

SANE'S GUIDED SERVICE

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is SANE's guided service?

It is SANE's free guided service that combines our range of digital and telehealth supports, tailored to the needs and preferences of people with complex mental health issues. It gives participants a tailored plan for improved mental health, which includes one-on-one guidance, a trained support team, online counselling and community forums, and a range of activities and initiatives. On the way, participants learn to navigate the mental health system and build strong connections of support.

Who is it for?

The service is for people with complex mental health issues and trauma who have reached a point in their mental health journey where they would benefit from a personalised plan and a team dedicated to their support and recovery.

SANE also recognises that family members and carers of people with complex mental health issues often need extra support and skills to navigate the health care system. They, too, can be referred to the service.

Why is such a service needed?

Our health care system often leaves people with complex mental issues separated from the support they need. Sometimes they don't know what services are available or cannot access them. Sometimes they feel overwhelmed by choice and conflicting information. Because of our experience in peer-led digital mental health services, we can be the much-needed bridge between people and the primary care and psycho-social help they need.

What are complex mental health issues?

Complex mental health issues are any that significantly affect your day-to-day life, your relationships or your work. They include, but aren't restricted to, schizophrenia, complex trauma, psychosis, bipolar and borderline personality disorders, post-traumatic personality disorder (PTSD), anxiety, obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD), and eating disorders. You may also be autistic or have an intellectual disability and need mental health support.

How much does the service cost?

The service is free. SANE is a long-established and respected not-for-profit organisation with services funded by the Commonwealth Government and private donation.

What do I get from the service?

The service is tailored to each person's situation and needs, so every support plan will be different. But there are common elements.

You will initially speak to a member of our Welcome Team who will become your Peer Navigator, providing one-on-one practical, technical and emotional support during your time with the service. With their personal experience of complex mental health issues, they can help you formulate a support plan and guide you through each stage.

You will be allocated a professional counsellor who you will meet online or phone for regular counselling sessions.

A participant login will be set up for you on the SANE online portal. The portal is your private mental health and wellbeing space, where you and your team plot your recovery journey. It contains your personal support plan, a calendar of key appointments and events, booking tools for sessions, SANE surveys and the ability to access your personal information. Your Peer Navigator will show you how you can download resources, keep track of your progress and contact your support team.

Throughout your time using the service, you will be supported by your SANE team, consisting of your Welcome Team, your Counsellor and your Peer Navigator.

Online Social and Psychosocial Groups and Moderated Forums on the SANE website provide connection, creativity and information. SANE's community forums are monitored 24-hours-a-day.

Online Events, such as webinars and drop-in group events, will be a regular part of your calendar.

Extra supports and activities may be added as part of your tailored plan, according to your needs and situation.

Will the guided service link with my other health services?

Yes, this service combines SANE's established mental health services, one-on-one support and your existing mental health network, including your GP and Primary Health Care providers. It provides pathways and transition into a range of community and PHN supports and services.

Will the people in my support team be properly qualified?

Our Support Teams consist of qualified counsellors and trained peer support workers. Peer support workers also have lived experience of complex mental health issues and have invaluable insights into what you might be going through.

Who will be my counsellor and how much counselling will I receive?

You will be assigned an appropriately trained counsellor when you start the program, who you will speak to regularly. During your assessment, the frequency of the sessions will be set according to your needs. After six weeks, they will be reviewed and adjusted accordingly.

Do I have to attend counselling sessions in person?

No, all sessions will be conducted either by telephone or video call.

What kind of counselling will I get?

Our counsellors are specifically trained in complex mental health and will collaborate with you to improve your mental wellbeing and achieving the personal goals in your support plan. All our counsellors use a strength-based approach that helps you build connection, personal skills, confidence and self-knowledge. They will only use widely accepted evidence-based counselling techniques, such as cognitive behavioural therapy, motivational interviewing, mindfulness, open dialogue, and acceptance and commitment therapy.

