

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **FREE MENTAL HEALTH TRAINING FOR CARERS AND SERVICE PROVIDERS**

The Commonwealth Respite and Carelink Centre (CRCC), in collaboration with Silver Chain, is pleased to offer paid and non-paid carers, service providers and community members with the opportunity to access a number of free mental health awareness training sessions.

The Mental Health Awareness Training sessions offer training, advice and support for service providers and carers and are part of Silver Chain's primary health care service which focuses on prevention, education and early intervention.

Ms Marsha Ashwell, Silver Chain's Training Program Co-ordinator for Mental Health, notes that the sessions have resulted from a voiced need for support in rural and remote areas.

"CRCC has heard from carers and service providers throughout Western Australia who have expressed the need for information, support and assistance," Ms Ashwell said.

"As a result, CRCC has joined with Silver Chain mental health professionals to hold a series of free training sessions in rural and remote areas. These sessions are designed to equip carers and service providers with the tools needed to feel more confident about caring for people with mental health issues."

The range of topics include: dementia, major mental disorders, assertiveness training, drug and alcohol misuse, elder abuse, stress management, depression and challenging behaviours.

"The sessions have been well attended and the feedback has been very positive. Some topics are suitable for both carers and service providers and participants are welcome to attend multiple classes. Sessions designed for service providers will have a maximum capacity of 25 people, however additional classes are likely to become available should this number be exceeded," Ms Ashwell concluded.

The sessions have already run throughout the State, including in the metropolitan and lower Great Southern areas, as well as in the Wheatbelt and Pilbarra regions. Currently they are being offered in the Great Southern area, with the next session scheduled in Albany at the

Albany Town Hall. The free Mental Health Awareness Training sessions will run from 28 - 30 June 2010 and all carers and service providers are welcome to attend.

Many carers are eligible to receive respite funding to attend the health sessions and in general to assist in the provision of continued care.

For a copy of the training program, to register your interest or to receive more information regarding respite funding, please contact CRCC on (freecall) 1800 052 222.

The free Mental Health Awareness Training sessions for carers and service providers has been funded by the Department of Health, Western Australia.

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