A NATIONAL CARER PERSPECTIVE ON PERSONALITY DISORDERS:
Engaging Carers and Services

Eileen McDonald MCouns, GradDip DMT, BACommunications
Carer Representative & Advocate

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Carer Facts And Figures

- **Nationally: 2.6 million carers**
- **90,200 Young Carers under 25 (ABS 2003)**
- **72% female**
- **91% were caring for a close family member,**
- **40% care for a partner,**
- **29% for a child**
- **32% for others**

From estimates based on ABS 2003

Carers have the *lowest* collective wellbeing of any group the Deakin 2007 survey studied.

The survey found:

- More than 1/3 carers were found to be severely or **extremely depressed**
- More than 1/3 carers were found to be **experiencing severe or extreme stress**
- Almost twice as likely as the rest of the population to **worry** that their income would be sufficient to meet their expenses
- Almost twice as likely to **experience chronic pain**.

(Deakin University/Carers Australia/Australian Unity October 2007)

Mental Health Disorders Affect The Whole Family

•Due to stigma in the family, community, and cultural / religious community

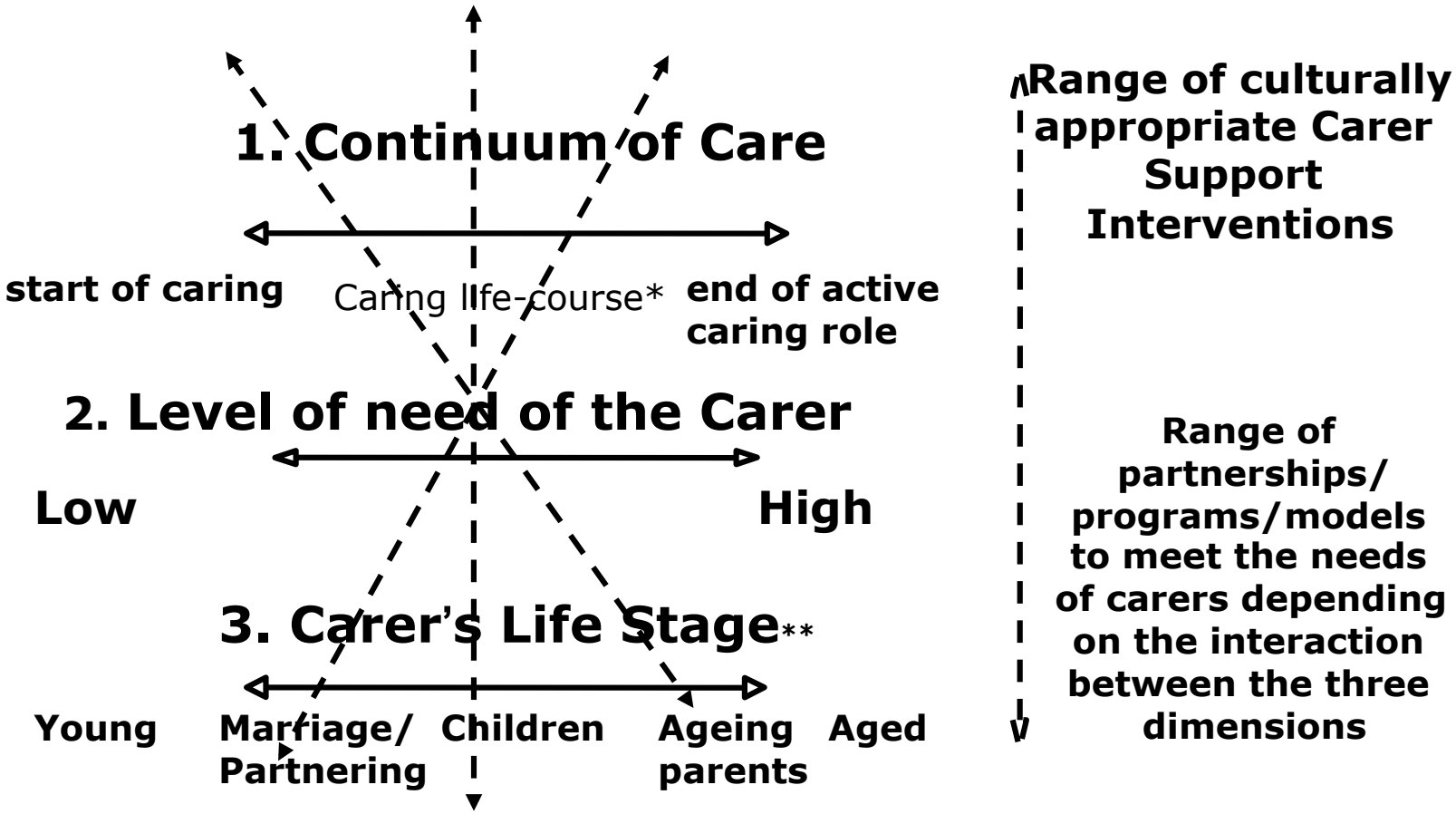
• Due to stigma and discrimination from service providers

