

The Mental Health Act



This is an easy read information sheet on the NSW **Mental Health Act**.

The **Mental Health Act** is the rules about **mental health treatment** in NSW.



Mental health is about how you think and how you feel.



Treatment is things that can help you feel better.



The Mental Health Act says that everybody has the right to the mental health care they need.



Mental health workers must follow the rules in the Mental Health Act.

Mental health workers are people who work to help you with your mental health.



There are lots of words in the Mental Health Act that we do not use very often.

Mental health workers often use these words too.



When the Mental Health Act talks about mental health problems it uses the words

- **mentally ill**
- **mentally disordered**



Mentally ill is when you have a mental illness that makes it hard to cope with your feelings and thoughts.

Mental illness includes things like

- strongly believing something that is not true (such as thinking someone is controlling your thoughts)
- seeing or hearing things that are not there
- very serious problems with mood

It could also be called something like

- depression
- schizophrenia
- anxiety



Mentally disordered is what the Mental Health Act calls it when someone is doing things that are dangerous or do not make sense.

Staying in hospital



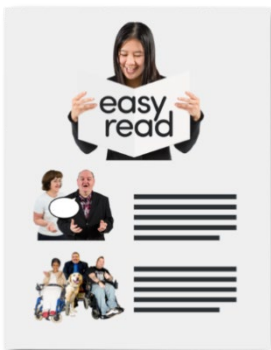
Mental Health Act

There are rules in the Mental Health Act about staying in hospital for mental health treatment.

There are different rules for **voluntary** and **involuntary patients**.



You are a **voluntary patient** if you choose to go to hospital for mental health treatment.



There is an easy read version of **your rights as a voluntary patient**.

There is an easy read information sheet about **Being a voluntary patient in a mental health hospital**.

Or go to

www.3dn.unsw.edu.au/projects/easyread.



There are different rules in the Mental Health Act for involuntary patients.



You are an **involuntary patient** if you must stay in hospital for mental health treatment until you are well enough to go home.

It is not your choice when you can leave.



Involuntary patients must stay in hospital until a doctor says they are well enough to leave.



But you can tell your doctor that you want to go home at any time.

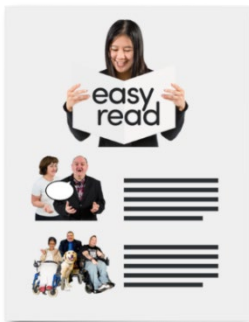


Your doctor will decide if you are well enough to go home.

You can get someone you trust to help you to ask or ask for you.

This may be

- your family member
- your friend
- your support person



There is an easy read version of **your rights as an involuntary patient.**

There is also an easy read information sheet about **Being an involuntary patient in a mental health hospital.**

Or go to

[www.3dn.unsw.edu.au/projects/easyread.](http://www.3dn.unsw.edu.au/projects/easyread)

Community Treatment Orders



The Mental Health Act also has rules about **Community Treatment Orders**.

Community Treatment Orders are usually called a **CTO**.



A **CTO** is a plan for you to get your mental health treatment in the community without having to stay in hospital.

You must follow the rules in the plan.



If you do not follow the rules you may need to go to hospital.



There is an easy read information sheet on **rules about Community Treatment Orders.**

There is also an easy read information sheet about **Community Treatment Orders.**

Or go to

[www.3dn.unsw.edu.au/projects/easyread.](http://www.3dn.unsw.edu.au/projects/easyread)

The Mental Health Review Tribunal



The **Mental Health Review Tribunal** is a group of people who know a lot about mental health treatment and the law.

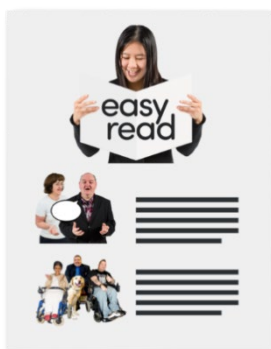
The job of the Mental Health Review Tribunal is to make sure you get mental health treatment that you need.



The Mental Health Review Tribunal makes sure everyone follows the rules in the Mental Health Act.



The Mental Health Review Tribunal can help you if you have a problem with mental health services.

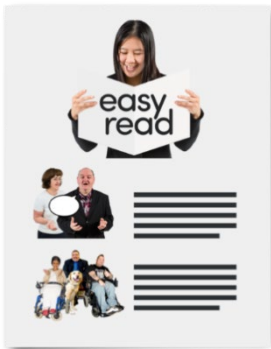


There is an easy read information sheet about what the **Mental Health Review Tribunal** does or go to www.3dn.unsw.edu.au/projects/easyread.

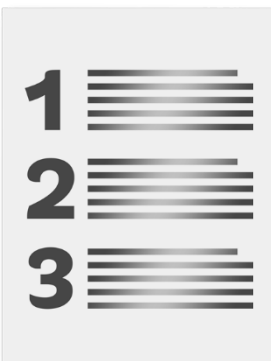
Getting help



You can tell someone if you think mental health workers are not following the rules in the Mental Health Act.



There is an easy read information sheet about who to tell called **Making complaints about your mental health care** or go to www.3dn.unsw.edu.au/projects/easyread.



There is a list of what some **words** mean in this information sheet **here** or go to www.3dn.unsw.edu.au/projects/easyread.

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This information sheet is part of a series of easy read resources explaining

- how people can access public mental health services in New South Wales and
- what they can expect.

For information on how to support people to use easy read see [**Making mental health information accessible for people with intellectual disability – A Toolkit**](#)

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