



Australian Government

Personal Helpers & Mentors Program



What we value

The Personal Helpers and Mentors Program was developed following consultations across Australia.

People involved in these consultations included people with mental illness, families and carers groups, clinical experts, mental health groups, and organisations that provide services and support to people with mental illness.

These consultations identified some key values about the program and how it should work.

These values are:

- mutual respect and compassion
- empowerment
- strong relationships and trust
- commitment
- flexibility
- collaboration
- involvement.

Our Personal Helpers and Mentors teams are committed to these values.

Am I eligible?

If you are 16 years or over you may be eligible for the Personal Helpers and Mentors Program.

You do not need to have a medical diagnosis of a mental illness to initially join the program. If you join, your Personal Helper and Mentor will help you to get the medical and other health support that you need.

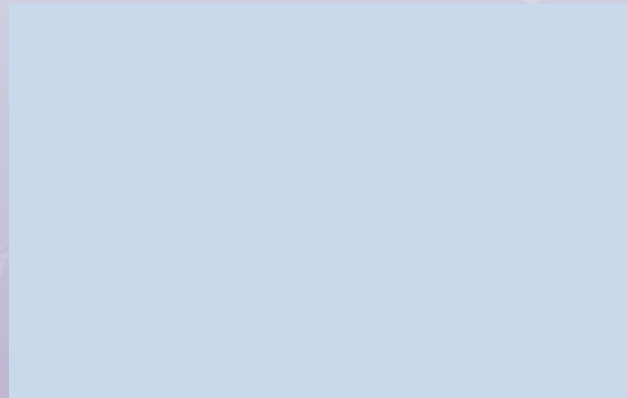
What do I have to do to join?

Contact your local Personal Helpers and Mentors service provider.

You will be asked some questions to see whether you are eligible for the program.

You can bring along a family member, carer or friend if you choose.

Where is my nearest Personal Helpers and Mentors service provider?



What is the Personal Helpers and Mentors Program?

The Personal Helpers and Mentors Program is a new program that supports people whose lives are severely affected by a severe mental illness.

It is a key part of the Australian Government's Mental Health package which was announced in the 2006 Budget, and is part of the Council of Australian Government's National Action Plan on Mental Health.

The Program focuses on strengths – what people with mental illness can do, rather than what they can't do.

It focuses on recovery – demonstrating that people with mental illness can lead a fulfilled life in the community with the same opportunities as other people.

People who join the program will work with their own Personal Helper and Mentor who will support them on their recovery journey.

"Recovery is a deeply personal, unique process of changing one's attitudes, values, feelings, goals and skills and/or roles. It is a way of living a satisfying, hopeful and contributing life even with the limitations caused by illness. Recovery includes the development of new meaning and purpose in one's life as one grows beyond the catastrophic effects of mental illness."

(Anthony, W.A. (1993) Recovery from mental illness: The guiding vision of the mental health service system in the 1990s, Psychosocial Rehabilitation Journal, 16 (4), 11–23.)

What do Personal Helpers and Mentors do?

Personal Helpers and Mentors will work with you to develop goals and strategies to achieve these goals.

They will provide you with opportunities, support and services that will help you reconnect with your community. They will be someone you can talk to when things aren't going so well.

It's a team approach where you and your Personal Helper and Mentor will work together to make things happen and get the outcomes YOU want. It's about trust and respect.

Your Personal Helper and Mentor can support you in many different ways, including:

- working with you to learn how to better manage everyday tasks such as housekeeping, managing finances and learning how to use public transport
- helping you get relationships with family and friends back on track
- accessing appropriate clinical support
- advising you on some parenting difficulties you may be having
- working with you to get you involved in a community activity that you would really like to do
- connecting you with other services or programs that could also support you on your recovery journey, like drug and alcohol, housing, or medical support.

Your Personal Helper and Mentor can support you with many different things. The key is that it is up to YOU what you want to achieve from the program, and how you go about achieving it.

Our team approach

Personal Helpers and Mentors will work in teams.

They will have a range of qualifications, skills, backgrounds and experience that will make them well-placed to support you in your recovery journey.

Our teams will be made up of people who understand mental illness and the needs and expectations of people with mental illness.

These people will know what other services and opportunities are available for you in your community.

They will respect your wishes in identifying what you want from the program.

And they will encourage your families, carers and friends to be involved in the program with you – if you want them to be involved.