Hidden Carers are:

• Family members who consider their carer role to be the normal part of being a spouse or family member

• Those who are usually not considered the primary carer such as children and youth, grandparents…

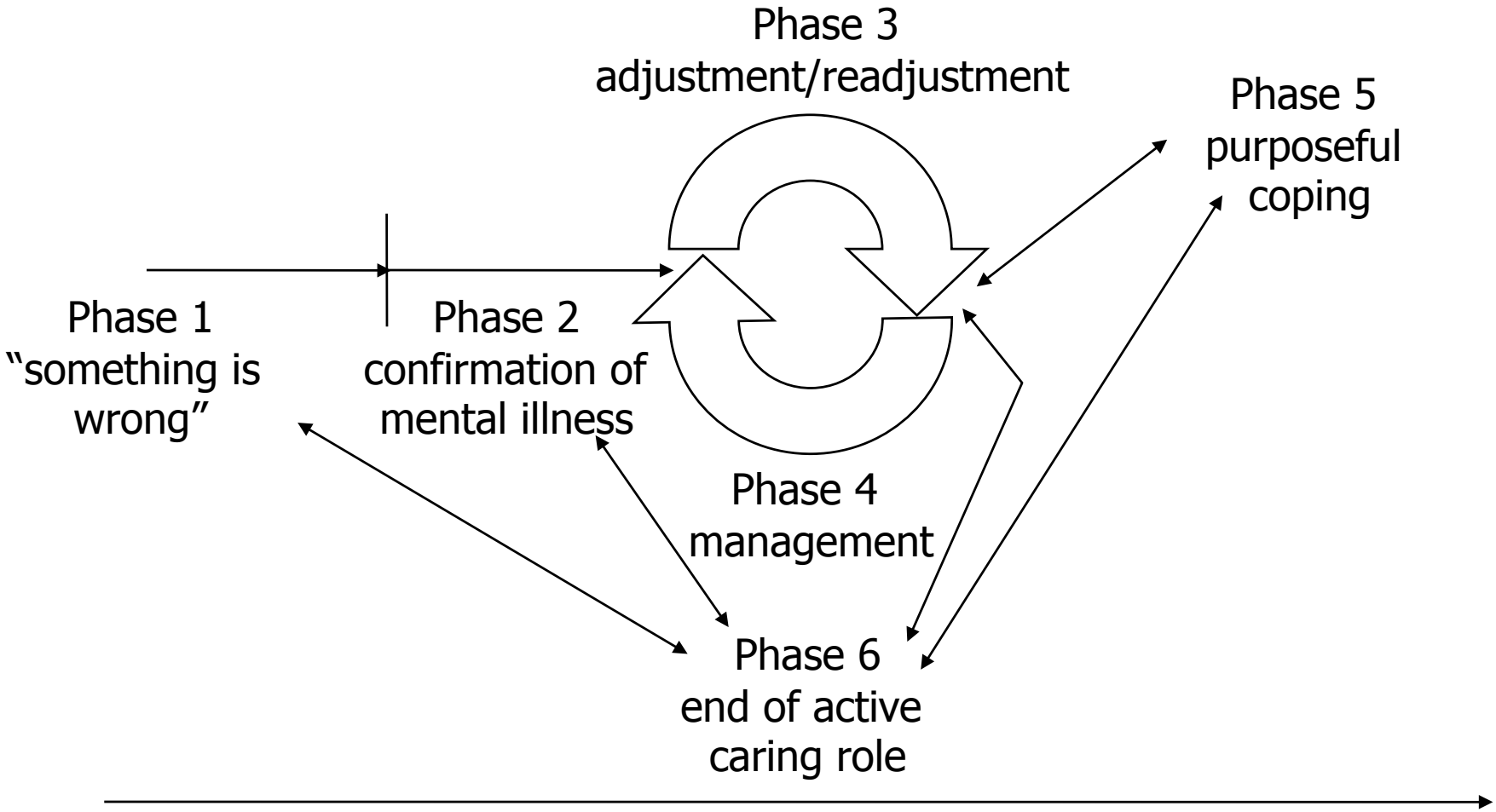
Dimensions of Caring



*Carers may undertake more than one caring role/life-course during their life and/or may have multiple caring roles

**Life Stage includes age-related and life events of the carer

Carer Life Course Framework

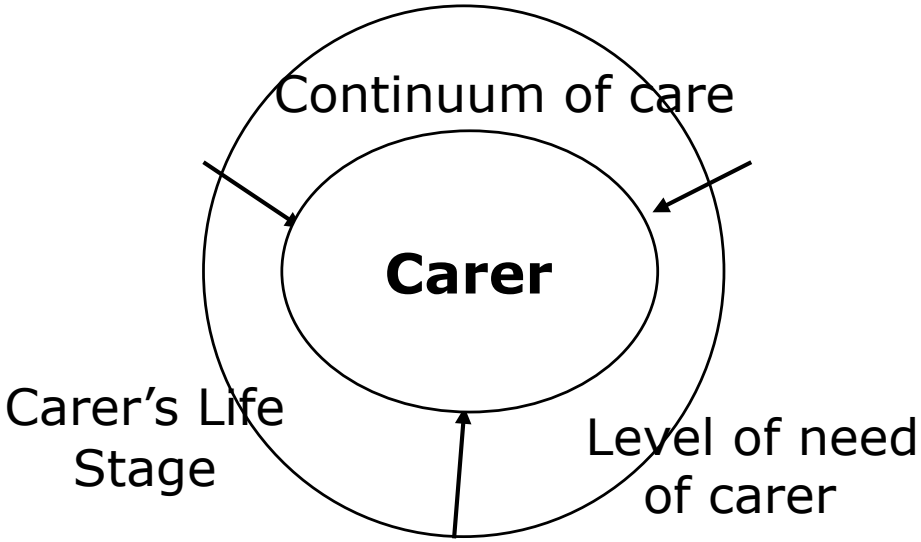


(Pagnini D 2005)