How does the guided service differ from SANE's established services that I can access myself?

SANE's range of services, including counselling, community forums and chat groups, form a drop-in service designed for self-managing mental health issues. It allows people with complex mental health issues to access the support they need when they need it. The guided service draws on many of the same programs but within a system of one-on-one guidance, a tailored plan and co-ordination with all your other health support.

For many people with complex mental health issues, using our services as they need them is convenient and easy: a counsellor for one-on-one help, a peer-led forum or chat group for social connection, or links to helpful information. You can be anonymous and choose if, when and how you engage with our services. For more information, see sane.org/services

This is a new service; how can I be sure it will be beneficial?

We created the guided service after extensive consultations with people with complex mental health issues, SANE's experienced counsellors, Peer Ambassadors and peer support workers, and many experts and organisations in the mental health sector. They spoke of the need for a service that filled in the gaps in support, integrating counselling and information services with public health services. With more than 36 years delivering peer-led mental health services, SANE was uniquely placed to join with Primary Health Networks to create a service that gives participants the support and skills to self-manage their mental health.

The service was co-designed with ALIVE – The National Centre for Mental Health Research Translation – to meet the highest standards of care.

All SANE services follow the CHIME framework, which stands for the five optimal components for mental health programs: Connectedness, Hope and optimism, Identity, Meaning and purpose, and Empowerment. Every aspect of the guided service has been created with these attributes in mind.

As we roll out the guided service, SANE will be monitoring its operation, including asking users for their feedback and suggestions. From this, we will be adjusting our practice to

create the best service we can. An external team from the University of Queensland will also evaluate its use, benefits and accessibility and report back to SANE.

I have been using the SANE's services for a while. Can I be referred to the guided service?

Yes, if you have casually used SANE's services but have reached a point where you feel the need for more individual and structured management of your mental health issues, you can be referred to the guided service. Or perhaps you feel you are missing opportunities in accessing health services and need to better navigate the system: the guided service can help.

Similarly, after completing your period in the guided service, you can continue to self-manage your mental health through our range of services.

Where is the service available?

SANE's guided service is available to people living in the following areas:

- North Western Melbourne PHN
- Central Queensland, Wide Bay and Sunshine Coast PHN
- Central and Eastern Sydney PHN
- Brisbane North PHN
- Capital (Canberra) PHN
- Adelaide and Metro South Australia regions
- Darling Downs and West Moreton regions
- The Hunter, New England and Central NSW Coast regions
- Northern Territory
- Tasmania
- Western Australia
- Western Sydney region
- Western Victoria region

Not in your area? SANE already offers a range of drop-in services to people anywhere in Australia including access to our online resources, information, community forums and counselling services. You can find more information [here](#).

ELIGIBILITY AND REFERRAL

How will I know I am eligible?

If you are over 18 years of age, dealing with complex mental health issues, and resident in a participating PHN, you are eligible for the guided service. However, your referral will be reviewed and, with your collaboration, assessed by our support team to make sure this service is right for you.

Do I need to be referred?

Yes, every person wishing to take part needs to be referred to the guided service, but that includes self-referral. SANE has made the process as simple as filling out an online form. There are no medical certificate requirements or any need to prove anything at all. The referral form asks straightforward questions about you and your circumstances to get the ball rolling.

Who can refer me?

You can refer yourself, using the Self-Referral Form. Or, you can be referred by your doctor, an allied health professional, a close family member or carer, or your local Primary Health Network. They need your informed consent to refer you. There is a form they need to complete. Or go to <https://portal.sane.org/s/referral>

After the referral form is submitted, what happens next?

If you are not over 18 or not located in a participating Primary Health Network area, you will receive an email explaining why we can't support you through this specific service right now, but we will direct you to SANE's other services you can access.

