



Maximising Opportunities:
collaboration with carers

Laraine Toms Eileen McDonald

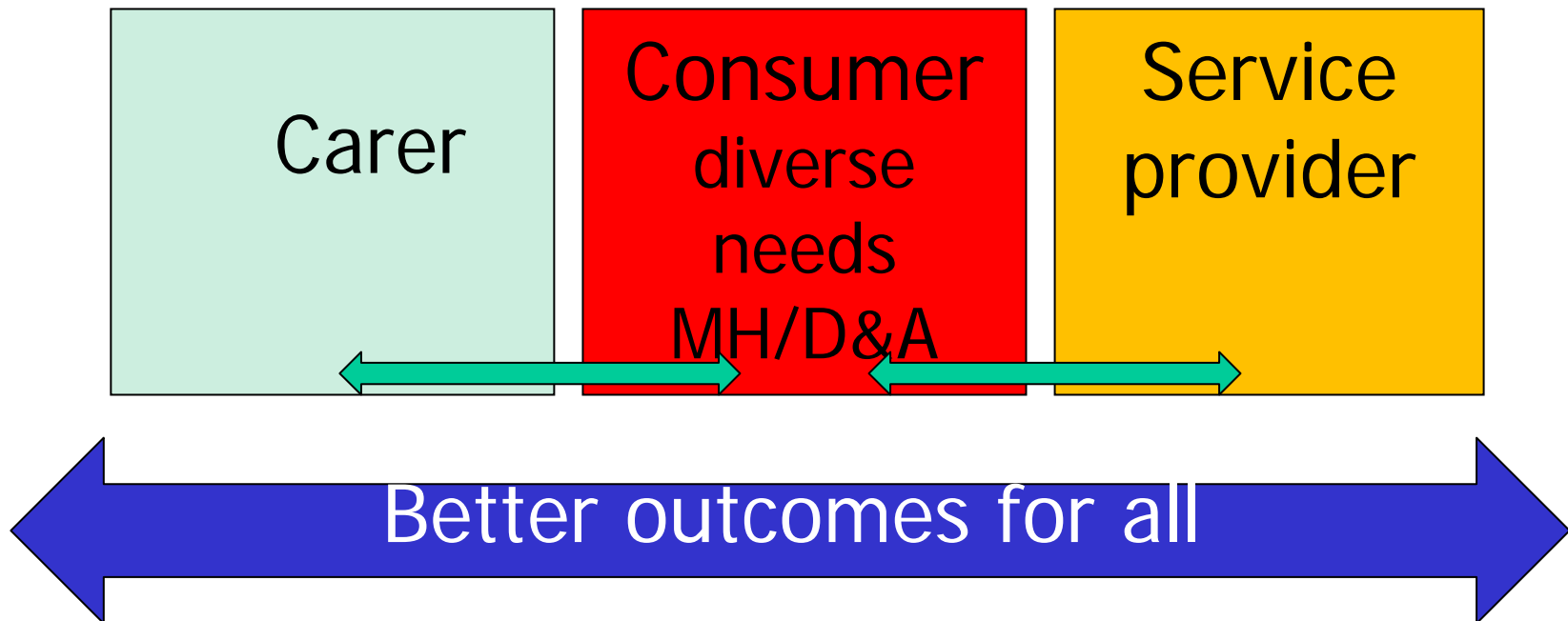
Outside In May 2009

Carers NSW

Carers NSW is the peak body for more than 750,000 people of all ages providing care for family members or friends with a disability, mental illness, chronic condition, have drug or alcohol dependencies, or who are frail.

Maximising Opportunities ...

For whom?



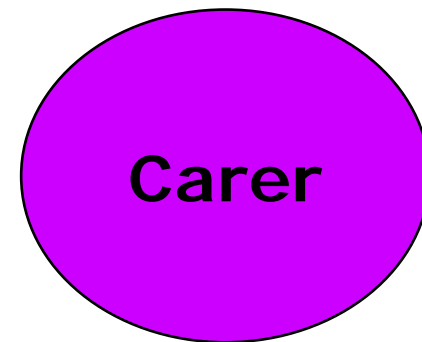
The Carer

An individual with few, if any, choices

- de-institutionalisation
- insufficient supported accommodation
- crisis in aged care accommodation

An individual denied equal opportunities

- restricted employment, education, social opportunities
- no superannuation
- poorer health
- shorter life span



