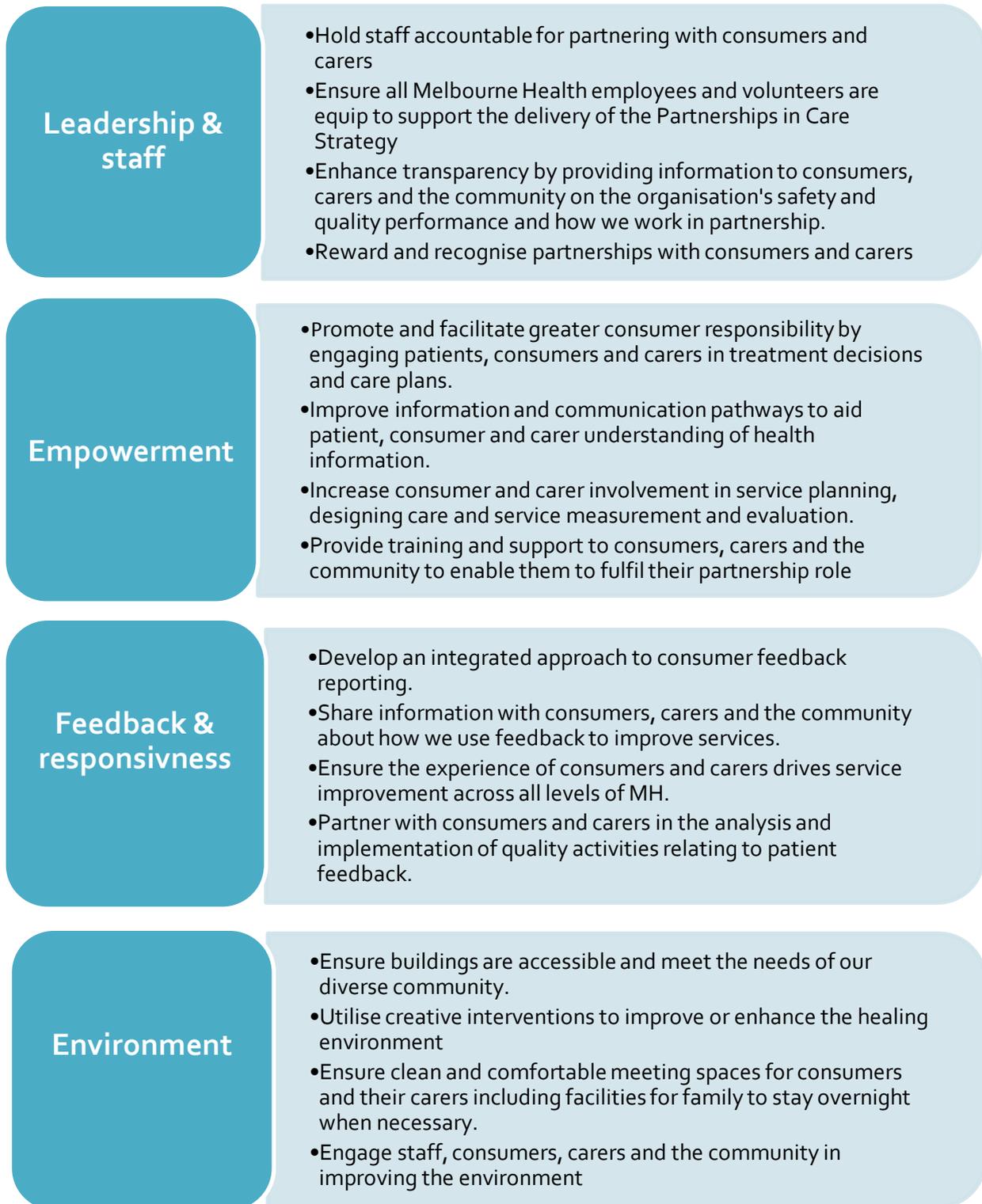
3. Feedback & Responsiveness

To utilise patient, consumer and carer feedback to understand the patient and consumer experience and drive service improvement

4. Environment

To create an environment that supports the delivery of person centred care.

