



Bendigo Health
Mental Health Services

Patient, Family and Carer Service Guide

For 24/7 Psychiatric access
and emergency response,
please contact Bendigo Health
Psychiatric Regional Triage Service

1300 363 788



Excellent Care. Every Person. Every Time.

Mental Health Services

- Community services
- Inpatient services
- Residential services



Welcome

To our patients and carers

Welcome to Bendigo Health Mental Health Services (BHMHS). This guide contains information about your treating team, your rights and responsibilities and the many services available to you.

It is our aim to work in partnership with patients, family and carers to support their recovery, recognising that this journey will be different for each person. With this in mind we encourage you to participate in all aspects of the care and treatment we provide.

We recognise that a person's culture, spirituality, gender identity, relationships and sexualities affect every area of their life. People are most mentally healthy when their personal identity is acknowledged and valued. We encourage you to speak to our staff about any specific needs or considerations for yourself or the person you care for.

We respect people of all cultures, gender expression, sexual orientation, socio-economic background, age, religion and ability.



Interpreting Services

Bendigo Health Mental Health Services has access to a free interpreting service. Please inform staff if you require an interpreter or assistance for your communication needs.

Patient, Family and Carer Service Guide

My primary staff contact during this
episode of care is (staff can help you fill this section out);

Service Team: _____

Name: _____

Role: _____

Phone contact: _____



The Bendigo Health Smoke Free Policy provides for a healthy, smoke free environment at all Bendigo Health facilities. The policy applies to all people within Bendigo Health facilities including employees, patients, residents, contractors, volunteers and visitors.

Our approach to care

We aim to work with the patient to assist their recovery by ensuring that mental health services are delivered in a way that supports the recovery of the patient. Recovery outcomes will be personal and unique for each individual. Recovery involves supporting the patient's participation in their own care, and empowering individuals so that they know they are at the centre of the care they receive. The patient's values, beliefs and culture are respected. Care is provided in partnership with the patient and their family and carers, to provide support in a way that makes sense to them and instills hope in the patient's future and ability to live a meaningful life.



We hope your time with us is helpful and
we wish you well.

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Where does Bendigo Health mental health Services (BHMHS) provide care?

BHMHS is a publicly funded area Mental Health Service providing psychiatric services across the Loddon Campaspe and Southern Mallee region.

The region covers just over 37,036 square kilometres and has a population of 270,534.



Extreme Weather

Our region can experience extreme weather events, particularly extended days of high temperatures, 'heat waves' during the summer months. Extreme weather conditions can impact on your health and the way we can provide services. Please take extra care on hot days and if you require special assistance please talk to a staff member.

Consumer register

(includes patient, family/carer)

Bendigo Health is committed to working in partnership with consumers, patients, families and carers, to continue to improve our care and services. Joining with us as a consumer representative gives you the opportunity to provide your feedback, share your ideas, suggestions and knowledge, and participate in a variety of ways.

Committees, Reference Groups, Workshops, forums or focus groups: Be a member of a group (board, advisory committee, reference group or project group) that meets regularly.

Workshops, forums or focus groups: Participate in a short-term group to provide a consumer perspective on specific aspects of care and treatment.

Literacy Review Groups: Review information and provide feedback on content, ease of reading, clarity and appropriateness. This could include brochures, fact sheets and website information.

Quality Improvement: Take part in quality improvement projects. Review data, processes and assist to develop improvement strategies.

Education: Talk to staff to share your experiences which can increase staff knowledge, skills and practice improvements.

Want to join

Time commitment is flexible depending on your availability, from a one-off-group meeting to attending regular meetings or contributing to a project from home. We offer opportunities across a wide range of areas and it is always your choice to participate. If you are interested and would like to apply to join, please complete a registration form, talk to staff or contact Consumer Participation and Patient Experience on 5454 9078 for further information.

Consumer Participation Group (CPG): There is also an independent Consumer Participation Group, specific for people who use any mental health service in our area. Consumers provide leadership in the committee and share their knowledge and expertise gained through lived experience to contribute to service improvements. Refer to page 30 for more details.