Carer Health and Wellbeing

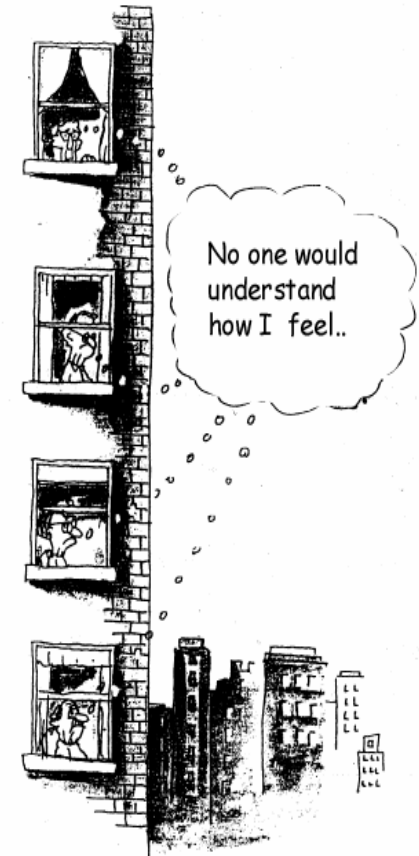
(Deakin University/Carers Australia/Australian Unity October 2007)

The survey found that carers have the **lowest** collective wellbeing of any group Deakin studied.

- More than 1/3 carers were found to be severely or extremely depressed
- More than 1/3 carers were found to be experiencing severe or extreme stress
- Almost twice as likely as the rest of the population to worry that their income would be sufficient to meet their expenses
- Almost twice as likely to experience chronic pain.

Carer facts and figures

- Nationally: 2.6 million carers
- 90,200 Young Carers under 25 (ABS 2003)
- NSW: 750,000 carers
- 72% female
- 91% were caring for a close family member, 40% care for a partner, 29% for a child and 32% for others
- 36% of primary carers are employed, 54% part time

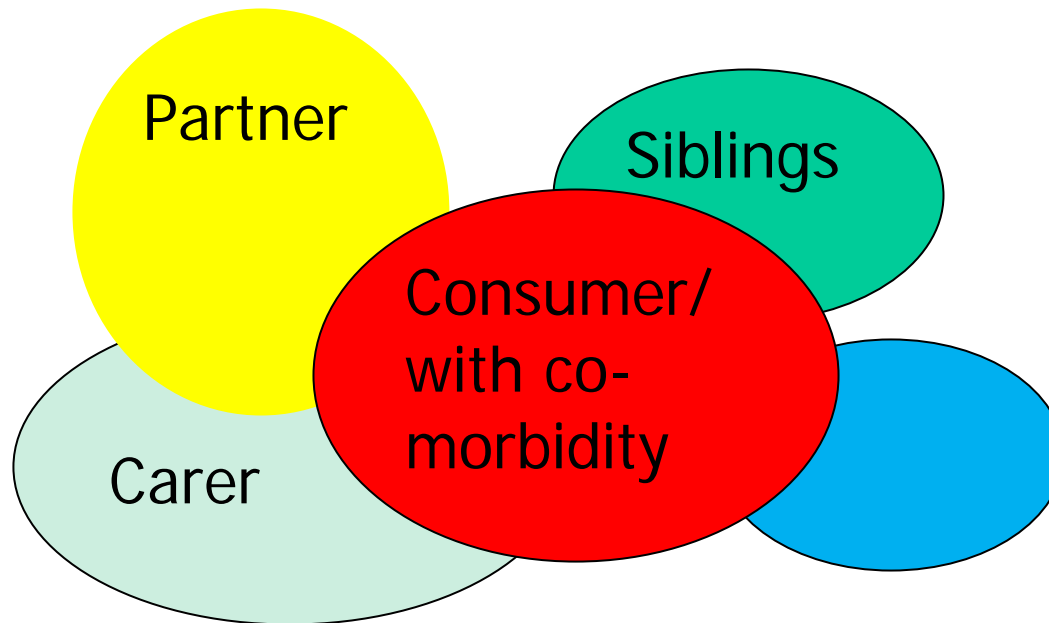


Carer facts and figures



- Unpaid care for is worth \$30.5 billion and \$10 billion in NSW
(AIHW 2003, Access Economics 2005)
- Carers tend to have lower incomes than the rest of the population and more than half rely on government pensions and allowances as their principal source of income.
- Only 12% have access to respite

The Family Dynamic and Recovery



What are the implications for families, including consumers, health professionals, community workers, NGOs?

What is family recovery?

Recovery will mean different things to different consumers and families

'Recovery is a process of adjusting one's attitudes, feelings, perceptions, beliefs, roles and goals in life. It is a process of self discovery, self renewal and transformation'

(Spaniol, Koehler & Hutchinson 1994)

What is family recovery?



