

Consumers contribute to the addiction sector in more ways than one

NATIONAL COMMITTEE FOR ADDICTION TREATMENT AND MATUA RAKI CONSUMER LEADERSHIP GROUP, JULY 2012

Recovering people have far more to offer the alcohol and other drug problems arena than their personal stories of self-destruction and rebirth. – William White, *The Art of Life Itself*¹

This is not to undermine or undervalue those stories or the people who tell them – we all know the value of both – it is simply to highlight the range of activities in which people who have experience of alcohol and other drug problems can participate, such as those being undertaken by consumers throughout Aotearoa.

The National Service Framework service specifications now provide for six different specific service type/roles:

1. consumer leadership, consultancy and liaison
2. consumer advocacy service
3. consumer resource and information service
4. peer support service for adults
5. peer support service children, adolescent and youth
6. phone service.

Recent activities include:

- **Consumers as researchers:** The *Intravenous Opioid Dependence in NZ 2008* (National Addiction Centre) study included consumer perspectives in research design and practice as peer interviewers/co-investigators and report writers.
- **Consumers as planners:** There has been consumer participation in national strategic planning and in local planning for specific DHB addiction and mental health services.

- **Consumers as advisors:** Consumers advice is provided in and to services, e.g. CADS Auckland Consumer Team, ADANZ Consumer Advisor; in national steering groups including Matua Raki Steering Group, Co-Existing Problems; and in advisory groups and national associations e.g. Matua Raki Consumer Leadership Group, and National Association of Opioid Treatment Providers.

As a national group consumers have made submissions to Law Commission reviews.

- **Consumers as networkers:** Consumer perspectives are elicited and communicated to service providers. For example, the ADANZ Consumer Advisor meets with client groups in parts of the South Island; staff of the Christchurch Methadone Programme attend the Christchurch consumer meeting to consult and inform clients of proposed changes to service delivery.

Consumers engage in local, regional and national networks including the National Training Providers' Network.

- **Consumers as presenters:** Consumers present at Cutting Edge, and to non-addiction services and professional groups including CYF, WINZ, midwives, trainee nurses and to the future addiction and health workforce at Auckland and Otago Universities about consumer experiences and the role of the consumer and peer workforce.

*Evidence suggests consumer involvement in teaching can have a positive impact on attitudes and values.*²



- **Consumers as educators:** Consumers contribute to programme content as members of tertiary institution post-graduate and undergraduate advisory committees.

Consumers train new and existing addiction staff to concepts of consumer participation, peer support, recovery, and more. Consumers are involved in wananga and indigenous training e.g. Te Korowai Aroha O Aotearoa, Mauri Ora 'transforming whānau violence' programme.

- **Peer education** is utilised to introduce consumers to wellness and recovery plans (WRAP) and to the Health and Disability Code of Consumer Rights.
- **Peer education** is a central tenet of the NZ Needle Exchange programme and local Hepatitis C Resource Centres.
- **Consumers as evaluators:** Consumer satisfaction surveys are developed in partnership with service providers and the results used to inform service delivery and development. E.g. CADS Auckland Consumer Team manages surveys for the various services including the Treatment and Service Perceptions Questionnaire for Auckland Opioid Treatment Service and satisfaction surveys for in-patient and Community & Home Detox services, and CADS Counselling Service.
- **Consumers as auditors:** Trained consumers provide a unique perspective as members of teams engaged in auditing of service providers.
- **Consumers as supervisors:** Trained consumers provide supervision to people in designated consumer and peer roles.



- **Consumers as information providers:** Consumers develop and review written resources for consumers and families, whānau.
- **Paid consumers** are active participants in recruitment of clinical and allied health staff.
- **Consumers** help develop a consumer participation policy with and for service providers.

The rise of peer support

Peer support groups are now happening:

- within treatment services e.g. CADS North (Auckland) pilot peer support groups
- in collaboration with treatment services e.g. The Friday Group: Weekend Planning around Safe Alcohol & Drug Use (Christchurch)
- in the community e.g. Te Tai Tokerau Whai-Ora Network where peer support takes the form of motivation and information workshops and a music group.

Kaupapa whānau recovery groups – wairua focused and whānau driven – are facilitated locally and regionally.