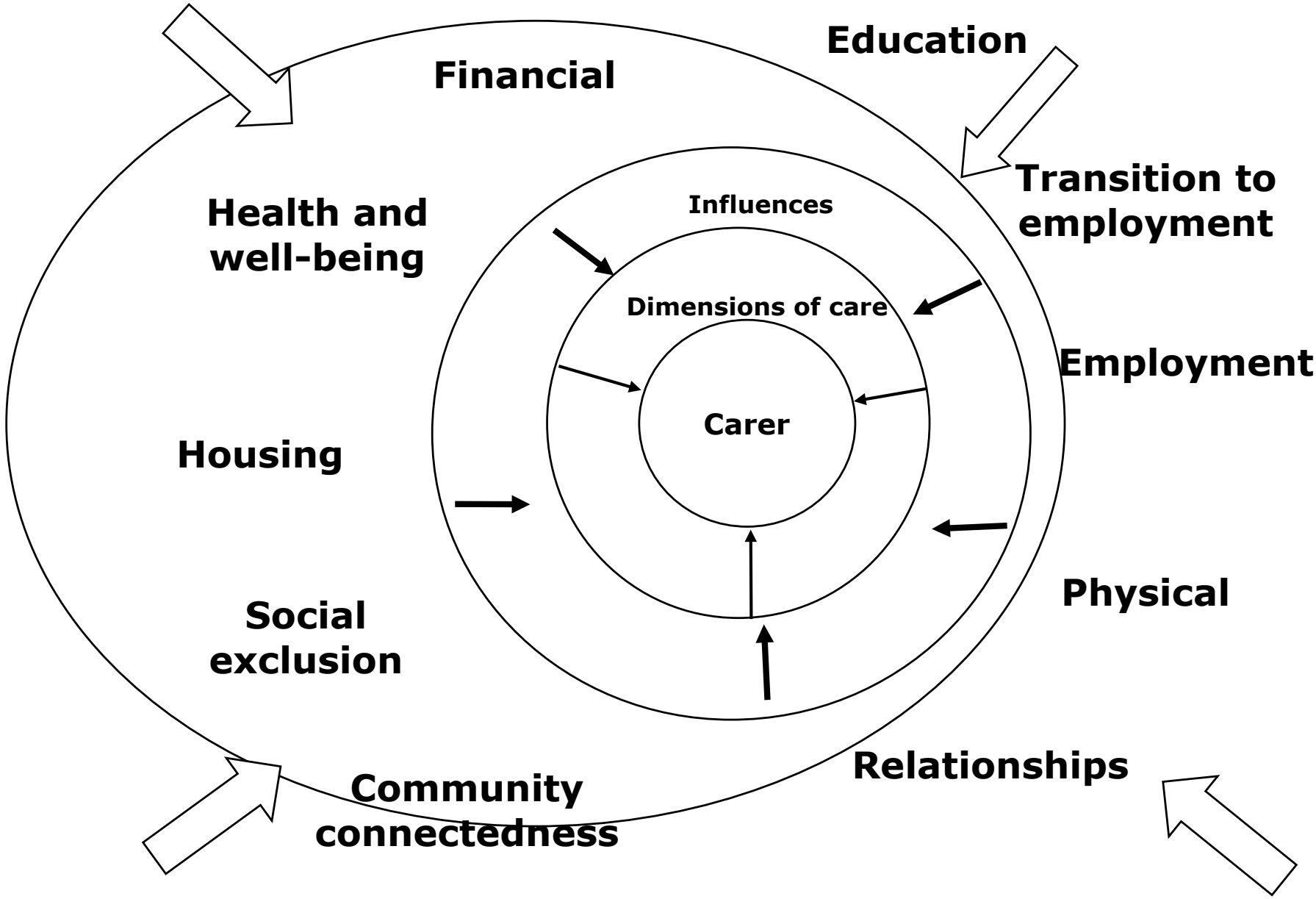
Dimensions of caring - impact on the carer

Carers' needs:

