

— **South Pacific Private** —

Changing Lives & Healing Families

# What you Need to Know when a Family Member Arrives at South Pacific Private

No matter if it's the first time or if it's something you are familiar with, it's never easy when a family member is hospitalised due to a mental health concern or an addiction.

You may wonder how to help them and where to go for help yourself. This brochure provides information about how to support your family member and yourself while they are in hospital and throughout the weeks and months that follow.



**SOUTH PACIFIC PRIVATE**  
Australia's Leading Treatment Centre

# What you Need to Know

**One of the most challenging aspects of the disease of addiction, mental illness and trauma related conditions, is the powerlessness that friends and family members feel as they watch problems unfold and escalate.** By the time people find their way to us they are usually sick and tired of the cycle of despair that accompanies untreated addictions and mental health concerns. Often friends and family members have spent a long time trying to 'make' the person address their problems, to get treatment, to change.

Coming to terms with the fact that we cannot 'make' someone address these issues is the first step into recovery from these problems. Taking this first step can be overwhelming for the individual and also their family members. The following testimonial shares a personal experience of being a carer which we hope will serve as a reassurance for you.

*"Twelve years ago I was an anxious mum who had just checked her daughter into South Pacific Private. To say that I was scared was an understatement. The 'not knowing' of what was going to happen to her was especially scary. I asked myself how we (the family) could help in this situation as we had absolutely no experience of anything like this. It was akin to being in a boat with no paddles, no rudder and no map. After our first Sunday visit, I could see that she was beginning to settle into the program, but I still felt as if I was 'in that boat'. When I was contacted to consider the Family Program, I was really happy to commit, because I hoped that this would help not only our daughter's recovery but also give us an insight into how this program worked. I attended with the intention of helping my daughter, which it certainly did. We learned a lot about addiction and how to support her in recovery but we also learned a lot that we didn't expect about ourselves and our family unit. I cannot recommend this program enough. Recovery is not easy but together with an informed network and supportive family system, it has a much higher chance of success. Our daughter is now 12 years clean, finished her education and is happily married with a loving family around her. Thank you South Pacific Private."*

## How Can I Help?

- Find out when people are allowed to receive phone calls and visits. If your family member wants you to, our visiting hours are Sunday between 1.30pm – 3.30pm. Please be mindful that any other communication with your loved one whilst they are in treatment may be filtered through our clinical team e.g. messages left or emails sent. This is to ensure the best treatment outcomes are met.
- Check with hospital staff first if you wish to bring anything with you for them. Some items (technical equipment, certain clothing, food items and some grooming items) may not be allowed.
- Know that they may not want to see anyone at first and respect those wishes.
- Learn about their illness, diagnosis, symptoms, and treatment options.
- Remind yourself that they are suffering from an illness, not a character flaw, and it is not anyone's fault.
- Ask the person prior to admission who they want and don't want to be informed of their hospitalisation and be respectful of their decisions; *even if they surprise you.*
- We also advise you to be aware of what information they are prepared to have shared and with whom; *immediate family, wider family circle, friends or their workplace.*

# How can I Get Answers to Questions about my Family Member's Treatment?

- There are confidentiality clauses at the hospital that may keep you from finding out about your family member's treatment. These clauses are there to protect them, not to keep you out.
- Ask hospital staff what you can do to find out more. Your family member may give consent for the restrictions to be removed or confirm that they are happy for you to be aware of their treatment.
- Being hospitalised for a mental illness or addiction is different to other hospitalisation as there will be restrictions in place to protect the patient. These include hospital doors being locked at certain times, clothing and gift rules, specified visiting hours and clients being able to leave the facility. Phones are only located in common areas and their use is sometimes restricted. These rules are in place to protect their safety as well as the safety of the broader community.
- Your family member is in safe hands. There will be a dedicated team of professionals treating your family member including a psychiatrist, GP, Mental Health Nurses, Therapists and Counsellors.
- For more information about a typical day in treatment and our treatment program please visit our website [www.southpacificprivate.com.au](http://www.southpacificprivate.com.au) where you will find plenty of useful information.

# What Happens when my Family Member is Ready to Leave Hospital?

Recovery is a long-term process that requires ongoing care, treatment and support. In advance of discharging from the hospital they will meet with a Continuing Care Case Manager who will work with them to create their ongoing recovery plan.

The plan may include a range of information such as *follow up communication, recommended ongoing day program options, appointments with healthcare professionals, medications, local 12 Step meetings (AA or NA for example) and any other relevant community support services.*

## **Why is ongoing recovery support such an important part of the treatment planning at South Pacific Private?**

Evidence based research indicates that approaching recovery from all angles is essential - and our day and evening programs, combined with 12 step meetings, regular 1-1 visits with a therapist, and our regular online webinars, plus a healthy lifestyle including mindfulness, exercise, nutritious food and healing relationships are vital.

## How can I be Supportive after they Return Home?

- The support of a family or network can be critical in terms of relapse avoidance and also ongoing motivation around recovery planning.
- Ask what your loved one needs; don't assume. Ask if you can help with daily tasks, give medication reminders, or come along to health care appointments.
- Respect their boundaries. Be available when he or she is ready to accept your help.
- Be patient. Don't rush, pressure, hover, or nag. It may take some time for them to feel well. A person may have temporary side effects such as dizziness, upset stomach, headache, or trouble sleeping when starting a new medication.
- If you live far away, show your support with phone calls, cards, and letters. Talk with the person's health care providers and other loved ones who live nearby about how you can help.
- Get support for yourself. It helps to talk to people who know how it feels to be in your situation. South Pacific Private has a Family Education and Support Group available to provide insight and education to family members. Please call 1800 063 332 to find out more.

## Who can I Call if I Need Support?

If you have any concerns, please call us 24/7 on **02 9905 3667**.

The team will be able to attend to your questions and address them where they can with respect to any confidentiality concerns. You can also email [info@southpacificprivate.com.au](mailto:info@southpacificprivate.com.au) and your enquiry will be attended to within 24 hours.

South Pacific Private is located at 24 Beach Street, Curl Curl NSW.

**Parking Options:** South Pacific Private has parking available in our off-street car park during the day and on weekends. If you wish to access this during the evening please ask reception or a therapist for an access code.

South Pacific Private also recommends that all visitors to the hospital park on Carrington Parade to avoid congestion on Beach and Ellen Streets for the local residents. We thank you for your support.

