

# 11<sup>th</sup> World Summit on Mental Health, Psychiatry and Wellbeing

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### **Working with Carers, Family and Kin – A Practical Guide for Healthcare professionals**

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CEO Arafmi, Queensland, Australia, with funding from the Queensland Government Department of Child Safety, Seniors and Disability

The purpose of this guide is to ensure healthcare professionals are aware of and include carers in the treatment of their patient. Carers can be a family member, friend or kin in an unpaid caring role. It is estimated that 2.6 million, or one in eight, Australians are carers. Arafmi is part of an Australian-wide network of peak bodies representing mental health carers and has been charged with preparing the guide for use throughout Queensland, one of Australia's largest states. There are several laws and policies in place in Australia to ensure the involvement of carers, however carers report that they are often excluded in healthcare settings, exacerbating already highly stressful situations. The guide, now in its final draft, hopes to inform healthcare professionals of the crucial role carers play in the patient's recovery. It emphasises that carers hold valuable information for healthcare professionals and provides strategies for sharing information with carers, while still respecting patient confidentiality and consent. When the guide is finalised, it will include templates, flyers and brochures for healthcare professionals to use and share. The guide will be piloted in one of seven Primary Health Networks in Queensland, for feedback from healthcare professionals and carers.

#### **Biography**

Irene Clelland is the Chief Executive Officer of Arafmi Ltd, a not for profit organisation in Queensland, Australia that provides systemic advocacy and capacity building supports to mental health unpaid carers, families and kin. Irene has a personal lived experience of mental health care, which has informed her 25+ years working in not for profit and government sectors in the UK and Australia.

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