Includes:

- instilling hope in consumer family member
- not seeking to inhibit self determination of consumer family member
- being able to withdraw - 'dignity of risk'
- a strong belief that their own needs are important – that pursuing an independent life assists consumer and carer recovery

Why is recovery needed for families of people with a mental illness/drug & alcohol problem?

58 – 73% of mental health consumers live with their families – (notion of interlinked lives)

Family recovery needs to be identified as important for the family itself *and* the consumer family member

Families need to recover *and* be



a recovery resource for consumers

- Families and carers need to be considered as a recovery resource for consumers
- Families need nurturing and care if they are to be a sustainable resource including accessible, adequate & flexible respite options that address needs of family and consumer
- Community care can only work if families are supported in their own recovery

Family recovery *is* possible – what are the implications for health professionals?



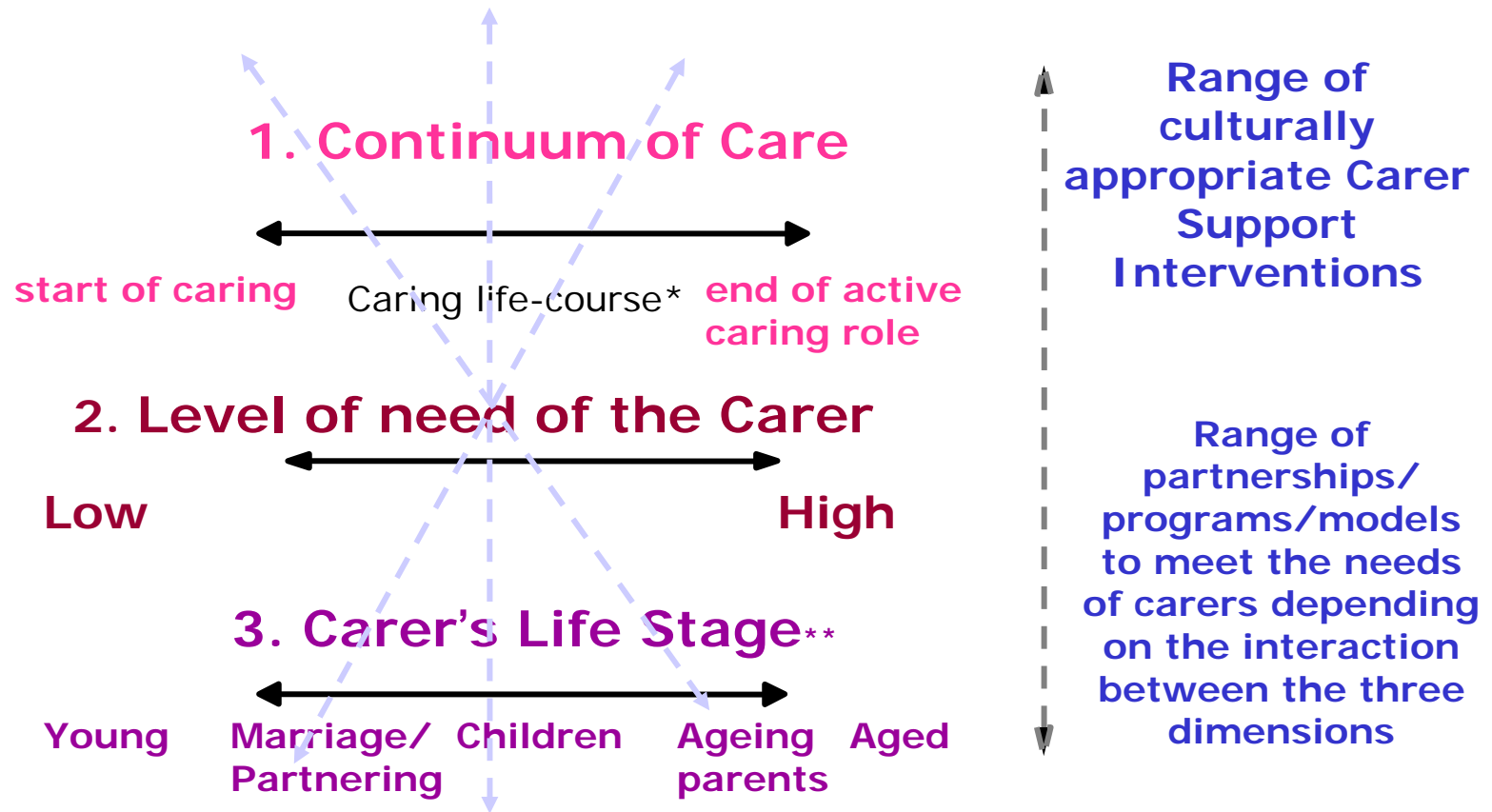
- Identify the values that support recovery
- Discuss the importance of self help in recovering
- Provide information
- Focus on strengths
- Ensure services are family sensitive and inclusive
- Integrate the Carers NSW *Carers Lifecourse Framework* into thinking and planning for interactions with and services for families

It's not my job to care for the carer!