Figure 2 Partnerships in Care Strategy focus areas



How will we achieve Partnerships in Care?

Given the organisation's scale and complexity, successful implementation will be dependent on the dedication and commitment across all levels of Melbourne Health. Implementation will be the responsibility of departments and divisions across Melbourne Health to ensure of whole of health service response as outlined in **Table 1**.

Table 1

Who	Responsibility
Melbourne Health Board	Advocate for partnering with consumers and carers across Melbourne Health.
Executive Management Team	Hold self and others accountable for partnering with consumers and carers across all levels of MH. Create a supportive environment which encourages and supports partnering with consumers and carers.
Divisional Directors	Model effective partnerships with consumers and carers. Hold self and direct reports accountable for partnering with consumers and carers at the program and individual care level.
Patient Experience Manager	Support staff to ensure the consumer voice contributes to the development, delivery and review of services.
Community Engagement Manager	Support staff to effectively partner with consumers, carers and the community at the organisational and program levels. Provides orientation and training to consumers, carers and community members to support them in their role.
NWMH Service Development Manager	Support the overall consumer and family/carer portfolio at NWMH which provides leadership to the organisation regarding systemic improvements.
Person Centred Care Coordinator	Supports staff including Nurse Unit Managers on partnering with consumers and carers at the individual care level.
Quality Consultants	Coach and mentor partnering with consumers and carers at the program and individual care levels.
Unit Managers/Department Heads	Support effective partnerships with consumers and carers. Hold self and team accountable for partnering with consumers and carers at the program and individual care levels.
Front line service delivery and support staff	Demonstrate effective partnerships with consumers and carers at the individual care levels
Consumers and carers	Demonstrate leadership and social responsibility by articulating a shared vision to improve the health system for everyone.

Key committees will be instrumental in the implementation of 'Partnership in Care' including:

-  Melbourne Health Community Advisory Committee
-  NorthWestern Mental Health Consumer and Carer Advisory Group
-  NorthWestern Mental Health Executive
-  NorthWestern Mental Health Continuous Improvement Committee
-  Melbourne Health Clinical Governance and Improvement Committee
-  Melbourne Health Clinical and Quality Executive Committee
-  Melbourne Health Partnering with Consumers (Standard 2) Committee
-  Melbourne Health Person Centred Care (Standard 2) Sub-Committee

Key Focus Areas and Actions

Leadership and Staff

It is important that leaders demonstrate that *everything* in the culture is focused on the patient and consumer and practiced everywhere in the hospital — at the individual patient and consumer level; the program level and organisational level. Effective leadership engages the hearts and minds of staff and providers which in turn provides a foundation for respectful team communication and partnerships with patients, consumers, carers and families. While training will help to build capacity, Melbourne Health’s commitment to change, and to meeting the needs of patients, consumers and carers, are essential prerequisites.

To build the capacity for staff, patients, consumers and carers to work together across Melbourne Health we will:

Goal	Actions
Hold staff accountable for partnering with consumers and carers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage staff, volunteers, patients, consumers, carers and the community so they are well informed, understand their role and support the implementation of 'Partnerships in Care'. Review position descriptions and terms of reference to ensure they include expectations and accountability for partnerships with patients, consumers and carers (including people from diverse backgrounds) and that these elements are included in annual discussions. Identify and address barriers to partnering effectively with patients, consumers and carers through ongoing evaluation of patient, consumer and carer participation.
Ensure all Melbourne Health employees and volunteers are equip to support the delivery of the Partnerships in care Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Integrate the Partnerships in Care Strategy goals and actions to existing initiatives to align and coordinate efforts (e.g. Safety First, Productive Ward). Implement partnering with consumers training to staff and volunteers via orientation, online and face to face training. Engage consumers and carers in training the clinical workforce. Ensure Melbourne Health staff are skilled and knowledgeable about partnerships with patients, consumers and carers from leaders of the organisation.
Enhance transparency by providing information to consumers, carers and the community on the organisation's safety and quality performance and how we work in partnership.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrate Melbourne Health’s commitment to 'Partnerships in Care' to staff, patients, consumers, carers and the community via Melbourne Health publications, social media, public forums. Hold an annual Open Access Board Meeting, led by the Melbourne Health Board in partnership with the Community Advisory Committee and NWMH Consumer and Carer Advisory Group to provide opportunity for the public to participate in decision making processes and increase community awareness and understanding of Melbourne Health. Publish data about partnerships with patients and carers and safety and quality performance in ways that are easy to understand (e.g. Quality of Care Report, Internet, ward performance boards, posters).
Reward and recognise partnerships with consumers and carers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Incorporate effective and meaningful partnerships with patients, consumers and carers in the Melbourne Health Rewards and Recognition Program.

