



Family, friends, carers
and support persons



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Welcome

The Melbourne Clinic welcomes you as a visitor to the hospital and thanks you for your interest in your relative or friend's wellbeing while they are with us.

At The Melbourne Clinic we deliver Patient Centered Care; care that is respectful of, and responsive to the preferences, needs and values of our patients. Our programs and care are based on the recovery model.

The Melbourne Clinic embodies an inclusive service. We are dedicated to providing services that are culturally sensitive and aware. We understand and are accepting of diversity in identity.

Regardless of the reasons behind the admission, we realise families, friends, carers and support persons may have questions they would like answered. This booklet aims to go some way towards providing those answers.

This may be your family member or friend's first-ever admission to hospital, or it might be their first admission to our facility, but may have had in-patient treatment elsewhere on other occasions. Whichever of these is true, The Melbourne Clinic's care team will aim to provide the best medical, social and psychological support during their stay, in order for them to take an active role in their own recovery.



Consumer and Carer Consultants

The role of the Consumer and Carer Consultant is to help the hospital be responsive to patient, carer/support person and consumer input and needs.

The Consumer Consultant will provide advice to the hospital about partnership with consumers and carers and help the site to maintain and improve our patient-centred approach.

Consumer and Carer Consultants have experience in mental health private hospital services, as a consumer; either patient or carer/support person.

Consumer and Carer Consultants also provide support to consumers, patients, carers and support persons, they can answer your questions and assist you to negotiate and understand the hospital processes. They are independent of the hospital and you can confidentially discuss any aspects of care provided by The Melbourne Clinic.

If you have questions about your patient's care, or concerns with how they are managing, please speak with the contact nurse first.

Should a more serious concern arise, please ask to speak to either the Nurse Unit Manager or the After Hours Manager.

If you would prefer to speak to someone who is independent of the hospital's staff, please contact 03 9429 4631 who will coordinate an appointment for you with the Consumer or Carer Consultant.

Patient Centred Care

At The Melbourne Clinic we use a patient centred care approach to recovery. What that means is that our multidisciplinary team – psychiatrists, general practitioners, nurses, psychologists, occupational therapists, social workers and other allied health professionals – will work closely with patients, from day one, focusing on:

- Addressing their immediate issues
- Shaping their personalised care plan
- Educating them further about their specific diagnosis
- Establishing shared goal-setting for the short, medium and longer-term
- Planning for their discharge
- Putting strategies in place for community support and relapse prevention
- Working towards their recovery.

This holistic approach has been proven to deliver a higher level of personalised treatment and support as well as better long-term outcomes.

Our patients are admitted under the care of a consultant psychiatrist or physician accredited to The Melbourne Clinic, during an acute phase of their illness. During the admission, patients are offered a range of in-patient group programs focusing on how to manage their illness, developing adaptive coping skills, establishing and working towards their recovery goals.

The admitting doctor will work directly with them to ensure they attend an appropriate selection of these therapeutic programs throughout their stay. In these programs, in-patients may also work further on their recovery and discharge plans.

The admitting doctor is also likely to recommend ongoing day program attendance or outreach services after discharge, when appropriate.

Day Program and Outreach Program

Please see our brochures for further information around specific programs.

The focus of these programs are supporting patients to continue working on their recovery, developing and utilising coping strategies to support ongoing mental health and wellbeing, while minimising the disruptions to life by reducing the length and frequency of hospital stays.

The care plan and bedside handover

Upon admission, or as soon as they are able, all patients will develop and sign, with the support of their nurse, an individualised care plan. With the consent of the patient, families, carers or support persons are also able to participate in care planning and are invited to sign the care plan, recognising their contribution to recovery.

At the end of each morning's nursing shift, a clinical handover takes place for each patient in the presence of that person. This not only allows in-patients to know who their nurse will be for the coming shift, but also to raise care-related issues or questions. With the consent of the patient, you may also participate in this handover.

While your loved one is an in-patient at The Melbourne Clinic, their care team will also work with them to identify appropriate social and community support networks for when they go home.

