



ARAFEMI

Promoting and improving the well being of people affected by mental illness

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## NEW SUPPORT GROUPS IN THE NORTH

*With increasing demand for carer support groups – ARAFEMI and the Northern AREA Mental Health Service are providing additional specialist services for Northern carers.*

ARAFEMI has long been known for its program of support groups for people suffering mental health issues and those caring for people with mental health issues. In 2010 these groups were expanded to include two support groups for carers who care for someone with a mental illness in Preston – Caring 4 Carers Wood Street and Caring 4 Carers High Street.

In 2011 those groups have been expanded further. ARAFEMI now offers a support groups for people with Borderline Personality Disorder and a support group for Partners of people with a mental illness. These latter two groups are run from ARAFEMI's office in Rosanna.

Borderline Personality Disorder (BDP) is a psychological condition that can have a devastating impact on not only the sufferer, but those that care for them. Without proper support, carers quickly suffer from burnout or worse.

Similarly partners of people with a mental illness often feel isolated as they carry the lion's share of the work. Support for them is critical. The introduction of a support group for people with Borderline Personality Disorder and a group for Partners of people with a mental illness offers hope for families and partners.

According to Frances Sanders, Executive Director at ARAFEMI, "We are grateful for the support of Northern Area Mental Health in providing the funding to expand groups for carers of people with a Borderline Personality Disorder and also the first Partners group in the North. Mental illness impacts the individual and their families and friends – everyone that cares for them. Professional help and support is essential for carers, as dealing with it alone can frustrate and overwhelm them".

"We're really pleased to have been able to extend our support services to people living in the Northern suburbs. The solid attendance numbers we see at the two Preston Caring 4 Carers support groups has shown us there is a genuine need for more in the area. Being able to provide the two new support groups from our Rosanna office I hope will make a real difference for carers in the area."

The BPD support group runs on the third Wednesday of each month. The Partners Group runs on the first Wednesday of each month. The Caring 4 Carers High Street group run on the second Wednesday of each month and the Caring 4 Carers Wood Street group runs on the fourth Wednesday of each month.

ARAFEMI is a grassroots organisation, formed through the meeting of a group of carers in 1979. The impetus for getting together was a result of ever increasing demands on carers with little or no available community supports; the reason ARAFEMI endeavors strongly to provide services wherever there is need. Since this time, ARAFEMI has significantly grown as an organization to take a unique approach in its work within mental health – offering both support services for carers of people with mental illness, as well as a broad range of consumer services.

##Ends##

**For interview arrangements and further information:**

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**About ARAFEMI**

ARAFEMI is a non-profit community based organisation, which works from a recovery perspective. It is unique as it houses both the peak support agency for carers of people with a mental illness and a broad range of consumer services.

Our mission is to promote and improve the well being of people affected by mental illness.

For more information about ARAFEMI go to [www.arafemi.org.au](http://www.arafemi.org.au)

For more information about our support groups go to:

<http://www.arafemi.org.au/family-support/support-groups.html>