If you are eligible, one of our Welcome Team will call you to discuss your circumstances and needs. Our Welcome Team is made up of trained peer support workers who have experienced many of the issues you are facing. It will be an informal discussion to find out more about your circumstances, particularly about the support you have and the support you need. You can ask them anything about the guided service and what it entails. Only after this discussion will the support worker confer with the Welcome Team to assess your suitability for the guided service.

How will my case be assessed?

We need to make sure the service is right for you, so the Welcome Team will consider a range of criteria. They will speak with you about your current mental health issues and how they are affecting your life, the level of support you need to manage your situation, whether your current supports are adequate, your access to reliable phones and internet, and your willingness to work with SANE to co-ordinate the best plan for yourself.

Why do I need to have a reliable internet or phone connection?

Reliable communications are crucial to connecting with the guided service, because one of its key features is your own portal on the SANE website that organises all your supports, appointments, meetings and activities. Through the portal you will connect with your mental health team and support workers, join online chats and community forums, receive notifications and attend meetings – all requiring the capacity for phone calls, texts, and internet. Your plan may also incorporate telehealth services. Without a reliable computer or phone connection, the benefits of the service are limited.

What will happen if the Welcome Team decides that, although I am eligible, my circumstances are not suitable for the service?

In that case, the Welcome Team member will call you and direct you to other solutions and options for you. They may include support services in your area or the counselling, community forums and practical information available from SANE.

If the Welcome Team decide my case is not suitable, can I be referred again later?

Yes, of course. If your situation changes, we will assess you again.

HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS AND PRIMARY CARE WORKERS

I work in mental health care: how do I know if the guided service is suitable for my client?

At the stage of referral, all you need is a belief they would benefit from a tailored plan and personalised support. But there are categories of people with complex mental health issues for whom we have designed this service:

- People with mental health issues too complex for GP mental health plan management alone.
- People stepping down from hospital into the primary care system.
- People waiting to access psychological support through a Mental Health Treatment Plan.
- People whose complex mental health needs a more nuanced understanding than their current services can provide, particularly in rural and remote areas.
- People who receive National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) support for their disability but not for mental health needs.
- People who have limited formal and community support networks.

I am a health worker and one of my clients would benefit greatly from the tailored, one-on-one support of the guided service, but I cannot persuade them to take part. Can I refer them anyway?

No, the guided service needs the informed consent of participants. However, if you call SANE support (1800 18 7263), our team can tell you about other services your client can use, including those offered by SANE.

CARERS AND FAMILY MEMBERS

I am a carer of someone with complex mental health issues. They would find it difficult to manage a program online, can I help them carry out their online plan?

Yes, if our Welcome Team feels the person you care for will benefit from the service and you can help them manage the plan online. However, you will need their informed consent before referral.

I am a carer of someone with complex mental health issues and finding it difficult to cope. I need support. Can I take part in the guided service?

Yes, if you meet the eligibility criteria, our Welcome Team will discuss your circumstances with you and, if we agree that you will benefit from the service, we will put a support plan in place that is tailored to you as a carer.

COMPLETING THE GUIDED SERVICE

How long does the guided service last?

It depends on you, your circumstances and your mental health needs. This is a personalised journey, planned out between you and your support team. The average period will be around 12 weeks, but it could be longer or shorter. Throughout that time, your support team will be monitoring how well you are going by asking you questions and listening to you. Adjustments to your personalised plan will be made when needed.

Why does the guided service only last for a limited period?

The guided service is not designed to be permanent, full-time support, nor is it suitable for handling severe mental health crises. Rather, it is designed for you if you would benefit in the medium term from the structure of a tailored plan, supported by a dedicated team, to help you navigate your mental health journey. At the end of the service period, you will be a long way on your recovery path, with the connections, knowledge and skills to self-manage your mental health in the future.

Can I leave the guided service before the scheduled period?

Yes, of course. The program is entirely voluntary. You can leave at any time. You might find you no longer need the program, or it turns out it is not for you. In such a case, your Peer Navigator will help you transition out of the program with all the appropriate supports in place.