Importance of families, friends, carers and support persons

Our team acknowledges that families, friends, carers and/or support persons play a vital role, not only in the immediate and day-to-day support of their loved ones but also in their longer-term wellbeing once patients are discharged. Therefore, our shared goal is to ensure that an easily accessed support network is firmly in place prior to discharge to help your loved one remain healthy.

We acknowledge that, from a family and friends viewpoint, the issues around mental health can be complex, dynamic and sometimes demanding. While our patients are encouraged to drive their own recovery planning, The Melbourne Clinic team also encourages families, friends, carers and support persons to support their ongoing efforts in whatever constructive ways they can, while ensuring their own wellbeing.

To do this successfully, families, friends, carers and support persons may need to learn more about mental illnesses, discover positive ways to support their loved ones and, on occasion, accept professional advice about healthy ways to respond to issues and difficulties.

Importantly – as well as providing suggested sources of mental health information and support later in this booklet – we encourage families to embrace self-care as well.



When this is all new

The caring/supporting role can come about in many ways. You may have become a carer/support person of someone who has just received a mental health diagnosis. You may have only had prior experience caring for someone with a physical condition. On the other hand, you may have been a carer/support for someone with a mental health condition for a while.

Discovering more about mental health conditions, their treatment and how to best respond as a carer/support person are important steps to help you lessen the stress of your role and to build confidence in the care and support you'll give. The Melbourne Clinic recognises the potential value of carers/support persons to the ongoing wellbeing and welfare of its patients.

Family and carers information sessions

The Melbourne Clinic offers regular Family, Friend's and Carers information sessions.

These sessions gives carers, relatives and friends the chance to:

- Ask questions, air concerns, share experiences
- Learn more about mental illness as well as ways to respond to your family member or friend, according to the level of distress in the moment
- Make the most of available social supports
- Begin post-hospital preparations ahead of discharge.

In addition to Family and Carer Evenings, we also offer support sessions through GROW and Eating Disorders Victoria. GROW is an afternoon drop in support session for Carers.

These sessions are advertised throughout The Melbourne Clinic, on our Facebook page and website, or please speak with one of our staff who will help you.

Privacy matters

Upon admission, patients will be asked to nominate the individual/s with whom the hospital may discuss aspects of their care. It is important for a patient's family, carer, friends/supports or other visitors to understand that – if an individual has not been specifically nominated by the patient – then the hospital cannot disclose any details in relation to that person. This is a legal requirement under national privacy legislation.

Of course, we would encourage you, at any time, to contact nursing staff or any other member of the multidisciplinary team to share information about the person for whom you are providing support. This can be done in full or partial confidence and can often help the care team make a more comprehensive assessment of the person's mental health needs.

In some instances, family consultation in order to educate can also be helpful. If this applies to your circumstances, your relative or friend may request a family consultation with the treating doctor or another team member during their stay.



Applying structure to the day

'Disorder' is a word that comes up quite a bit around mental illness. The aim of our care team is to help our patients restore some order, structure and routines that will help them reduce the level of disruption in their lives. For this reason, their days in hospital will typically develop a rhythm to them: times when they will attend therapeutic programs, times when they will see their psychiatrist or doctor, times when they will dine, times when they will have some quiet time to work on their recovery, times they will spend outdoors or chatting to other in-patients.

To help keep that rhythm settled, the hospital has set visiting hours. These allow those important activities to go on with minimal disruption.

Generally, visiting times are:

- Mondays to Fridays from 12.00pm to 1.30pm and 3.30pm to 8.00pm
- Weekends and public holidays 12.00pm to 8.00pm.

Specialist Programs, such as Addictive Behaviours Services, Eating Disorders Program and Intensive Care Unit have visiting hours designed to meet patient and program needs. Please check with nursing or reception staff to clarify these.

You or your family may like to share an evening meal with your loved one in our dining room. If so, please speak to reception to arrange this for a nominal fee.