Empowerment

It is imperative that every care interaction is anchored in a respectful partnership, anticipating and responding to patient, consumer, carer and family needs (e.g. physical comfort, emotional, informational and cultural). Respectful partnerships extend to the involvement of patients, consumers and carers in planning, improvement and evaluation of services. An empowered patient or consumer means they are engaged, equipped and enabled to take control of their health. Patients, consumers, carers and their families are well placed to see things that work and don't work. They are a significant resource of valuable information that the healthcare system needs to tap into, for example in escalating care.

To support patients, consumers and carers to be empowered to meaningfully engage in decision making about their own care and treatment and to improve the quality and safety of services we will:

Goal	Actions
Promote and facilitate greater consumer responsibility by engaging patients, consumers and carers in treatment decisions and care plans.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop tools which assist all staff to better communicate patient rights and responsibilities to patients, consumers and their carers including those at risk of not understanding this information. • Explore decision making aids for patients and consumers e.g. videos, handouts, internet, social media. • Encourage patients and consumers to stay safe e.g. asking a clinician "have you washed your hands". • Support carer participation in care e.g. Visiting Hours Procedure.
Improve information and communication pathways to aid patient, consumer and carer understanding of health information.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a system to ensure consumer and carer participation in the development and review of all patient information. • Explore evidence based patient education systems in waiting areas and at bedsides to improve health literacy. • Scope current health literacy programs and capabilities with local libraries and collaborate on a shared program to empower health care consumers with reliable health information. • Engage consumers and carers in improving information on the Melbourne Health website.
Increase consumer and carer involvement in service planning, designing care and service measurement and evaluation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluate consumer and carer involvement on committees and develop an action plan to improve processes and address barriers. • Develop an action plan to ensure feedback and engagement from diverse and hard to reach consumers and carers. • Further develop systems by which volunteers give their views and shape services. • Build upon the existing program of consumer and carer involvement in Root Cause Analysis reviews.
Provide training and support to consumers, carers and the community to enable them to fulfil their partnership role.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build on the consumer workforce by providing orientation and development opportunities to consumers and carers. • Develop a Consumer and Carer Workforce Development Strategy to support both the employed and casual workforces respectively across NWMH including orientation, professional development opportunities, performance review and mentoring/supervision as appropriate. • Establish a mentor program for consumers and carers to support them in their role.

Feedback and Responsiveness

Patient and consumer experience is a recognised component of high-quality care. Understanding how patients and consumers are experiencing care can effectively translate their needs and preferences into higher quality, safer and more efficient services. Patient and consumer experience data is not just about listening. It is about acting, responding and taking a proactive approach to this feedback and sharing this information (including changes that have been made as a result) with our patients, consumers, carers and the broader community.