Reproduced from: "New Paradigm" the Australian Journal on psychosocial rehabilitation, April 2003

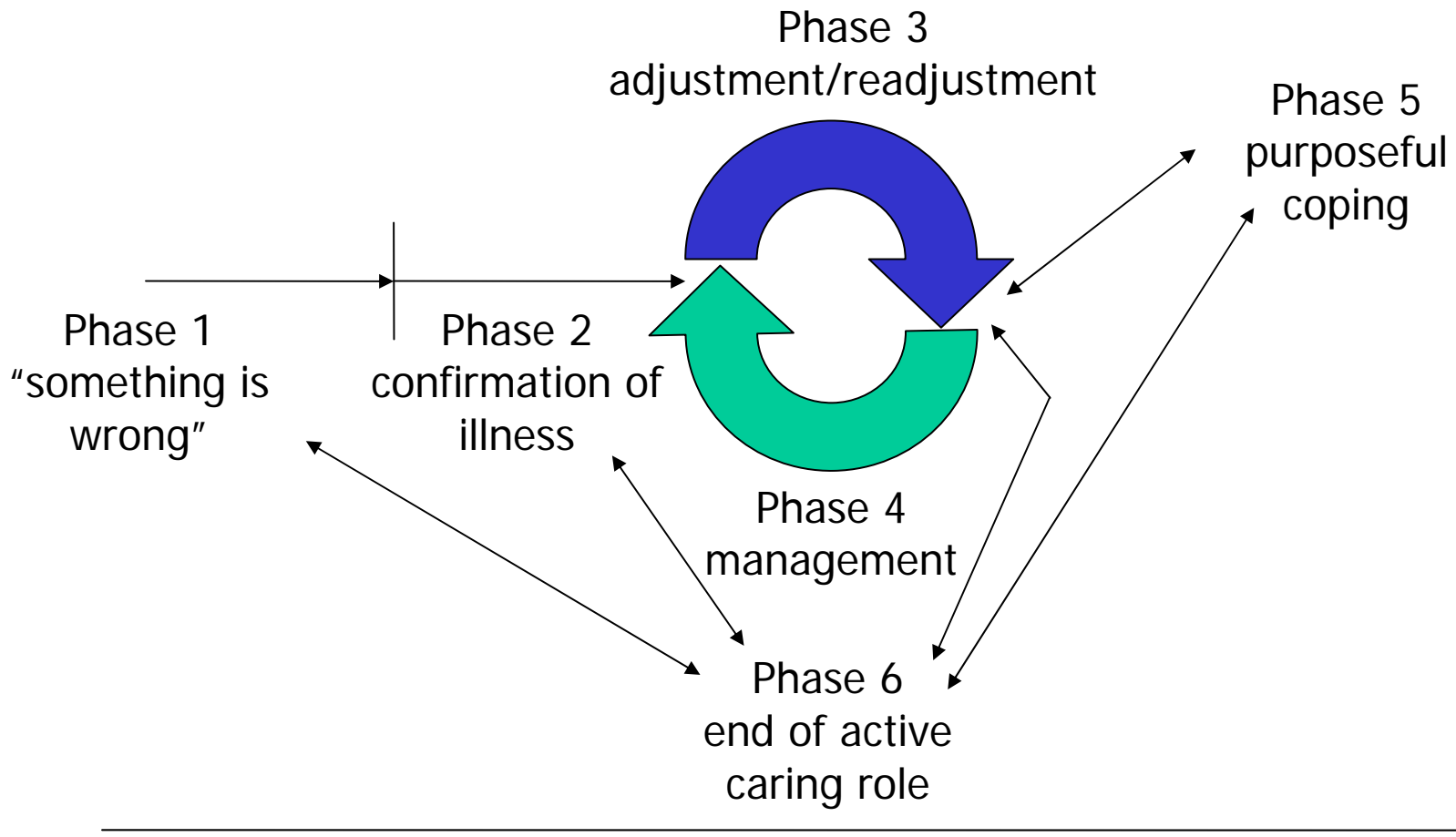
Dimensions of Caring



*Carers may undertake more than one caring role/life-course during their life and/or may have multiple caring roles