Providing a safe environment

On occasions, some steps that are taken for patient and staff safety may initially seem intrusive, such as regular room checks or the surrender upon arrival of items that may present a risk either to themselves or others at the hospital. However, such limitations are explained carefully to patients on admission and are signposted for others throughout the facility. For further information please refer to the Providing a Safe Environment Brochure available from front reception and the Consumer Hub on Level 1.

When you visit The Melbourne Clinic

Access to our hospital will be through the secure main entrance only. Visitors will be let in by our reception staff and you will be asked to sign in and sign out when entering and leaving the hospital. A visitors sticker will be provided to you after you sign in so our staff can identify who you are. This is an important part of our security and safety plans.

Escalation of care

We encourage patients and their loved ones to alert clinical staff if there is a worrying change in the patient's condition. Worrying changes can be psychological or physical; they include deterioration in mood, thoughts and feelings, behaviors that are unusual for the person or medical concerns.

We understand that you know your loved one best and you may notice worrying changes before anyone else does. Escalation of care is a communication process that helps you share those concerns so we can provide assistance.

How can you alert staff:

- Speak directly to the nurse caring for your friend or family member
- Press the emergency button located on the wall in the bedroom or bathroom
- Press the emergency button in the main corridors throughout the hospital.

Ensuring patient welfare and safety

The Melbourne Clinic is committed to meeting it's patient welfare, safety and regulatory responsibilities as well as ensuring the comfort and well-being of everyone on it's premises.

To help this happen, the care team needs patients and visitors to understand that operational guidelines have been set for the comfort, safety and legal protection of all.

Sometimes these will mean certain limitations on individual behaviour, such as:

- Treating all patients, visitors and staff with respect. The Melbourne Clinic has a zero tolerance to aggression.
- Observing set visiting hours (this ensures in-patients are free to attend medical meetings as well as vital therapy sessions).

Your co-operation in observing the hospital's guidelines – and reinforcing them with the person you're visiting – is appreciated because it contributes to The Melbourne Clinic's ability to deliver an optimal level of care and safety. If you are ever unsure how or why a guideline applies, please speak to the Nurse Unit Manager or After Hours Manager.



Patient leave arrangements

Each patient's admitting doctor, together with their multidisciplinary team, will determine the type and duration of any leave they may take during their admission. This assessment will be reviewed regularly and modified in line with their condition. Nursing staff assess the patient's status immediately prior to their leave and are able to refuse leave if that is in the patient's best interests.

If you are unsure about whether your loved one can have leave, please ask their nurse.

It is important that you do not take a patient out of the hospital without checking with nursing staff first. Please take a copy of our information leaflet for families and friends, which will feature the hospital's number if it is needed.

Any patients who are on Accompanied Leave must have someone with them at all times. This will mean that you will be responsible for the patient for the entire duration of that leave and will need to be alert to what they are doing and how they are feeling. As part of this responsibility, before you leave the hospital, you must sign them out in the presence of a nurse.

You must also ensure that your loved one is returned to the hospital, accompanying them back inside and signing them back in with a nurse upon their return. Should the patient experience any difficulties during their leave, please inform their nurse.

If you are unable to return at the agreed time, please call the hospital to advise of the delay.

If you become concerned about changes in your loved one's behaviour at any time during the leave period, staff will be available to speak to you. Just call the hospital on 03 9429 4688.

Your rights and responsibilities

It is important that, as a family member, support person and/or carer, you understand that – while your relative or friend remains in the care of this hospital – their multidisciplinary care team will respect your relationship with that person as well as your right to:

- Ask questions and be informed (with the patients consent) about their mental health condition, treatment and ongoing care
- Provide any member of the multidisciplinary team information that may assist in the care, assessment and treatment of your relative or friend
- Be present (with the patients consent) during care, assessment and treatment processes
- Receive appropriate language and/or cultural support
- Have agreed confidentiality observed
- Seek further opinions
- Place limits on your availability
- Understand the mechanisms of complaint
- Be treated with respect and consideration in a fair and open manner.