1:1 peer support is being provided by NGOs such as Connect Supporting Recovery, and within clinical services, e.g. Specialist Peer Support Worker with CADS Auckland Pregnancy and Parental Service.

Peer advocacy services for people with mental illness and/or addiction experience are available in the South Island, e.g. Mental Health Advocacy and Peer Support Christchurch and Pact West Coast.

Consumer networks and the recovery movement

The Matua Rāki Consumer Advisor has supported the building of local, regional and national consumer networks which bring together people who have used addiction treatment services and people employed (voluntary and paid) in designated consumer and peer roles.

The thoughts, opinions and ideas that emerge in these forums are diverse because individuals and different recovery communities have different modes of being, different recovery epistemologies, different ways of knowing and being in the world.³ Such diversity is a strength of the consumer movement as we believe there is no one path to wellbeing.

- Te Tai Tokerau Whai-Ora Network serves addiction and mental health consumers living in the far north. See Facebook: Te Rau Ara Northland
- Counties Manukau Alcohol and Other Drug Consumer Network was established by Counties Manukau DHB and local AOD consumers in 2006. See www.alcoholdrugconsumernetwork.org.nz.
- Kaupapa Whānau Oranga (Māori recovery) utilising 'Te Ao Māori'

Five quick questions for service providers

1. Does your service/team regularly seek consumer input into service planning and provision?
2. Is consumer input used to alter service provision and practice?
3. Are the services/programmes you offer based, even in part, on the stated needs and preferences of your clients?
4. Are consumers involved in hiring decisions and in training and orienting new staff?
5. Are consumer issues a standard item on your staff meeting agenda?

as a pathway to healing for consumers and their whānau has grown since 2001, with national recovery hui held throughout Aotearoa.

- A National Pacific Consumer and Family Forum, developed out of regional networks, was launched at New Zealand's first national Pacific consumer and family recovery conference in 2009.
- Aotearoa Alcohol and Other Drug Consumer Network gathers and provides consumer experiences and perspectives to inform input at local regional and national levels. The Network now functions as a national online group at <http://groups.google.com/group/aaodcn>.

Where to from here?

We believe client outcomes are improved when consumers are involved in education, research, and service delivery because active consumer participation contributes to:

- destigmatising people who use alcohol and other drugs
- destigmatising people in opioid substitution treatment
- improving service systems, processes and pathways for clients
- improving access for people requiring support
- developing innovative recovery interventions
- broadening the concept of 'evidence base' so that it includes and places value on personal and interpersonal significance and meaning.

Together consumers, service providers, professionals, and others have opportunities to unite in a collaborative and dynamic future.

For more information about the activities listed here or for queries about implementing meaningful consumer participation contact the Matua Rāki Consumer Advisor or access the resources below:

Resources a pathways to information on local consumer and peer activities

Clark, S. (2007). *Not Just Another Participation Model: Guidelines for Enabling Effective Youth Consumer Participation in CAMH and AOD Services in NZ*. Auckland: The Werry Centre for Child and Adolescent Mental Health Workforce Development

Matua Rāki. (2010). *Consumer and peer roles in the Addiction Sector*. Wellington: Matua Rāki

Matua Rāki. (2012). *Consumer Involvement in Education: a discussion paper for education and tertiary training providers*. Wellington: Matua Rāki

Northern DHB Support Agency Ltd. (2010). *Pacific Consumer 'Tiare Ruperupe' Leadership Framework for Mental Health and Addictions Sector*. Northern DHB support Agency Ltd: Auckland

Standards NZ. (2008). *Health and Disability Services (General) Standard*. Wellington: Standards NZ

Te Pou. (2010). *Mental Health and Addiction Service Evaluator Workbook*. Auckland: Te Pou

www.adanz.org.nz and www.addictionshelp.org.nz/Directory

1. Bamber, S. (2010). Recovery writing volume one: 2009-2010. Manchester: *The Art of Life Itself*

2. Matua Rāki. (2012). *Consumer involvement in Education: a discussion paper for education and tertiary training providers*. Wellington: Matua Rāki

3. Bamber, S. (2010) p. 11



National Committee for Addiction Treatment

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