Caring Communities Program - Project Overview

Organisation:	Carers NSW, in partnership with the Illawarra and Central Coast Commonwealth Carer Respite Centres.
Name of Project:	Supporting and Educating Carers in Palliative Care.
Length of Project:	18 months, from June 2003- December 2004

Project Summary

Carers NSW, in partnership with two Commonwealth Carer Respite Centres, will provide face-to-face education and telephone follow-up support to carers of people who require palliative care. The education will comprise two components: (1) around the dying process and practical caring issues, and (2) psycho-education on grief, bereavement and coping with loss. The telephone follow-up will draw on Carers NSW's expertise in providing telephone group counselling (TGCs). A small amount of primary health professional education will also take place. This project will cover the Central Coast and Illawarra areas of NSW.

Project Objectives

- Provide education to carers of people requiring palliative about the dying process, pain and symptom management and where to access appropriate support, enabling them to better manage the practical aspects of caring in the end stages of a person's life.
- Assist carers in understanding grief and bereavement with a view to enabling them to better cope with the final stages of caring and the time after caring.
- Provide group telephone follow-up support and assistance to carers to ensure that they have implemented the knowledge and strategies presented in the education sessions and enable them to give and receive mutual support.
- To educate local health care workers about the role of palliative care, carers' needs and issues, grief and bereavement with a view to enabling them to better support carers providing palliative care to a relative or friend.
- To improve links between local health care providers and community service networks with a view to increasing the number and appropriateness of referrals by health care professionals.
- To link carers providing palliative care to appropriate supports in their local area.

Project Activities

Carers NSW, with the assistance of two Commonwealth Carer Respite Centres, will conduct ten full day face-to-face education sessions with carers in two areas of NSW (six sessions on the Central Coast and four in the Illawarra region). Each session will consist of at least six carers who will attend one face-to-face session each. These education session will cover the dying process, how to access support and psycho-education on grief and bereavement. The face-to-face sessions will be followed up with three telephone group counselling sessions, for one hour each at fortnightly intervals.

Seven half day health professional education sessions (three on the Central Coast and four in the Illawarra) will also be conducted with the aim of enabling these workers to better support carers. Links with other services in the local area will be encouraged.