

This pamphlet is one of eight. The titles are as follows:

- *Carers*
- *Community Treatment Orders*
- *Electroconvulsive Therapy*
- *Involuntary Detained Patients*
- *People referred for a Psychiatric Examination Under the Mental Health Act 1996*
- *Treatments*
- *Voluntary Patients*
- *Your rights under the Mental Health Act 1996*

Other pamphlets available include:

- *The Mental Health Review Board, Information about the review process*
- *The Council of Official Visitors*
- *The Mental Health Law Centre*

Contact Directory:

ARAFMI

(Mental Health Carers and Friends Association)
Phone 9228 0577 Fax 9228 0440
Freecall 1800 811 747

Council of Official Visitors

Phone 9226 3266 Fax 9226 3977
Freecall 1800 999 057

Mental Health Law Centre

Phone 9328 8266 Fax 9328 8577
Freecall 1800 620 285

Mental Health Review Board

Phone 9219 3162 Fax 9219 3163

Multicultural Access Unit (DoH)

(for interpretation & translation of health information & policy)
Phone 9400 9504 Fax 9400 9554

Office of Health Review

Phone 9426 0100 Fax 9322 6848
Freecall 1800 813 583

Office of the Chief Psychiatrist

Phone 9222 4462, 9222 4079, 9222 4217
Fax 9222 4244
Freecall 1800 022 222

Psychiatric Emergency Team

Phone 9224 8888 (24 hours) Rural 1800 676 822

WA Association for Mental Health

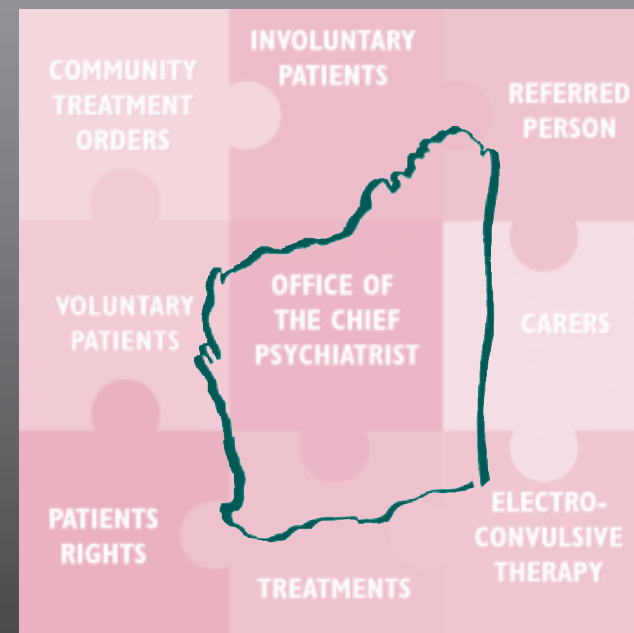
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VOLUNTARY PATIENTS

*Information about
your rights under the
Mental Health Act 1996*

This pamphlet helps answer any questions you might have about being a voluntary patient in relation to the Mental Health Act 1996.



Why am I here?

You have been admitted to hospital as a voluntary patient because you agreed to be admitted and a psychiatrist believed you would benefit from the treatment and care that you will receive here.

What will happen to me while I am here?

In hospital you will see a psychiatrist and other staff of the treating team such as psychologists, social workers, occupational therapists and nurses and have a thorough physical and psychological assessment, to work out what is the best treatment and care for your mental illness.

You need to cooperate with the staff while you receive care and treatment for your mental illness. At times you may feel sad, angry or distressed. The Staff Members are here to assist you and it is always better to seek their help than act on these feelings.

What treatment may I get?

Treatment may include medication and electroconvulsive therapy (ECT) as well as occupational therapy, individual or group counselling and psychological programs. As a voluntary patient you have the right to refuse any treatment offered to you.

Where will I stay?

You will be one of a number of patients on the ward, and community living always has some rules and routines. You will be told about these during your ward orientation. If you have any questions, ask the staff.

What are my rights?

You have a right to:

- See a psychiatrist and receive treatment.
- Obtain a second opinion from another psychiatrist about your treatment.
- Ask questions and be fully informed about any treatment you are being offered.
- Refuse any treatment you are offered.
- Contact people by letter or phone bearing in mind ward and hospital rules.
- Your personal possessions. In certain circumstances it may be better to leave valuables at home, and, for the health and safety of others, the staff may ask that certain possessions are put into storage or left at home.
- Vote in any elections.
- Complain to the staff, the hospital managers, or the Office of Health Review.
- Seek legal advice on any issue you are concerned about (Mental Health Law Centre may provide free legal advice about the *Mental Health Act 1996*)
- Access to your medical records (this right may be restricted).

Can I discharge myself?

Yes, as a voluntary patient you can leave the hospital whenever you wish, or you can be discharged by your psychiatrist. If you are thinking about discharging yourself it is important that you first discuss it with your psychiatrist and other staff members.

Can I be kept in hospital against my will?

You can be kept in hospital against your wishes if your psychiatrist or other staff believe:

- That you need to be detained for your own or another persons health or safety, or
- That you will harm yourself, financially, or
- Damage your reputation which can lead to damaging a personal relationship, or
- That you will do serious damage to property

If a psychiatrist is not available to see you when you want to leave, and the staff believe that you meet any of the above points, then a senior mental health practitioner, usually a senior nurse, can make an order for you to be held on the ward, against your will if need be, for up to six hours, so you can be seen by a psychiatrist.

The psychiatrist can order that you be detained in the hospital as an involuntary patient.

Can I get other information about being a voluntary patient in hospital?

The hospital in which you are a patient will give you information about the hospital and your rights and responsibilities while you are an in-patient. Please read this pamphlet along with any other information given to you.