

## 5. Working with Families

The families of the people in Spectrum's services are diverse. Whatever our personal feelings about individual family members may be, we need to honour and facilitate their participation. Often we are put in the position of having to restore faith in systems that have mistreated their involvement. This can sometimes be a difficult, long-term process but one from which we have learnt a great deal.

Some ways to support families are:

- (i) Honouring their opinions, their culture and their histories;
  - (ii) Being flexible about schedules and meeting times to suit the needs of families rather than staffing;
  - (iii) Ensuring families are kept regularly informed of successes, problems, meetings and social events they might like to attend;
  - (iv) Following through on commitments made to the family, sharing this information with the team and coming to a consensus as to how to follow up and facilitate relationships;
  - (v) Clearly directing the family to the appropriate resource when difficulties arise;
  - (vi) Being open to learning from families.
- (a) Every effort by management, support staff, volunteers and sub-contractors of Spectrum will be made to support the involvement of individuals with their families.
  - (b) Families will have access to the Society's Policy and Procedures Manual and to in-house training provided by the Society.
  - (c) Every effort will be made to resolve conflicts which arise between family members and employees of the Society. If necessary, a third party apart from an employee of the organization may be involved to assist in the conflict-resolution process.
  - (d) Families will be welcome to visit the home as often as their family member wishes. Beyond this policy, program-specific guidelines will be developed as necessary to balance the needs of visitors to the person's home (family and friends) with the needs of the person(s) served.
  - (e) Families may receive reimbursement for expenses directly related to their involvement with their relative, with prior approval from the Program Manager.
  - ~~(f) Unless mutually agreed by the Program Coordinator and the family, family members will not be used as additional or relief staff.~~
  - ~~(g) Unless approved by the Manager, family members will not administer medications, drive Spectrum vehicles or have access to confidential records.~~