**Life Stage includes age-related and life events of the carer

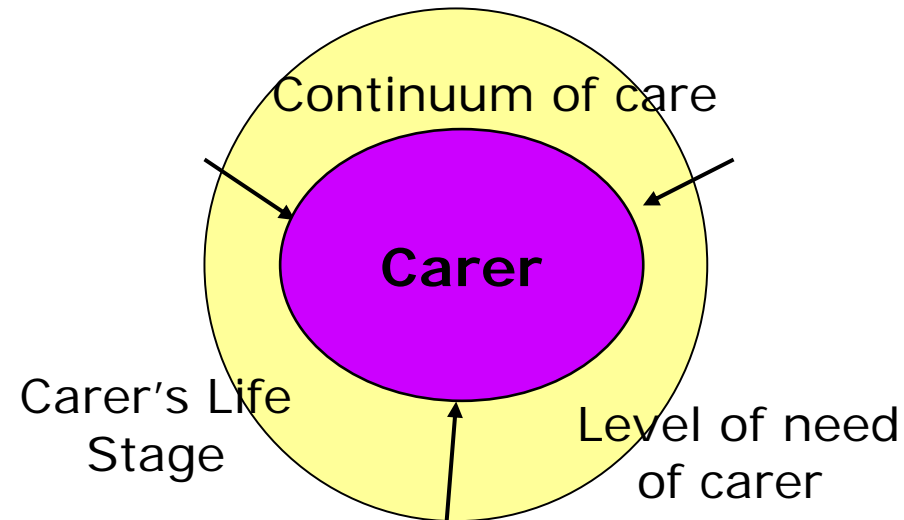
Carer Life Course Framework



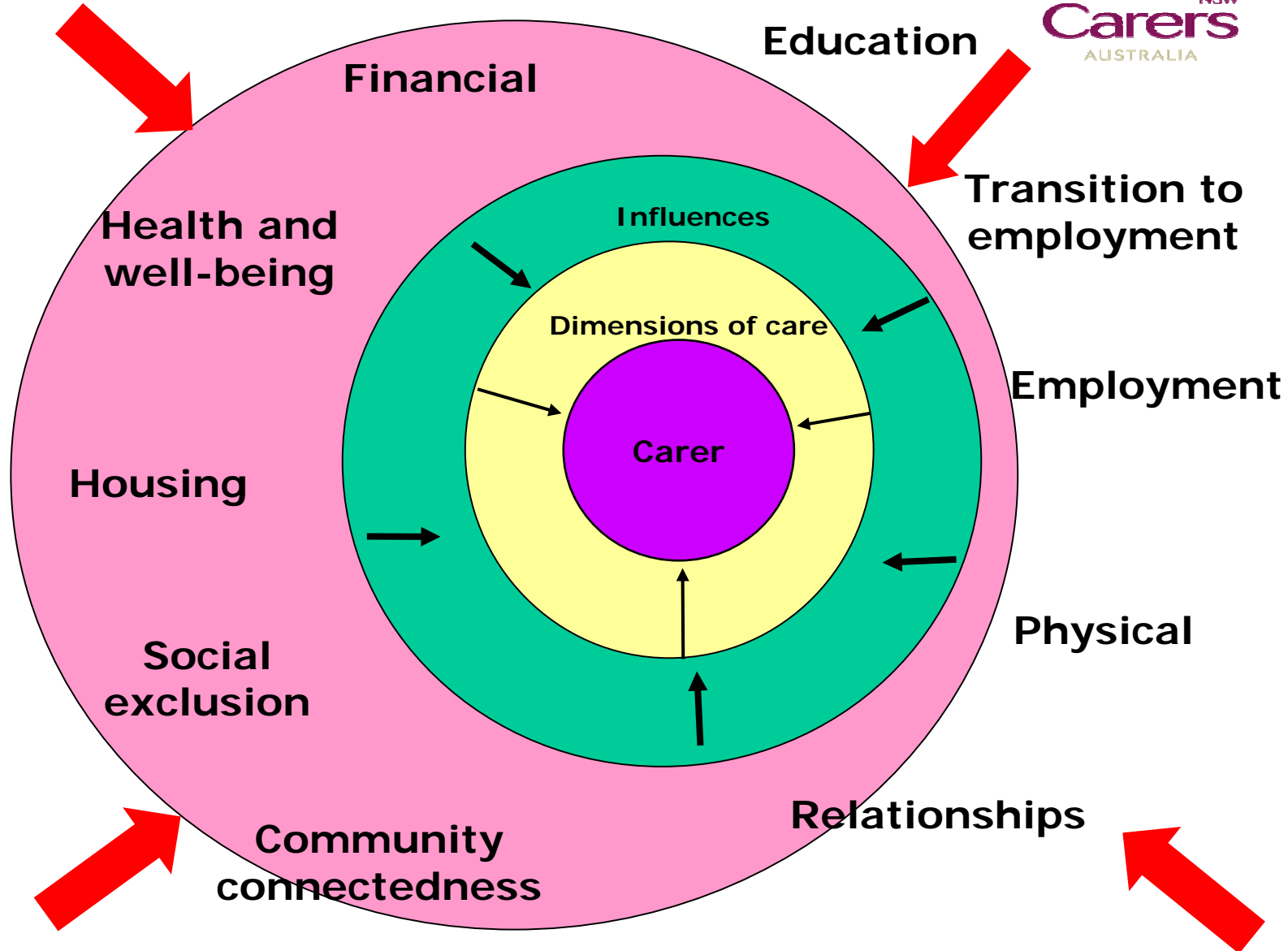
Dimensions of caring - impact on the carer

