

Arafmi services include

- **Free professional counselling**
- **Mental health support groups with peers**
- **Workshops & programs**
- **Dealing with the mental health system**
- **School education to fight stigma**
- **School holiday programs for 8 – 18 years**
- **Mental health news & information**
- **Advocacy, gaining your full rights**

Mike Seward, executive director of mental health carer organisation, Arafmi, says well-informed carers, working in co-operation with doctors, greatly assist in enforcing medical treatment for mental health consumers.

Mr Seward said mental health carers could ask themselves the following questions:

- Do you need someone to talk to?
- Not sure you are doing the right thing?
- Want to know what help you can get?
- Need time out?

Arafmi was available with full support services including online and printed newsletters, seminars and recreational activities for carers.

Arafmi (with logo) – Caring For Mental Health Carers Since 1976

The *Walk of Pride* will be led by **Estelle Dragun**, mother of the late TV newsreader Charmaine Dragun. Estelle is an *Arafmi* ambassador.

Accommodation, education and employment opportunities for those with mental health issues and respite and carer involvement for carers are just as important as addressing the health issues.

It is vitally important to focus on the individual and to involve and get assistance from their carers, people who are often overlooked.

After all, as carers know more about their loved ones' issues than anyone other than the person themselves and are motivated to help, they are in an ideal position to help.

Politicians need to wake up to the fact that there are over 2.5 million [ABS](#) identified carers in Australia.

Mental Health Facts

2007 National Survey of Mental Health and Wellbeing found that:

- Almost half the total population (45.5%) experience a mental health disorder at some point in the lifetime.
- One in five, or 20% of the Australian population aged 16-85 years, experienced mental disorders in the previous 12 months [of their survey]. This is equivalent to 3.2 million Australians.
- One in 16 (6.2%) had affective (mood) disorders; one in seven (14.4%) had anxiety disorders; and one in 20 (5.1%) had substance use disorders.
- Based on these prevalence rates, it is estimated that nearly 1 million Australians have affective disorders; over 2.3 million had anxiety disorders and over 800,000 had substance use disorders in the previous 12 months.
- The prevalence of mental disorders declines with age: from 1 in 4 young people (16-24) to 1 in 20 (75-85 years)
- Only one third of people (34.9%) with a mental health disorder used health services for their mental health problem – and two thirds of people with a mental health disorder did not report using services for their mental health disorder.

Depression and anxiety are the most prevalent mental disorders experienced by Australians. Depression alone is predicted to be one of the world's largest health problems by 2020.¹

Around one million Australian adults and 100,000 young people live with depression each year. On average, one in five people will experience depression in their lives; one in four females and one in six males.^{2m}

Among young Australians aged 12-25 years, depression is the most common mental health problem. Around one in ten young Australians will experience an anxiety disorder in any given 12 month period.³ At least one third of young people have had an episode of mental illness by the age of 25 years.⁴