



**WAAMH**

Western Australian Association  
for Mental Health

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**MEDIA RELEASE**

**26 April 2017**

### **National forum leads way in reducing restrictive practices in mental health**

DESPITE the last straightjacket being removed from Graylands Hospital in 2007 and Western Australia reducing seclusion in mental health units by nearly 70% over the past 10 years, there is still much to be done in shifting restrictive practice out of mental health units entirely.

The Towards Elimination of Restrictive Practices 11<sup>th</sup> National Forum (TERP 11 Forum) is coming to Perth for the first time on 4-5 May 2017 and will play a significant role in contributing to this goal nationally.

The forum will take place at The University Club of WA with Deputy Premier of WA and Minister for Mental Health The Hon. Roger Cook MLA opening the forum.

Chief Psychiatrist of WA Dr Nathan Gibson said restrictive practices such as seclusion and restraint, had historically been used in mental health services to try and prevent harm when patients (consumers of mental health services) were distressed or behaving aggressively.

“This is a complex and challenging area within mental health units - consumers can be very unwell, particularly with psychosis,” Dr Gibson acknowledged.

“Tragically, 70% of people being admitted to a mental health unit have already experienced significant trauma in their lives before coming to hospital.”

“Evidence now clearly shows seclusion and restraint re-traumatizes individuals - it not only traumatizes consumers, but staff are frequently distressed and injured by the process as well.”

Dr Gibson said there were a range of strategies shown to help reduce distress for consumers when they're admitted to hospital.

“Using these techniques to cut seclusion and restraint actually decreases harm to consumers and staff and improves mental health care,” he said.

Consumer / survivor speaker, writer and educator Indigo Daya said her personal experience of restrictive interventions was profoundly distressing.

“Whenever I was admitted to a psychiatric unit I was also re-living childhood abuse, so to be restricted just felt terrifying,” Ms Daya said. “What I really needed was a safe space and compassion.”

WA stands as one of the national leaders in reducing restrictive practice.

The TERP 11 Forum will highlight these local strategies and successful techniques; while showcasing consumer and carer leadership in reducing restrictive practice;

Peak body representing the community-based mental health sector in WA.

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providing an opportunity for learning, and a platform for presenters from around Australia and the world.

Keynote speakers include Mr Geoff Brennan (executive director of Star Wards, UK); Professor Bernadette McSherry (foundation director of Melbourne Social Equity Institute); Professor Brian McKenna (Professor of Forensic Mental Health, Auckland NZ); Mr Keir Saltmarsh (consumer advocate, Victoria); Ms Margaret Doherty (family leader in mental health, WA); and athlete and motivational speaker Jessica Smith as Master of Ceremonies.

National statistics detailing the frequency of restraint in mental health units will also be unveiled for the first time, with co-ordination work done through the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare.

The Perth forum is being hosted by lead agency the Chief Psychiatrist of WA, as well as co-hosts the Mental Health Commission of WA, WA Department of Health and the WA Association for Mental Health (WAAMH).

WAAMH chief executive officer Rod Astbury said the association was proud to host this important forum in WA for the first time.

“We are particularly pleased the forum has attracted strong consumer, family and regional registrations, and that culturally and linguistically diverse communities, and Aboriginal perspectives are reflected in the program,” Mr Astbury said.

The sold-out forum will welcome consumers, carers, clinicians, the media and anyone interested in alternatives to restrictive practice in mental health settings.

### **Media Pass**

If you would like to attend the forum in a media capacity or interview any of the speakers, please contact WAAMH Public Relations Manager Brooke Johns to organise a complimentary media pass and set up any interviews you may require on 08 6246 3012 or 0438 9307 62 or at [BJohns@waamh.org.au](mailto:BJohns@waamh.org.au)

### **TERP 11 Forum**

To find out more about the Towards Elimination of Restrictive Practices 11<sup>th</sup> National Forum program, please visit: <http://waamh.org.au/TERP11forum>

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