Accessing BHMHS

Regional Psychiatric Triage Service

If you are concerned about your own mental health or that of someone else, you can contact Triage 24/7 by calling

1300 363 788

or via the Bendigo Health Emergency Department

Triage provides 24 hour access to mental health services across the region and is BHMHS single point of initial contact.

For the cost of a local call from anywhere within Victoria (mobile calls excluded) you can talk to a trained mental health practitioner who will give you advice, help you access appropriate services, and/or arrange for the person you are concerned about to have a psychiatric assessment.

When should you contact triage?

If you are concerned about your own mental health or that of someone else due to:

- Obvious changes in mood
- Display of disorganised behaviour
- Unusually poor concentration
- Hallucinations of any kind
- The expression of delusions
- Intense anxiety
- The expression of suicidal ideas



**If you feel someone is in immediate danger,
contact emergency services on 000**

Accessing BHMHS



BHMHS has a single point access for all first time contacts.

While referrals can be made through various sources, including General Practitioners, health, welfare and emergency agencies and concerned family and community members; every referral is screened and appropriate follow up co-ordinated through BHMHS Regional Triage Service.

Based on the information provided, triage clinicians (qualified mental health practitioners), determine if a psychiatric assessment is required and how urgently this needs to happen.

If an assessment is required, the triage clinician will organise for this to occur in either a community location, or in the Emergency Department at Bendigo Health, or at a regional hospital or similar venue.

Sometimes, there may be other more appropriate and useful services available to provide the support and help required. This may include local GP's (doctors), counsellors or other community based agencies. In these cases, Triage clinicians will co-ordinate access and any referrals required.

Throughout this region BHMHS offers mental health services and support across all age groups:

- **Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services**
Community based services for ages 0 to 18 years.
- **Youth Mental Health Services**
Residential and community based services for ages 18 to 25 Years.
- **Adult Mental Health Services**
Inpatient, residential and community based services for ages 25 to 65 years
- **Older Persons Mental Health Services**
Inpatient and community based services for ages 65 years and older

The majority of our multidisciplinary clinical services, including all residential and inpatient facilities, are located in Bendigo. However, BHMHS also has clinical teams located in Swan Hill, Echuca, Kyneton, Castlemaine and Maryborough.

Aspects of Care

BHMHS, part of a teaching hospital



BHMHS is proud of its contribution to Bendigo Health's role as a teaching hospital.

Working closely with various teaching organisations, BHMHS regularly supports medical, nursing and allied health students.

From time to time patients may be asked to participate in teaching and training opportunities for students. While we appreciate your help in allowing students to be involved during your care, it is important that you know that you can decline direct involvement of a student at any stage. Your choice to do so will not impact on your care.

All students should be easily identified through their ID badges. Staff will ask before inviting a student to directly participate in any part of your care.

Community based treatment

Wherever possible, treatment and support is provided by BHMHS in the patients home environment.

Community based care means:

- Regularly seeing a lead clinician (a mental health practitioner assigned to support the patient and help coordinate the provision of treatment and care)
- Having treatment regularly reviewed by a psychiatrist
- Being linked into other support services when beneficial
- Having access to inpatient treatment when and if needed.

The service system

Health services can be complex systems to understand. The structure of mental health services can also be a challenge to navigate. Bendigo Health provides public mental health services for our region. Other mental health service providers include Private Practitioners, GPs, Community Support Services and Counselling Services. At times these services are more appropriate for someone's specific needs. BHMHS will often work alongside you and these other services to provide you with the care you need.

Admission to a Psychiatric Inpatient Unit

Admission to an inpatient unit is sometimes necessary for people living with a mental illness. People are sometimes admitted to hospital because:

- They are changing their medication and require close monitoring
- Their symptoms are severe and they are having significant difficulty coping in their usual environment
- Their health and/or safety are at risk
- Treatment options need to be explored in a supported environment.