Conversely, as a family member, support person and/or carer, you have a responsibility to:

- Work positively to support your relative or friend
- Communicate concerns promptly to a relevant member of the patients' multidisciplinary team
- Consider the professional opinions of care team members
- Co-operate, as far as possible, with reasonable treatment programs
- Seek help as needed
- Keep learning.

Self care tips

Caring for/living with or supporting someone who has a mental health diagnosis has its challenges. These challenges are not all about the person being cared for – sometimes your own carer/support role will have unintended consequences for you, your family and friends.

The Melbourne Clinic is committed not only to providing quality in-patient as well as out-patient care but also to encouraging carers to take good care of themselves and to seek help and advice as soon as it's needed.

Carers can take steps that can help optimise their resilience:

- Take time to reflect and acknowledge your feelings and any frustrations.
- Use a journal to track your care-giving, observations, challenges and responses
- Avoid bottling up your emotions – talk to a trained psychologist, qualified counsellor, a trusted friend or mentor who will respect your situation and your privacy (ideally someone who has experience in being a carer for another person with a mental health diagnosis)
- Mixing with other carers can help you find understanding and valuable insights
- Maintaining friendships and social activities beyond that circle is also important
- Ensure you eat properly, drink plenty of water and get adequate sleep. If you're not sleeping well seek medical advice
- Regular exercise helps break down “stress chemicals” in the body and gives you an activity that is not care-related but which will help maintain your wellbeing
- Avoid self-medicating or over indulging. Overuse of food, alcohol or other substances is a sign of imbalance
- Take regular breaks, especially if the situation is highly stressful, to help you gain perspective. Avoid waiting until you are feeling overwhelmed.
- Defuse with someone you trust after a stressful incident
- Be aware that your reaction to a highly stressful situation may be delayed or triggered by something else altogether. If this happens, do not hesitate to seek help from an appropriate healthcare professional.

We value your feedback

The Melbourne Clinic invites you, as a family member, carer or friend, to share your insights and any feedback with our team.

You can do this by:

- Speaking to a member of our multidisciplinary team.
- Make an appointment to speak to our Consumer or Carer Consultant (Appointments can be made by calling 03 9429 4631 who will coordinate an appointment)
- In writing to either the hospital's Consumer or Carer Consultant or Director of Nursing by sending a letter to them via:

The Melbourne Clinic
130 Church Street
Richmond VIC 3121



Useful contacts and supports for you

The hospital's Consumer/Carer Consultants, with input from families and carers, have compiled listings of useful and reputable resources for you on the following pages. These may also be used as an adjunct to the hospital's regular information sessions for families and carers.

Please Note: Information obtained via the internet can sometimes be inaccurate or misleading. Keep an open mind about what you are reading, particularly if you are unsure about the credibility of the source. Try to check what you've read with your loved one's doctor or mental health practitioner to ensure you are getting the correct information.

Service	About	Contact	Website
ARAFEMI	ARAFEMI supports carers and families of people with a mental illness. They provide a broad range of consumer services, including information, support, referral, counselling, peer support and advocacy.	1300 550 265	www.carersvic-toria.org.au/contact-assets/mental-health-support/arafemi
Eating Disorders Foundation of Victoria (EDV)	EDV provides support, information, community education and advocacy for people with eating disorders and their families in Victoria.	1300 550 265	www.eatingdisorders.org.au
Grow: Mental wellness programs	Grow better together: Encourages and supports caregivers of people experiencing mental illness. Support groups across Australia.	1800 558 268	https://www.grow.org.au

Service	About	Contact	Website
The Mental Health Foundation of Australia	The Mental Health Foundation of Australia supports consumers and families, professionals and organisations concerned with mental health.	03 9826 1422	www.mhfa.org.au
SANE Australia	SANE Australia is a national charity working for a better life for people affected by mental illness, their family and friends. They conduct campaigns and educational programs, support and carry out research and operate a helpline.	1800 187 263	www.sane.org
Wellways	Wellways provides services to people with a mental illness and their families in Melbourne.	1300 111 400	www.wellways.org
The Mental Health Act	Legal framework for care and treatment of people living with mental illness	1300 656 692	www.health.vic.gov.au/mental-health
Mental Illness Fellowship of Australia	Fact sheet about mental health problems	03 8486 4200	www.mifa.org.au
Mind	Information, support and accommodation	1300 286 463	www.mindaustralia.org.au
SANE	Information about treatments, symptoms and medications	1800 187 263	www.sane.org