To utilise patient, consumer and carer feedback to understand their experience and drive service improvement we will:

Goal	Action
Develop an integrated approach to consumer feedback reporting.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to develop the process for the regular collection of patient and consumer feedback, including post-discharge experience surveys; complaints, compliments and suggestions; and real-time feedback. Develop integrated reporting that enables services to understand feedback themes and trends. Ensure that service managers and staff have access to post-discharge patient experience data in order to analyse and benchmark their own performance.
Share information with consumers, carers and the community about how we use feedback to improve services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a more robust approach to sharing feedback and actions including a "you said....we did" process of communication. Integrate across all NWMH services the 'Tell Us What you Think' feedback process which was successfully piloted in the North West Area Mental Health Service.
Ensure the experience of consumers and carers drives service improvement across all levels of MH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a library of short films of patient, consumer and carer experiences for use in staff training and for committees. Work with staff to ensure feedback is translated into actions and drives service improvement. Ensure that actions are evident within existing quality processes.
Partner with consumers and carers in the analysis and implementation of quality activities relating to patient feedback.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continuously improve the complaint resolution process on the basis of complainant evaluation. Explore systems for the involvement of consumers and carers in responding to complex complaints. Engage consumers and carers in auditing the quality of complaint responses, and in analysing post-discharge survey data.

Environment

The first impression for the patient, carer, family, and visitors indicates the type of experience they will have. Health service environments can easily cause undue stress; alternatively, they can offer a sense of calm and healing. Paying attention to the environment including noise, cleanliness, lighting, ease of finding your way, welcome and comfortable settings all impact on the experience. At the heart of the environment are the human interactions that occur within the physical structure to provide comfort and support. Together these interactions can create a positive culture and transform care.

To create an environment that supports the delivery of person centred care we will:

Goal	Action
Ensure buildings are accessible and meet the needs of our diverse community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement the disability access audit recommendations including the establishment of a staff training program to raise awareness of the barriers that are disabling to an individual.
Utilise creative interventions to improve or enhance the healing environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Connect communities through arts by building participatory arts programs. Undertake improvements to key public areas to create a welcoming, calm and healing environment. Create quiet zones across Melbourne Health for relaxation and diversion. Establish a Create Activity Volunteer Program which includes assisting patients and consumers with creating art and craft activities and projects both large and small.
Ensure clean and comfortable meeting spaces for consumers and their carers including facilities for family to stay overnight when necessary.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to implement the person centred care grant program which aims to support a variety of initiatives and programs which focus on improving the patient, consumer, carer and family experience of care and enhancing the healthcare environment.
Engage staff, consumers, carers and the community in improving the environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure feedback from consumers, carers and the community drives improvements to the health service environment. Engage consumers, carers and the community in projects, working groups and committees to improve the environment.

How will we know the Strategy is successful?

Performance Measures

The success of the Strategy is not just dependent on meeting the actions within. Just as important is the experience of the patient, consumer and carer and their perspective on the quality of our partnerships. **Table 2** outlines the performance measures of the Partnerships in Care Strategy at the organisational, program/department and individual care levels.

Table 2

Level	Measure	Target	Source	When
Organisational Level	Percentage of Portfolio/Divisional Business Plans that explicitly detail actions for partnering with consumers and carers.	100%	Portfolio/Divisional Business Plans	Annually
	Percentage of staff and volunteers completed Partnering with Consumers Training	90%	Training space	Quarterly
	Percentage of formal Improvement Projects that conduct voice of customer with consumers and/or carers (where consumers are affected)	100%	Transportal	6 monthly
Program/ Department Level	Percentage of Root Cause Analysis (RCA) Review Working Groups including a consumer or carer	100%	RCA database	Annually
	Percentage of consumers or carers that rate their experience on a MH Committee or Working Group as positive	100%	Survey to consumers and carers on committees and working groups	Annually
	Percentage of patient/consumer information brochures developed or reviewed with consumer or carer input	100%	Patient Information Mandatory Checklist	Annually
Individual Care Level (person centred care)	Percentage of patients/consumers that felt as involved as they wanted to be in decisions about their care	*Target to be determined	Patient Experience Post discharge survey (question 11).	Quarterly
	Percentage of patients/consumers that would recommend the RMH to a relative or friend	*Target to be determined	Patient Experience Post discharge survey (question 21).	Quarterly

*baseline target currently being established (effective 1 July 2014)