

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This document presents a Framework to inform policy, programs and practice for continuing care to prevent further episodes of mental illness for people who have been seriously affected by mental illness.

The 4As Framework was developed through a national consultation process where a discussion paper on the role of relapse prevention in the recovery process for people seriously affected by mental illness was developed to prompt discussion of the issues through a national consultation with consumers, families and carers, service providers, peak bodies, and policy makers.

The methodology and major findings of the national consultation are documented in a separate report and the consultation discussion paper has been updated to reflect comments that were received during the consultation process. The final documents of the process that support the 4As Framework are:

- *Pathways of Recovery: Preventing Further Episodes of Mental Illness (Monograph)* – note: this is an updated version of the original discussion paper;
- *Pathways of Recovery: Report of the National Consultation on Preventing Further Episodes of Mental Illness.*

The basic elements of the Framework to promote the mental health of people who have been seriously affected by mental illness and prevent further episodes of mental illness are the 4As:

1. *Awareness* – awareness of mental health status and understanding of the factors that affect mental health and mental illness, including potential vulnerability to further episodes of illness.
2. *Anticipation* – planning for future mental health in terms of self-management, recovery, continuity of care and crisis planning.
3. *Alternatives* – availability of self-management and service alternatives that address all the risk and protective factors for mental health according to a holistic approach.
4. *Access* – early, easy and equitable access to services that meet all the changing care needs of people who have been seriously affected by mental illness and their families and carers.

The Framework briefly describes each of the 4As and identifies implementation actions that need to be taken at different levels of the mental health care system. Examples of current innovative models and approaches for implementation are also provided.

It is hoped that the 4As Framework will provide the directions and impetus to change current practices and reorient the mental health system toward recovery and the prevention of mental illness.