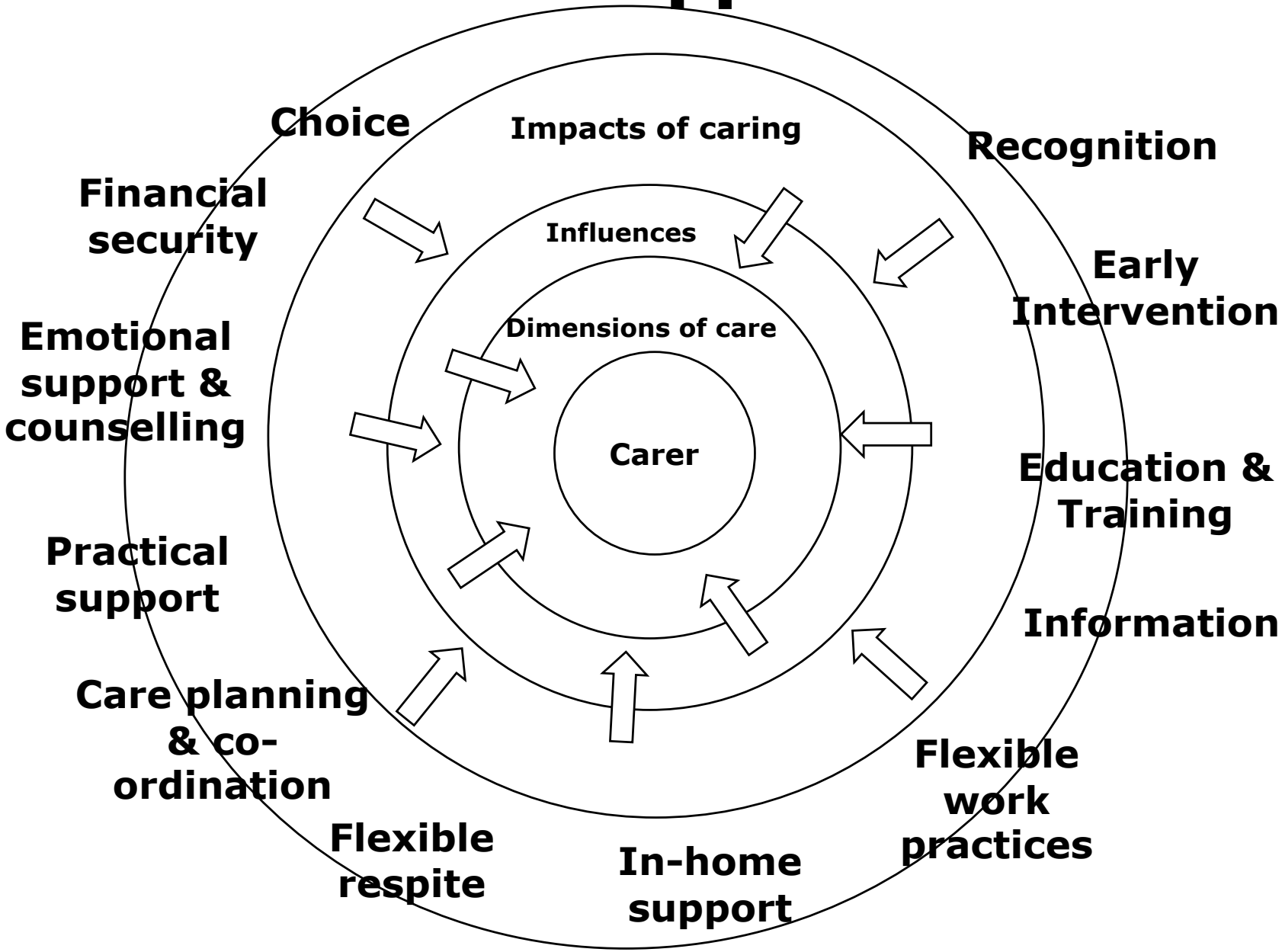
- Separate to, but intertwined with, consumer
- Sometimes at variance with needs of consumer–