At the end of my time in the guided service what will I have achieved?

After those weeks of one-on-one support, you will find yourself a long way on your recovery journey and a support plan that you can take with you to continue working on your goals. You will have learnt how to better manage your mental health and navigate a path through the complex health system. You will have networks of support and know how to access them when you need them. We'll support you in a process of transition to increased self-management of your mental health.

What if, at the scheduled end of my guided service, I'm not ready to leave?

We know leaving the service after weeks of support, connection and structure can be scary, but we will be there to help you transition to a self-managed model. Many of the SANE's supports and activities you have enjoyed will still be there for you to use when you need them. Many of the relationships and connections you've made can be maintained into the future, while the knowledge and skills you have picked up, especially about how to access the help you need when you need it, will always be with you.

However, if you and your support team feel you need some extra time, there is provision to extend your support by a couple of weeks to make transition easier and to put the right supports in place.

Who can I contact for more information about the guided service?

If you are thinking that the guided service might help you, a family member or someone you care for, you can contact SANE on our phone or email lines (**1800 18 7263; getsupport@sane.org**). There you can connect with one of our team, who can take you through it step by step and answer your questions.

PRIVACY CONCERNS

I am worried about filling out online forms and putting personal information on SANE's website. How can I be sure that what I tell you is kept safe and confidential?

Confidentiality is important to us and keeping your information safe is our priority. We have a strict privacy policy in which all our staff are trained. All personal and identifying information provided to SANE will be kept private and confidential.

On the referral form, we ask only the minimal information we need to begin assessment and create your individual plan. Any information you give us is confidential between you and your support team. All data is kept safe on secure systems and is available to no one outside SANE. Go to our privacy policy: <https://www.sane.org/privacy>

Do you share any information with outside parties?

Yes, but in extremely limited circumstances. For example, if there is imminent risk of harm to someone, there may be a legal requirement to share information with a government authority, such as a local health authority or police.

And SANE shares service information with our research partners at Australian universities, who are evaluating our services and researching ways to improve them. But this information is of a statistical nature and will not identify you, nor will information you gave our support team in confidence be passed on.

Do you keep my information forever?

No, after keeping it secure, we will eventually destroy your information in accordance with our data and information management policies. See here: [sane.org/data-and-information management](https://www.sane.org/data-and-information-management)

You will assign me a portal on your website. How secure will it be?

The portal we set up for you is your private health care and wellbeing space, accessible only to you. You will protect it with your own password and control the information on it. We will help you maintain it and will send you alerts, news and other messages, but only you can access it.

I still have some questions about the guided service. Who do I speak to?

Just call SANE on **1800 18 7263** (Monday to Friday, 10am to 10pm) and speak to one of SANE's support team. Or contact us by email through our website (getsupport@sane.org). We'll be glad to answer your questions.

If I have some feedback, concerns or complaints about this service, who do I speak to?

Feedback is always welcome, and complaints help us improve the service. If you wish to comment or complain about SANE's services, just email us at feedback@sane.org.

We have a feedback and complaints policy that you can read here:

<https://www.sane.org/about-sane/policy/feedback-and-complaints-policy>

We will always try to resolve your complaint, but if you are not satisfied by our response, you can contact AHPRA below.

For other issues:

If you have privacy or security issues, contact the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner (OAIC) at oaic.gov.au/privacy/privacy-complaints.

For concerns or complaints about a health service, contact your state or territory health complaints organisation; the contact details can be found on the Australian Health Practitioners Regulatory Authority (AHPRA) website: ahpra.gov.au/notifications/further-information/health-complaints.

For concerns or complaints about a registered health professional, go to AHPRA's webpage: [ahpra.gov.au/notifications/raise a concern](http://ahpra.gov.au/notifications/raise-a-concern).

For concerns and complaints about misleading claims, contact Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCAC): acc.gov.au/consumers/complaints-problems/make-a-consumer-complain