While most people prefer to be treated in the community and every effort is made to do so, an inpatient admission sometimes can be an important and necessary step towards recovery.



Assessment and Review

When accessing BHMHS, a comprehensive psychiatric assessment will be conducted by a mental health practitioner. The assessment will help identify the immediate needs of the patient and determine the environment in which treatment can best be provided.

If an inpatient admission is required the patient will be reviewed by a medical practitioner. This review will include a physical assessment and questions about the patient's mental, physical and medication history and treatment.

It is important that staff be informed of any past or ongoing medical issues as they may have a significant impact on treatment.

Establishing a clear picture of the patient's past and current health issues and personal situation will assist the clinical treating team and patient to:

- Identify clinical needs and priorities
- Determine clinical goals for that episode of care
- Develop a treatment plan to guide ongoing care and treatment.

The treatment plan will be developed collaboratively with the patient and their family/carer and will be reviewed regularly to make sure that the clinical goals set are being met and that treatment is working.

Forms of Treatment

Treatment will be based on decisions made collaboratively between the clinical treating team, the patient, their family/carer and anyone else involved in providing care.

Before treatment begins patients are fully informed about the plan. The patient and their family/carer are supported to ask questions and have any concerns addressed.

Treatment provided can include:

- Psychological
- Psycho-education
- Developing and improving a patient’s living skills
- Identification of early warning signs
- Cognitive behavioural therapy and distraction techniques
- Individual and family therapy
- Individual/group programs
- Sleep management
- Collaborative therapy.

Medical or Biological

Procedures such as Electroconvulsive Therapy (ECT) are used to treat symptoms of certain illnesses and are particularly effective when someone experiences more severe and often debilitating symptoms.

You may receive a number of different medications on the ward. Please tell us if you have any allergies or bad reactions to any medications.

You have a right to be given information about all medications you are given, including what it is prescribed for and any possible side effects.

Please ask as many questions as you like about the medications we are providing you.

It can sometimes take a little while to get the medication type and dose right. Sometimes people need to try different types of medications or adjust doses a number of times. If in the past a medication has worked well or has not been successful, please advise staff.

It is important to let staff know if a patient experiences any side effects from a medication or sudden changes that may be due to medication.



Inpatient Services

Wherever possible, people are treated and supported in the community.

Sometimes this is not possible and inpatient care is needed, according to a patient's clinical and therapeutic needs.

BHMHS has four inpatient units, each located in Bendigo:



Parent and Infant Unit (PIU)

Bendigo Hospital
Ph: (03) 5454 8570

The PIU has five beds for parents and infants and provides interventions for a range of parent mental health concerns. The treatment program aims to lessen the impact of mental illness on the infant and family relationships.

Adult Acute Inpatient Unit (AAU)

Bendigo Hospital
Ph: (03) 5454 7765

AAU is a short-term acute inpatient unit that provides intensive therapeutic treatment for people aged 18 to 65 years.

Patients are supported to find ways to manage their illness and identify triggers and coping strategies that assist them in their recovery.

Extended Care Unit (ECU)

Bendigo Hospital
Ph: (03) 5444 4910

The ECU is a secure inpatient unit for persons aged 18 to 65 years.

ECU provides medium to long term inpatient treatment and rehabilitation for patients requiring extended support and a more secure environment.

Children

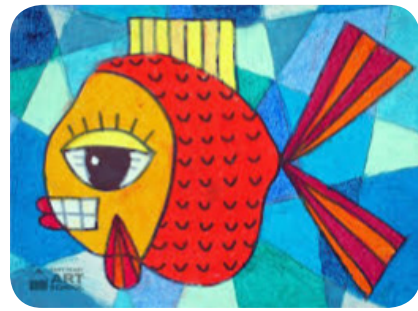
If you have children under your care, please talk to staff so that you can discuss their care needs and support for your parenting role.

Your children can visit you on the unit and we also have a special family visitor's room available.