Service	About	Contact	Website
Addiction			
Directline	Counselling and crisis intervention, information and referral service.	1800 888 236	www.directline.org.au
Alcoholics Anonymous		03 9525 2833	www.navic.net.au
Al-Anon	Support for teenagers affected by problem drinking from a family member	1300 252 666	www.al-anon.org.au
Gambling			
G Line Gambler's Helpline	Free counselling for people with issues and their family	1800 858 858	www.responsible-gambling.vic.gov.au
Gambler's Helpline Youthline	Counselling for people under 25 with gambling issues	1800 262 376	www.responsible-gambling.vic.gov.au
Grief			
Griefline	Counselling to anyone who needs support and to air their feelings	03 9935 7400	www.riefline.org.au
Mood Disorders			
Beyond-Blue	Information on depression and anxiety	1300 224 636	www.beyondblue.org.au
The Blackdog Institute	Information on mood disorders		www.blackdoginstitute.org.au

Service	About	Contact	Website
Eating Disorders			
Eating Disorders Victoria	Information and support about eating disorders	1300 550 236	www.eatingdisorders.org.au
Postnatal and Antenatal			
PANDA	Counselling for people affected by post natal or anti natal depression	1300 726 306	www.panda.org.au
OCD and Anxiety			
OCD and Anxiety Helpline	Assistance to understand and manage symptoms of OCD, anxiety and depression	1300 269 438	www.arcvic.org.au
Young Adult			
Headspace	Support and counselling for people aged 12-25	1800 650 890	www.eheadspace.org.au
Kids Helpline	Counselling service for people aged 12-25	1800 55 1800	www.kidshelp.com.au
Orygen Youth Mental Health	Fact sheets and information for young people with mental health issues	1300 679 436	www.orygen.org.au
Men			
Mensline	Support, information and referral service for men	1300 789 978	www.mensline.org.au
CRANApus Bush Support Services	Support and debrief service for remote health practitioners and their family	1800 805 391	www.crana.org.au

Service	About	Contact	Website
Domestic Violence			
Family Violence Response Centre	Support, advice and information for people experiencing domestic violence	1800 015 188	www.safesteps.org.au
LGBTQIA+			
QLife	Counselling, information and referral service for the community	1800 184 527	www.qlife.org.au
Gay and Lesbian Switchboard	Anonymous, free telephone counselling, for the LGBTQ community.	9663 2939	www.switchboard.org.au
Zoe Belle Gender Collective	Online service supporting health of LGBTQ community.		www.zbgc.com.au
Victorian Aids Council (VAC)	LGBTQ specific health and other services.	1800 134 840	www.vac.org.au/lgbti-health
Minus 18	Mental Health support to LGBTQ and gender diverse young people		www.minus18.org.au
Sexual Assault			
Sexual Assault Crisis Line Victoria	Crisis counselling for victims and survivors	1800 806 292	www.sacl.com.au
Centre Against Sexual Assault (CASA)	Support for victims of sexual assault	03 9635 3610	www.casahouse.com.au

Service	About	Contact	Website
Crisis			
Lifeline	Crisis support and suicide prevention	13 11 14	www.lifeline.org.au
Suicide Callback	Crisis counselling, carers for someone who is suicidal and those bereaved by suicide	1300 659 467	www.suicidecallbackservice.org.au
Suicide Line	Counselling and Information	1300 651 251	www.suicideline.org.au
CATT	Psychiatric triage, information, assessment and referral.	1300 363 746	





The Melbourne Clinic

130 Church Street,
Richmond VIC 3121

Phone: 03 9429 4688 | Fax: 03 9427 7558

www.themelbourneclinic.com.au

A Healthscope hospital.

ABN 85 006 405 152



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