Carers' needs:

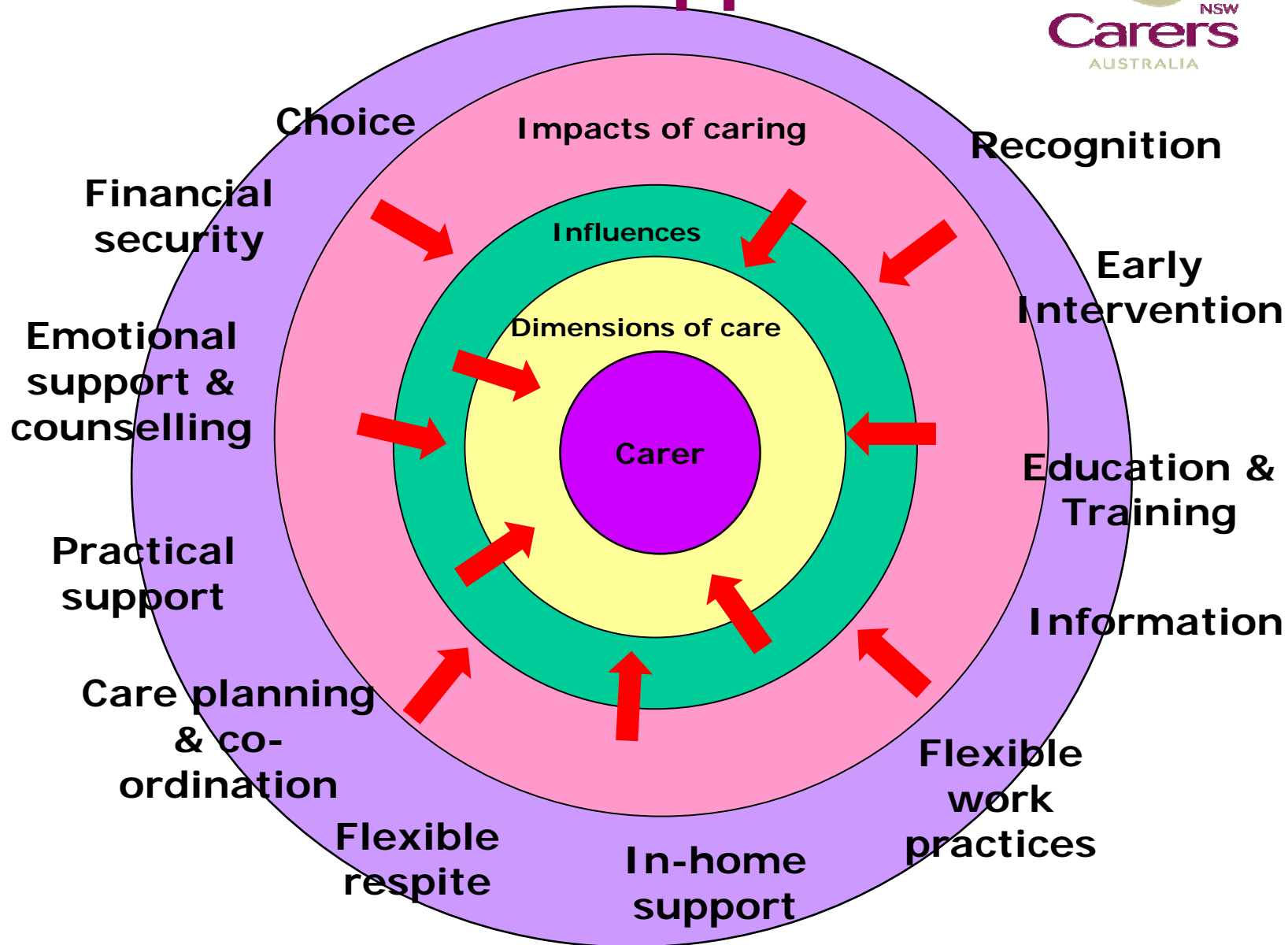
- Separate to, but intertwined with, consumer
- Sometimes at variance with needs of consumer– what are the implications for services?