Older Persons Acute Unit (OPU)

Bendigo Hospital
Ph: (03) 5454 8570

The OPU provides inpatient assessment and treatment for persons aged 65 and over with a mental illness and/or behaviours that cannot be safely managed in the community or by other aged care service providers.



Pets

If you have any pets at home that need care, please tell staff as soon as possible so we can ensure care for your pet is arranged.



Safewards

Safewards is a framework used across all Victorian mental health inpatient units to enhance the relationships between staff and those who use services. The model assists communication and helps to increase a persons sense of safety, support and comfort while receiving care.



Residential Services

BHMHS residential services support people requiring an increase in care to prevent an inpatient admission, or making the transition from an inpatient unit to living in the community.

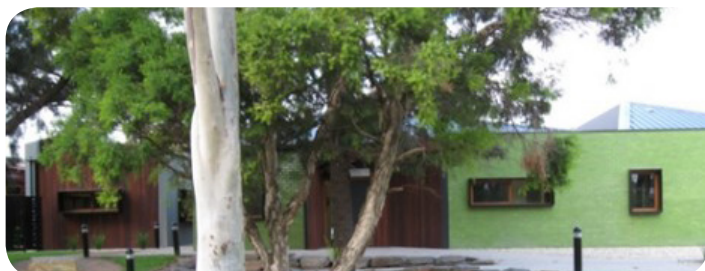
The residential unit provides a supportive therapeutic environment to assist the patient to work on their recovery goals. The programs foster links with community and opportunities for work, education and skill development.

BHMHS has four residential units in Bendigo:

Youth PARC (YPARC)

Havlin Street East, Bendigo
Ph: (03) 5454 7620

YPARC is a 10 bed unit staffed in conjunction with MIND Australia (a partner organisation that provides psychosocial support services). It is for patients aged 16 to 25 years. YPARC has a maximum stay of 28 days.



Adult PARC (PARC)

Tucker Street, Golden Square
Ph: (03) 5443 7477

PARC is a 10 bed unit staffed in conjunction with MIND Australia for patients aged 16 to 65 years. Maximum stay of 28 days.

Community Care Units (CCU)

Vahland Street, Bendigo
Ph: (03) 5444 4910

CCU is a 12 bed program staffed by BHMHS for patients aged 18 to 65 years. The program provides specialised rehabilitation support over an extended time.

Dual Diagnosis Rehabilitation Unit (DDU)

Vahland Street, Bendigo
Ph: (03) 5444 4910

DDU is an 8 bed specialised rehabilitation program staffed by BHMHS for patients experiencing co-occurring mental health and alcohol or other drug (AOD) problems.

Helping safety and recovery

Helping everyone to feel safe while an inpatient, visiting or working in any of our programs is very important and involves all staff, patients and visitors. It is important that we all work together to keep each other safe and comfortable. If you have any difficulties or safety concerns with another patient, please speak to staff immediately.

Treating other patients and staff with respect and courtesy

A good general rule is to treat other people the same way you would like to be treated, and try to be understanding of each other. Like you, other patients are working on their recovery and at times may not feel like being social.

Being non-violent in your language and behavior

Offensive and aggressive language, yelling, intimidation, and violence are frightening for many people, and can make us all feel unsafe.

Respecting the privacy of other people

This includes; not going into other people's rooms or letting people into your room, not taking photos, and giving people their own personal space. This includes not touching other people without their consent, e.g. ask if it is OK before giving someone a hug.

Not engaging in intimate relationships while a patient on the unit

Many people can be vulnerable or confused during a psychiatric admission and may agree to things they wouldn't normally do. Therefore, it is best for all patients to not engage in sexual activity during an admission.

Please speak to a staff member immediately if you feel pressured or unsafe in regard to any sexual approaches or activity on the unit. You also have a right to seek support from advocates or other agencies if you wish.

Drugs, alcohol and cigarettes

These substances can interfere with medications and your mental health. They can also delay your recovery and put other people at risk.

If you are experiencing withdrawal, please discuss this with your treating team so assistance can be provided.

