

Your Rights and Responsibilities as a Mental Health Consumer

INFORMATION SHEET 21
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For more information ask for the Mental Health statement of rights and responsibilities, adopted by the Australian Health Ministers, March 1991.

For more information about compulsory treatment in hospital ask for 'The Mental Health Act 2007 Statement of Rights'.

For more information regarding privacy ask for 'The Patients / Clients Privacy Information Brochure'.

Consumer Workers are staff members who have a personal experience of mental illness. Consumer workers can provide support or information; encourage you to advocate on your own behalf; advocate for you or help you to make a complaint. One of the workers below is able to assist you, or direct you to a Consumer Worker closer to your location.

Camperdown: **9515 9000**
Croydon: **9378 1100**
Bankstown: **9780 2777**

The Mental Health Care System

You have the right to be treated with respect, dignity and consideration. You are entitled to be treated by qualified health workers, and to know their name and qualifications. You have the right to be informed about health care services available and how they operate. You are entitled to be informed of any rules or regulations related to your use of the service. You have the right to advocacy. You are entitled to choose not to be involved in any clinical training program, research or experiment. You have the right to participate in the development of mental health policy, provision of mental health care and representation of mental health consumer interests.

Treatment

You have the right to ask for or be given a clear explanation about your mental health condition and plans for treatment and management.

For example: *What is the diagnosis or problem? What is the medication or other treatment and why is it necessary? Are there any risks involved? What are the side effects? Is there any alternative to this treatment?*

You have the right to timely and high quality treatment, which is appropriate to your age, gender, religion, language and cultural background.

When you are admitted to a mental health facility or community program, you have the right to adequate discharge planning, including referral to support services that you require.

You have the right of access to relatives and friends (by visiting or phone) subject to the rules of the facility where you are receiving treatment.

You are encouraged to be involved in the decision-making about your treatment, care and discharge planning.

You are entitled to ask for a second opinion, subject to available resources.

You have the right to access services that support you to live, work and participate in the community to the full extent of your capabilities.

You have the right to refuse treatment unless you are required to receive treatment against your will for a period of time under specific provisions of the NSW Mental Health Act 2007.

If you are a child or adolescent admitted to a mental health facility or community program, you have the right to be separated from adult patients and provided with programs suited to your own developmental needs. You have the right to have a person available to you whose task it is to protect your rights.

Interpreters

You have the right to request the assistance of trained interpreters.

Feedback and Complaints

Your experiences when receiving mental health care and treatment are important to us. If you have a positive experience, we would like to hear about it. If you are not satisfied with your care, you have the right to make a complaint. Making a complaint will not affect your right to a quality service and may help us improve the care we provide. You have a number of options if you want to make a complaint:

Option 1: Raise your concerns with the worker involved in your treatment or a senior member of staff. They may be able to resolve your issues immediately or they can refer the issue to the relevant person to address your concerns.



Health
Sydney
Local Health District

& Bankstown

Option 2: Contact or write to the Patient Liaison Officer, Mental Health Services (PLO). The PLO will ensure that your concerns are followed up and that you are provided with feedback.

Direct line: **9616 4204** or ring **9767 8900** and ask for the phone number of the patient liaison officer.

Option 3: You can put your concern in writing to the Clinical Director, Mental Health Services, Mental Health Administration at Concord Centre for Mental Health, Hospital Road, Concord 2139.

If you are not satisfied with the outcome of your complaint, you can contact the NSW Health Care Complaints Commission (HCCC) on **1800 043 159**.

Personal Information and consent

(For more information ask for 'The Patients' / Clients' Privacy Information Brochure')

You have the right to have the privacy and confidentiality of your personal health information respected. You may ask for access to your own medical files. A health worker is able to provide you with details about how to request this access. You have the right to expect that only those actually involved in your treatment have access to your personal information. This may include your GP or other service providers. By providing your GP's name and contact details, you are giving consent for the Service to contact the GP to obtain and give information about your health history.

You are entitled to have your carer, family or friend involved in your care. You are encouraged to nominate the person you would like to be your 'primary carer', or exclude any person who you don't want to receive information about your care and treatment, subject to some conditions. If you are being treated under the Mental Health Act, your 'primary carer' (usually the person you have nominated) has the right to receive information about your care and treatment. Apart from the nominated person, it is recommended that you give consent for other people (family / close friends) to be able to discuss your care with the treating team. Family / close friends are the people who are of most help when out of hospital.

Your Responsibilities

With some exceptions, people are responsible for their own actions.

Your responsibilities include:

1. Treating other consumers and staff with respect at all times.
2. Being considerate of the property of other people and of the health facility.
3. If you choose to provide information about your past or present treatment, ensuring the information you provide is accurate, to the best of your ability and knowledge.
4. Asking someone if you have not understood anything you have been told.
5. Participating as far as possible in reasonable treatment and rehabilitation options.
6. Notifying the worker if you are not able to keep an appointment.