Impacts of caring

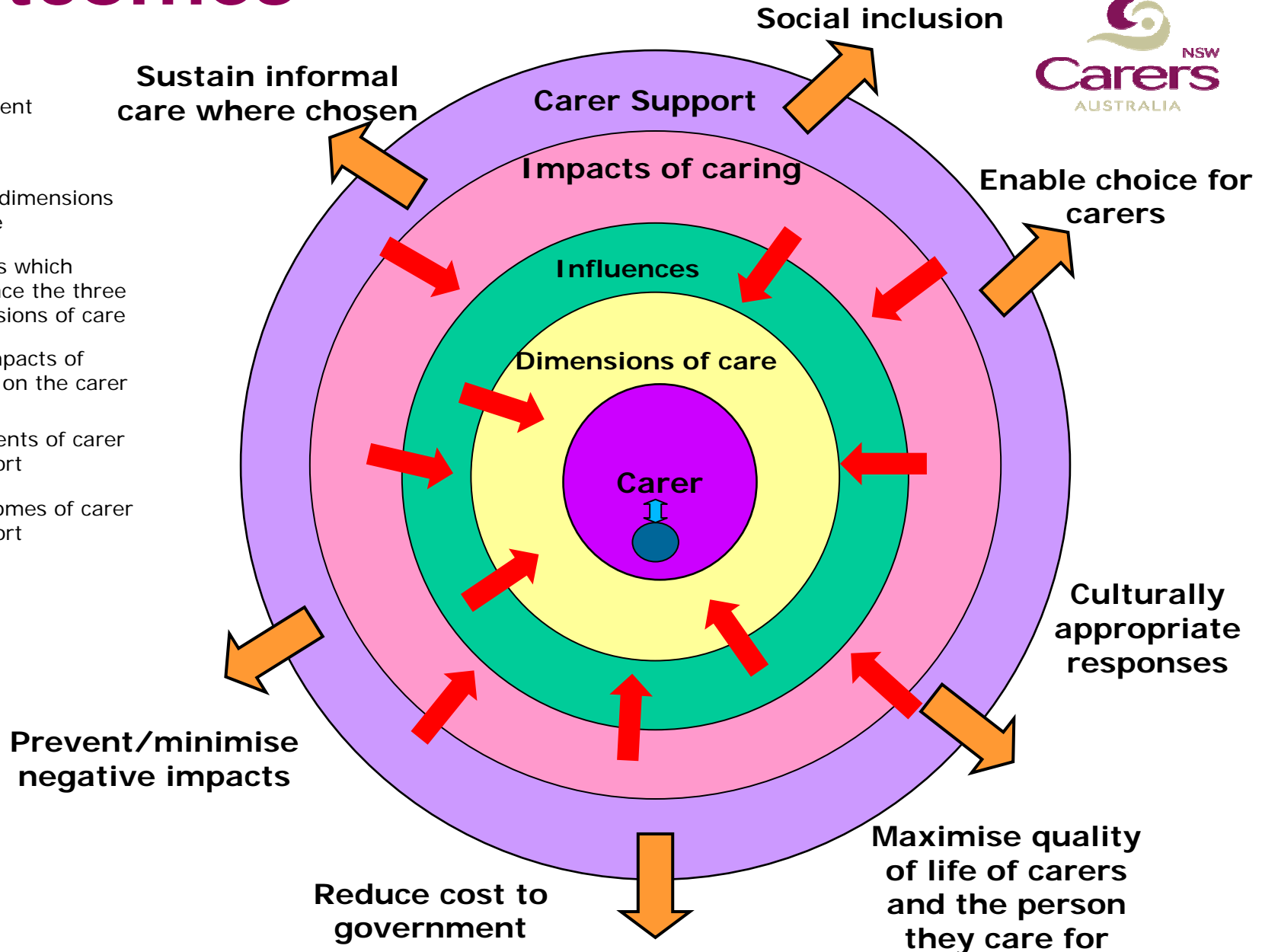


Elements of carer support



Outcomes

- 1 Care recipient
- 2 Carer
- 3 Three dimensions of care
- 4 Factors which influence the three dimensions of care
- 5 The impacts of caring on the carer
- 6 Elements of carer support
- 7 Outcomes of carer support



Applying this knowledge

What are the implications of this theoretical and experiential knowledge about carers for health professionals and community workers?