Care and safety for personal items

To help us make sure everyone is safe there are certain **items that we ask not be brought in during a visit or admission.** These include:

- Plastic bags
- Weapons of any kind including pocket knives
- Alcohol
- Drugs of any kind, including prescription and synthetic
(Please remember to advise staff of any medications you usually take)
- Drug paraphernalia
- Lighters and matches



Staff will need to remove these items. Legal items will be safely stored until discharge. Any illegal items will be appropriately discarded.

To make sure these items do not make it into the unit where they can be a risk to the health and recovery of everyone, staff will ask if you have any of these items with you as you enter the unit, whether visiting or returning from leave. They may also respectfully ask to inspect your bags or pockets.

Should a patient or visitor bring any items that are potentially dangerous onto the unit, this may impact on their leave, continued admission and/or their ability to continue to visit.

Sometimes there are also other personal items that can be brought on to the unit but that need to be stored by staff and used under supervision. These can include things like razors, glass perfume bottles, scissors and sometimes belts and similar clothing items. To make sure that these items are properly stored, staff need to look through any property brought onto the unit before giving these to the patient to keep with them both on and throughout an admission. A list of any items stored by staff is kept and these items returned when it is safe to do this or on discharge.

If you have any questions about whether or not an item can be brought in or kept with a patient or about any item that staff may have removed and be storing on behalf of a patient, staff will be able to assist you.



Community Services

Child and Youth Mental Health Services

Childhood and adolescence are times of rapid development. In these early years, key building blocks for lifelong health, development, learning and wellbeing are being set in place. Mental health problems early in life can put early development at risk.

About one in 10 young people experience emotional and behavioural problems that are so severe they cause personal distress, difficulties in the family and problems at school and in the wider community.

BHMHS has two community based teams who specialise in child, adolescent and youth mental health related assessment and treatment.

Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)

John Bomford Centre (JBC),
Condon Street, Strathdale
Ph: (03) 5440 6506

CAMHS is a multi-disciplinary team based in Bendigo, with clinicians also based in Swan Hill, Echuca, Castlemaine and Kyneton. CAMHS works with children and adolescents from the age of 0 to 18 years of age who have, or are at risk of, significant psychiatric disturbance.

Youth Community Mental Health Team (YCMHT)

Havlin Street East, Bendigo
Ph: (03) 5454 7753

YCMHT is based in Bendigo, with clinicians also in Swan Hill, Echuca and Castlemaine. YCMHT works with youth aged 18 to 25 years with significant psychiatric disturbance.

Echuca - Ph: (03) 5480 7419

Swan Hill - Ph: (03) 5036 1900

Castlemaine - Ph: (03) 5471 1000

Kyneton - Ph: (03) 5421 2100

Maryborough - Ph: (03) 5461 0400

Short Term Treatment Team (STTT)

Havlin Street East, Bendigo
Ph: (03) 5454 7201

STTT provides short term follow up for adult and young patients, from the Greater Bendigo area experience acute mental health problems.

Primary Mental Health Team (PMHT)

John Bomford Centre (JBC),
Condon Street, Strathdale
Ph: (03) 5440 6506

The PMHT offers assessment for people with non-urgent, low risk mental health problems and provides advice and consultation to other services such as GPs to support them in the care they deliver.

Adult Mental Health Services

BHMHS has multiple community based Adult Mental Health Services based throughout the Loddon Mallee region. These provide ongoing case management and support for people aged 25 to 65 years.

A patient can expect their lead clinicians not only to provide proactive treatment and support that meets their needs while in the community, but to keep in contact and remain involved in their care, treatment and discharge planning should they experience an inpatient or residential admission.

