The role of the psychosocial strategy is to assist you in gaining the knowledge and skills you need to effectively support the psychosocial wellbeing of people with SCI.

You know and understand what works for you in your practice setting, so your thoughts and ideas can make a difference.

If you have any ideas on what could assist you in your practice, if you would like to be further involved in specific working groups or have any comments about the strategy, your input is welcome! Please contact your representative on the Steering Group to feedback your thoughts and ideas, or contact the Chair of the Steering Group directly.

### Psychosocial Strategy (PS) Update & Highlights

The Psychosocial Steering Committee, comprised of key SCI stakeholders has worked diligently this past year on various objectives guided by the following 4 goals:

1) **To increase awareness of psychosocial (PS) issues**
   - Biannual **Newsletter** to SCI units and teams, outlines psychosocial updates and developments.
   - **Updates** provided by Steering Group members at monthly SCI unit business meetings.
   - **In-service presentations** for new staff occur regularly.
   - The **RNSH Road to Recovery SCI Core Course** includes a presentation on the PS Strategy with a focus on clinician skills development through case study discussion.
   - A **poster presentation** at ANZCoS 2013 outlined the PS Strategy Concept Map (2013-16) with objectives and initiatives.

2) **Improve psychosocial assessment, management, knowledge and skills among health professionals caring for those with SCI**
   - A **new resource** will be launched in early 2014 - *Psychosocial Adjustment to Spinal Cord Injury, An Emotional Wellbeing Tool-kit: Clinicians supporting individuals with SCI* and will provide info, guidance and tips to assist those working with people with complex psychosocial issues and challenging behavior.
   - Regular **Behaviour Support Meetings** to assist nurses to manage people with challenging behavior, led by a psychologist, have been established in the POWH & RRCS SCI units.
   - The POWH SCI Unit is piloting a weekly **Multidisciplinary Complex Case Review** group to discuss complex clients. Social work, psychology and psychiatry will always attend to provide consultancy.
   - Three **case studies** outlining challenging psychosocial scenarios have been developed with a selection of questions to assist clinicians develop psychosocial management skills and to encourage and generate discussion and questioning around challenging psychosocial scenarios. The case studies are available at [http://www.aci.health.nsw.gov.au/networks/spinal-cord-injury/resources](http://www.aci.health.nsw.gov.au/networks/spinal-cord-injury/resources) and can be used during in-service education and skills practice sessions.
   - The **Psychosocial ‘Champion’ Role** has been defined. It is our vision that identified ‘champions’ in each SCI service will be provided with regular support by PS Steering Committee members and resources to enable them to implement and promote the Psychosocial Guidelines and their principles.

3) **Improve the knowledge & skills of people with SCI regarding their understanding & self-management of psychosocial issues**
   - The **Inpatient Psychology Skills Group Program** (triailed as part of a LTCSA funded research reviewing group intervention efficacy) is now a regular management strategy in the RRCS & POWH SCI Units. The program focuses on enhancing self-management skills to promote adjustment to SCI and includes topics such as developing resilience, managing stress, mindfulness, coping skills, sleep hygiene and challenging unhelpful thinking.
   - Local NGOs ParaQuadNSW and SCIA promote through their newsletters the PS Strategy and resources available to both consumers and staff.
   - **Peer Involvement** models will be reviewed in 2014 with a view to developing a new model and plan.

4) **Enhance the systematic approach to psychosocial rehabilitation in SCI services across NSW**
For further information on the work of the Psychosocial Strategy Steering Group contact Annalisa Dezarnaulds via email: Annalisa.Dezarnaulds@SESIAHS.health.nsw.gov.au

Do you need something more?

In Memoriam
It is with great sadness that we farewell our dear colleague and friend Tullio Cittarelli, Clinical Psychologist, SCI and Pain Services, POWH, who died after a brief but fierce battle with cancer. He was a committed and integral member of the SSCIS Psychosocial Steering Committee working on a range of projects and papers to enhance the psychological well being of people with SCI. He will be sorely missed.

What's new?

Talking to your children about spinal cord injury
by Candice Unger, Social Worker, RRCS

It is widely acknowledged that family members play a key role in a person’s recovery and rehabilitation after traumatic injuries. Webster and Daisley (2007) found very few rehabilitation staff (less than 19%) routinely addressed issues of child relatives in their work and this indicated very few children are included in family focused rehabilitation with the major contributing factor reported by staff being the lack of suitable resources.

Social workers (SWs) in the SCI field have noted the gap in resources, services and supports available for families to explain their injury to child relatives.

In response to feedback provided by families engaged in NSW spinal services, the SWs developed the Talking to your children about spinal cord injury: A practical guide for families resource.

This resource was developed with considerations given to concerns raised by families, in conjunction with an understanding of child development, practical experience from a variety of practice settings in SCI, recent literature and research.

This resource can be downloaded for free from http://www.aci.health.nsw.gov.au/networks/spinal-cord-injury/resources and hard copies are available from your unit SW or the project co-ordinator Candice Unger candice.unger@royalrehab.com.au

It is our hope the resource will help both families and staff feel better prepared to have conversations with child relatives about SCI. A practical worksheet activity that can be done with children to help improve their understanding of SCI and help facilitate conversations about their adjustment to a relative’s injury.

Clinical Excellence Commission (CEC) Health Literacy Guide

The Directorate of Patient Based Care is pleased to announce the release of an online guide, the CEC Health Literacy Guide available at http://www.cec.health.nsw.gov.au/hlg

The Guide has been developed as a practical resource to support implementing patient based care strategies into health care. The Guide will assist clinicians to address barriers to health literacy and will also assist health services meet new performance goals and the Australian Commission for Safety and Quality in Health Care (ACSQHC) National Safety and Quality Health Service Standards.

The Guide is intended as a living online document and includes best available evidence at the time of release. The majority of vignette examples within the Guide have been sourced internationally. We strongly encourage health services in NSW to provide examples (250 words or less) of local / NSW initiatives that exemplify each section. This will ensure that the Guide continues to highlight the great work occurring in NSW with locally specific examples.