What would change?

Add to that knowledge about carers the requirements of:

- the new Mental Health Act provisions for primary carers
- NSW Carers Action Plan 2007 – 12
(NSW Government 2007)
- National Standards for Mental Health Services (2006)
- National Practice Standards
- National Consumer & Carer Participation Policy
(National Mental Health Consumer and Carer Forum)

***What would a service look like
if knowledge and policies came together?***

Families now allies and partners in treatment and recovery

(National Mental Health Plans 1,2,3, 4 TBR)



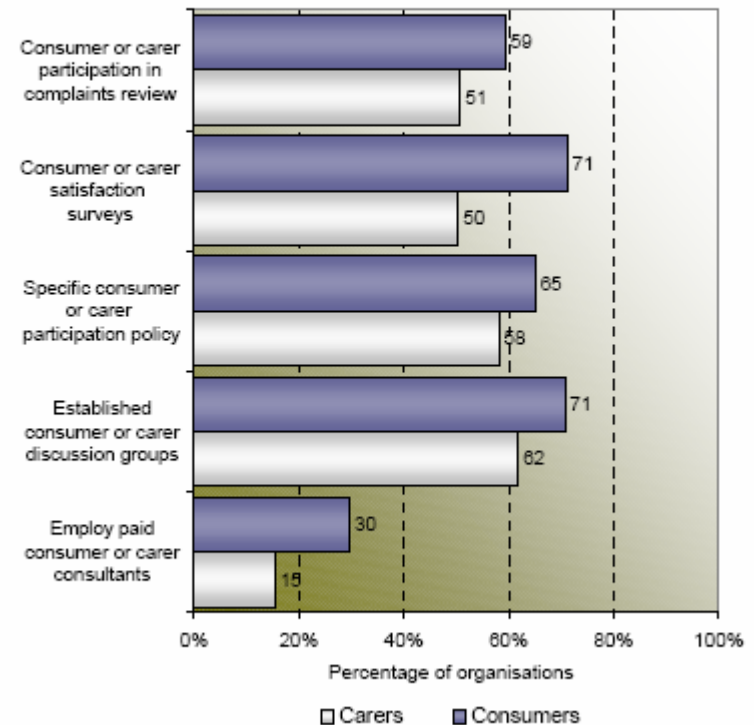
The NSW Carers Action Plan 2007 – 2012

The Plan outlines a whole of government policy commitment to recognising and supporting carers over the next 5 years. It includes strategies to increase the respect and recognition of carers, reach out to family members who may not see themselves as carers, improve service to carers and the people they care for, encourage agencies to view carers as partners in care and support carers to combine work and caring.

Carer participation: partners in care

- Promotion of carer participation more consistently and effectively
- Support for carer advocates
- Remuneration of carer consultants is inadequate

Percentage of mental health service organisations with other consumer and carer participation mechanisms, 2005



Systemic level

- Ensure carers have a voice and are present at all levels of policy making, service delivery, evaluation
- Ensure the concept of family recovery and the interdependence of family and consumer recovery is understood and incorporated into undergraduate, postgraduate and ongoing training

Individual level

- Ensure carers are **genuine** partners in care. Ensure that they participate, with consumer's agreement in:
 - Discharge planning
 - On-going care plans
 - Education & employment planning

Seeing the carer as an individual in their own right

Providing services and supports for carers' specific needs:

- Psycho-educational training for carers
- Information
- Respite
- Coping skills
- Counselling
- Support groups
- Access to education and flexible work opportunities
- Adequate financial support including superannuation
- National legislation recognising carers

Maximising opportunities



- Not difficult to include carers
- Working in partnerships increases chances of success
- Significant improvement in outcomes for:
 - Consumers
 - Carers
 - Service providers

CONTACT CARERS NSW



Carers NSW www.carersnsw.asn.au

Young Carers www.youngcarersnsw.asn.au

Telephone: 02/9280 4744

Carer information & counselling
national number: 1800 242 636