Bendigo Adult Community Mental Health Team (BACMHT)

John Bomford Centre (JBC),
Condon Street, Strathdale
Ph: (03) 5440 6529



Rural South Adult Services

Castlemaine Community Mental Health
Team: Ph: (03) 5471 1000

Maryborough Community Mental Health
Team: Ph: (03) 5461 0400

Kyneton Community Mental Health Team:
Ph: (03) 5421 2100

Rural North Adult Services

Echuca Community Mental Health Team:
Ph: (03) 5480 7419

Swan Hill Community Mental Health Team:
Ph:(03) 5036 1900

Telehealth

Telehealth facilities are available across Bendigo Health. Telehealth is a way of having a consultation between a patient and a health professional using audio and video over the internet or phone systems that allow both people to see and talk to each other.

The advantages of telehealth are:

- Reduced or no travel time
- Less impact on your daily life
- Your home is your waiting room
- Your local health care provider may be involved
- Easier access to specialist care

To access this service please speak with your GP or lead clinician.

Older Persons Mental Health Services

BHMHS Older Persons Mental Health team provides community based mental health assessment, treatment and support to people aged 65 years and over who have a mental illness or are experiencing age related psychological and/or behavioural problems.

Outreach can be provided to people at home, in hospital or in hostels or nursing homes. Advice, education and support is also offered to carers, family and aged care health providers.

Older Persons Community Mental Health Team (OPCMHT)

John Bomford Centre,
Condon Street, Strathdale
Ph: (03) 5454 6285

While the OPCMHT team is based in Bendigo, clinicians are also based in BHMHS offices in these other locations:

Echuca
Ph: (03) 5480 7419

Swan Hill
Ph: (03) 5036 1900

Castlemaine
Ph: (03) 5471 1000

Kyneton
Ph: (03) 5421 2100

Maryborough
Ph: (03) 5461 0400

BHMHS Specialist Service Programs

Perinatal Health and Emotional Program (PHEP)

Ph: (03) 5440 6529

PHEP is an early intervention service for women and families experiencing emotional difficulties during pregnancy and up to one year after birth. PHEP provides assessment, support, treatment consultation and education for families and referrals to appropriate services. Referrals to PHEP can be made through Maternity Services, Maternal and Child Health and GPs. You can also request a referral yourself by phoning BHMHS Regional Triage Service on 1300 363 788.

The Autism Disorders Assessment Service (ADAS)

Ph: (03) 5440 6506

ADAS is a program run through Bendigo Heath CAMHS service for the assessment of children and adolescents with complex but unclear presentations where your paediatrician is considering an autism spectrum disorder. We see children and adolescents aged 0 to 18 years of age.

ADAS is a regional service based in Bendigo. If you have concerns it is helpful to talk to your GP or paediatrician about an autism assessment. If you require more information about ADAS please speak to a member of the ADAS team.

Child & Adolescent Mental Health Service and Schools: Early Action Program (CASEA)

Ph: (03) 5442 7596

CASEA is a state-wide early intervention program that partners with families and primary schools to support children who are displaying emotional difficulties and challenging behaviours.



Working in partnership with schools, CASEA provides an eight week group program for children from Prep to Grade 3 who are identified as suitable. CASEA also provides education, support and follow up for the teachers and parents of children participating in the program.

Through collaboration and education, CASEA aims to provide a support network that assists children to improve difficult behaviours before they become more entrenched and problematic.

Women's Mental Health Program

Ph: (03) 5454 7724

The Women's Mental Health Program focuses on enhancing gender responsive and sensitive practice within mental health services.

This occurs through:

- Advocacy - addressing the broader systemic issues of women and mental health
- Community education - providing information, education and consultation to the community on issues of women and mental health
- Group programs - designing and facilitating educative and therapeutic group programs aimed at enhancing the emotional and mental wellbeing of women. This involves single session workshops and longer six to eight session programs
- Consumer participation - creating opportunities for female consumers and carers to meet together for connection, support, peer education and advocacy.



Kids with Confidence & Families where Parent/s have a Mental Illness (FaPMI)

Ph: (03) 5454 7612

Kids with Confidence is a program designed to provide support to children living in families affected by mental illness.

The group based program uses a mixture of fun activities, peer support and education about mental health, mental illness and coping strategies. The program aims to help young people understand and deal with their circumstances, and to reduce the stigma associated with mental illness.

