

# CONSUMER PARTNERS MENTORING PROGRAM



## About

The **Consumer Partners Mentoring Program** provides a development pathway for **consumers** through a group mentorship model. This will enable a **safe learning environment** to support a diverse range of 'emerging' and 'evolving' consumers to develop their skills, knowledge and capabilities.

The mentor guides their mentee group through a **four-stage mentoring process**. This involves:

1. Forming as a group and getting to know one another;
2. Supporting the mentees to identify development areas and set goals;
3. Actively working on goals, creating learning opportunities and testing newly gained skills and knowledge in the 'real world';
4. Reflecting on progress made and celebrating achievements.

The program is based on successful pilots which ran in 2021–22 and 2022–23, with positive outcomes reported by all participants.

## Who can take part?

The program is open to **consumers** involved in any aspect of the Victorian healthcare system.

We are committed to enhancing the **diversity of voices** that are driving change in the health system to reduce health inequalities. We encourage people from **all backgrounds** to register.

### Emerging consumer:

- Typically have a desire to contribute based on their personal experience of using health services;
- Tend to speak from their own experience rather than on behalf of others;
- May do 'one-off' style engagements like taking part in focus group, providing feedback in a survey or sharing their story to help other patients or families;
- Focus is on learning, growing, developing through on-the-job experience and finding their voice.

### Evolving consumer:

- Begin to connect their own experience to broader consumer issues;
- Developing confidence to raise concerns and point out potential issues;
- Will be becoming familiar with the common language, terminology, acronyms and areas of the service they work with;
- Are likely to be contributing on a regular basis and are often engaged on committees, co-design groups and working parties, with a focus on relationship-building and networking.

**“Should be made compulsory for all consumers involved in healthcare consumer engagement and advocacy.”**

*– Pilot program participant*

## What to expect?

This program is designed to be accessible and flexible. We know that people lead busy lives and, as such, the program is a manageable commitment of ten **online monthly meetings** from February to November 2024.

In addition, mentees on the program will access:

- A 1:1 intake interview with the program coordinator to understand more about your needs and goals;
- An online launch event;
- A half-day hybrid celebration event to close the program;
- A mentoring program manual including goal-setting template;
- Ad hoc support from the program coordinator.

Each mentor group will have no more than five mentees guided by one experienced mentor. Mentor groups are formed based on a combination of factors such as:

- Shared goals and levels of development of mentees;
- Alignment of mentees' interest areas with the experiences of the mentor;
- Personal qualities and communication preferences.



**"I felt very satisfied being grouped with [my mentor], she has a great level of understanding and empathy for other people."** – Pilot program participant

## What are the benefits?

Benefits to the **consumer partner** include:

- Acquiring new skills and knowledge;
- Improving skills and confidence;
- Feeling better supported in their role as a consumer partner;
- Increased personal and/or professional relationships and networks.

Benefits to the **sponsoring organisation** include:

- Highly engaged consumer partners with greater resilience, motivation and longevity;
- Consumer partners who can more easily connect with others and feel valued and validated in their work;
- Consumer partners drawing on learnings from other health organisations to speed up innovation across the sector.

## Key dates

- **Nov 2023–Jan 2024:** recruitment of participants
- **Feb–Nov 2024:** program implementation including closing celebration event
- **Nov–Dec 2024:** program evaluation



**PLEASE GET IN TOUCH WITH ANY QUESTIONS:**

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