Impacts of caring



Elements of carer support



Outcomes

1 Care recipient

2 Carer

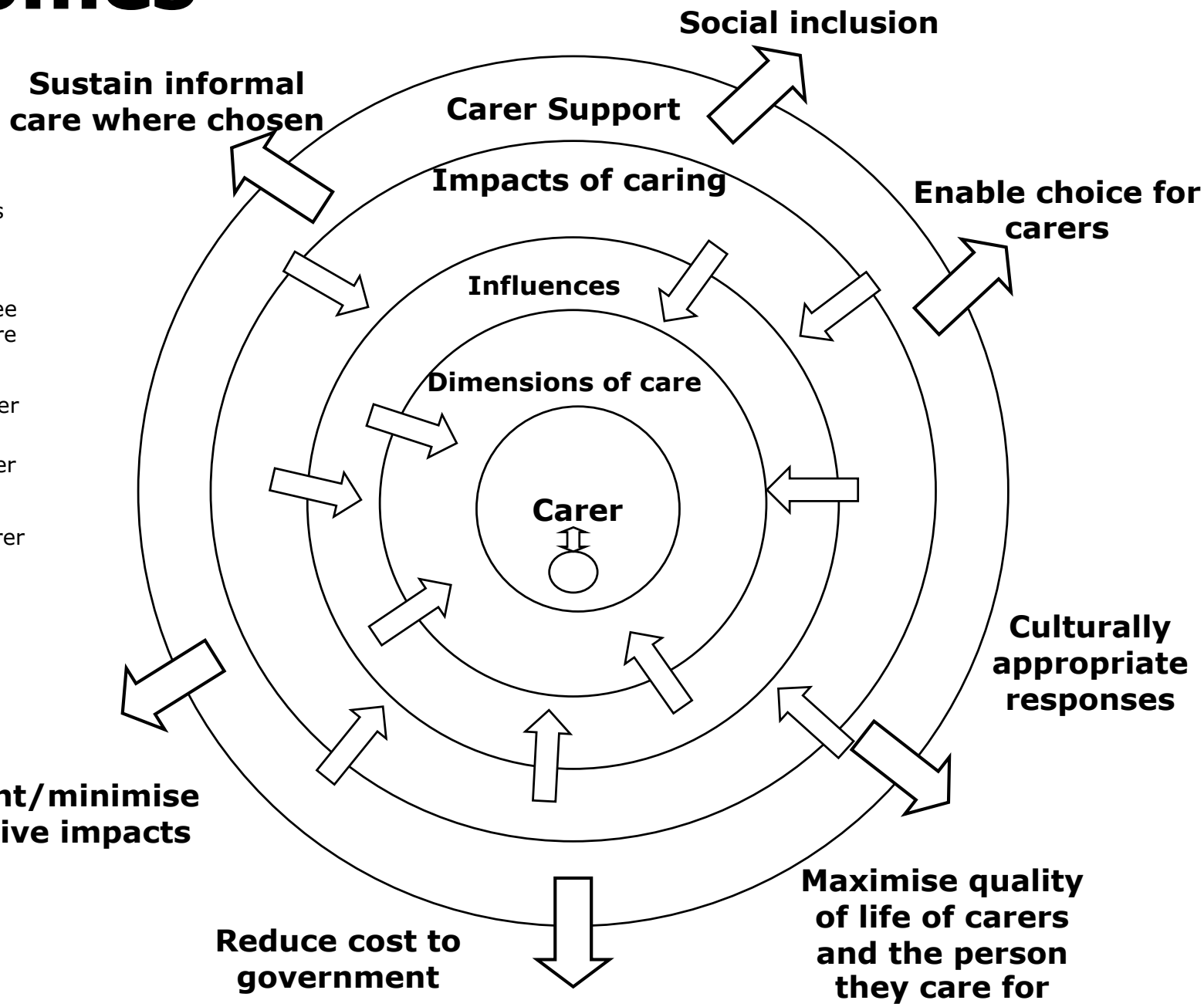
3 Three dimensions of care

4 Factors which influence the three dimensions of care

5 The impacts of caring on the carer

6 Elements of carer support

7 Outcomes of carer support



What is family recovery?

Recovery will mean different things to different consumers and families

'Recovery is a process of adjusting one's attitudes, feelings, perceptions, beliefs, roles and goals in life. It is a process of self discovery, self renewal and transformation'

(Spaniol, Koehler & Hutchinson 1994)

Systemic level

- Ensure carers have a voice and are present at all levels of policy making, service delivery, evaluation

- Ensure the concept of family recovery and the interdependence of family and consumer recovery is understood and incorporated into undergraduate, postgraduate and ongoing training for health professionals

Individual level

- Ensure carers are genuine partners in care. Ensure that they participate, **with consumer's agreement in:**
  - Discharge planning
  - On-going care plans
  - Education & employment planning

(NSW Mental Health Act 2007)

Engaging Carers

- It is not difficult to engage and include carers
- Engaging with carers increases chances of success for recovery
- Families now allies and partners in treatment and recovery
  (National Mental Health Plans 1,2,3,4 TBR) www.health.nsw.gov.au/policies/pd/2007/PD2007_018.html
- Significant improvement in outcomes for:

– Consumers
– Carers
– Health professionals & service providers

What is family recovery?

- instilling hope in consumer family member
- not seeking to inhibit self determination of consumer family member
- being able to withdraw - 'dignity of risk'
- a strong belief that their own needs are important – that pursuing an independent life assists consumer and carer recovery

Why is recovery needed for families of persons experiencing Personality Disorders

- 58 – 73% of mental health consumers live with their families – (notion of interlinked lives)
- Family recovery needs to be identified as important for the family itself *and* the consumer family member

Families a recovery resource

- Families and carers need to be considered as a recovery resource for consumers
- Families need nurturing and care if they are to be a sustainable resource
- Families need information, education & support
- New methods of communication
- Skills for effective relational styles
- Skills to cope in crisis

Family recovery *is* possible – what are the implications for Service Providers?

- Identify the values that support recovery
- Provide information and education
- Focus on strengths
- Ensure services are family sensitive and inclusive
- Integrate the *Carers Lifecourse Framework* (Carers NSW) into thinking and planning for interactions with and services for families

How?

- Consider carers and hidden carers when taking family history from clients
- Refer families to the counselling, resources and supports for mental health carers including specialized support needs such as Aboriginal, CALD & youth networks
- Have carer information in your practice
- Be an information resource for families
- Engage carers as partners in the solutions for Personality Disorders

Anyone,
Anywhere
can become a Carer
Anytime