Children aged between seven and 12

can attend a five week psycho-education program ran outside of school hours. The program provides a fun and safe environment for children to learn about mental illness and mental health; and explore, understand and manage their own feelings.

Children aged between 13 and 18

can attend a monthly peer support group held in Bendigo. The group provides a mix of educational and fun activities to provide respite, encourage and strengthen networks and friendships, develop skills and build confidence.



On occasions the program also runs other groups in regional areas or during the school holidays. The program also provides young people with access to mental health workers and quarterly newsletters keeping them up to date with ongoing activities.

The newsletter includes helpful hints and assists in maintaining connections.

Families where Parents have a Mental Illness (FaPMI)

FaPMI is an important focus for BHMHS. The program assists staff to be inclusive of the parenting role some of our patients have, and to recognise and support the needs of their children.

FaPMI mainly works with staff at BHMHS and other organisations by providing training and assisting with program development. FaPMI also co-ordinates a small brokerage fund available to support families which can be accessed by application arranged by staff.

Mental Health Carer Support Program

Carer Support Services

The Mental Health Carer Support program provides short term assistance and support to those who care for someone with a mental illness.

They provide carers with:

- Someone for carers to talk to
- Information about services and supports
- Links to carer support groups
- Links to supportive networks including respite services
- Strategies for self-care and caring for a person with a mental illness
- Assistance communicating with services.

You can contact the Mental Health Carer Support program for more information or to access their supports.

Bendigo

Ph: (03) 5454 7719

Castlemaine

Ph: (03) 5471 1017

Echuca

Ph: (03) 5482 0808 or

Ph: (03) 5482 0804

Mildura

Ph: (03) 5018 7377

Swan Hill

Ph: (03) 5036 1900

For 24 hour support access

8 Olinda Street Centre



Library and Resource Centre

The Olinda Street Centre offers a warm and friendly environment which can be used for groups providing education and support activities for consumers, family and carers. The BHMHS library provides information and resources on many aspects of mental health and mental illness. The information caters for all levels of need and has resources for all ages.

Membership is free and open to family/ carers, consumers and staff throughout the region.

There are two computers available with internet access and colour printing, which can be booked in two-hour blocks.

8 Olinda Street Centre

8 Olinda St, Bendigo

Monday - Thursday

10am to 4pm

Friday by arrangement

Ph: (03) 5441 7881

BHMHS Specialist Support Roles

BHMHS is respectful of cultural needs of their consumers and families/carers.

BHMHS provides access to Aboriginal Social and Emotional Wellbeing Workers (SEWB) across the region in partnership with local Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations.

If you would like to speak to or receive a visit from a SEWB worker please speak with any staff member.

Whilst an inpatient you also have the option to access the BH Aboriginal Hospital Liaison Officer (AHLO).



If you or the person you care for have specific cultural needs, please advise staff who will assist to engage with required services and cater for your particular needs.

Mental Health Spiritual Care



BHMHS recognises and values your spiritual wellbeing as an important part of your recovery and ongoing mental wellness.

Pastoral or spiritual care includes your spiritual, emotional, cultural and religious needs and is available to both patients and carers/families engaged with BHMHS in all settings.

The Mental Health Spiritual Care Practitioner or Chaplain can provide support if you:

- Want to talk in confidence about any personal or spiritual needs
- Would like support during a time of crisis or grief/bereavement
- Would like to connect or re-connect with your religious/faith community
- Would like someone to offer prayer.

If you would like to speak with or receive a visit from the Mental Health Spiritual Care Practitioner, please speak to any Bendigo Health staff member or contact:

Bendigo Hospital

General enquiries

Monday - Friday 8.30am to 5pm

Ph: (03) 5454 6000

Consumer Consultant

A Consumer Consultant is a person who has been a patient of mental health services and now acts as a consumer/patient representative across the mental health service.

They work in conjunction with consumers, the Consumer Participation Group (CPG), community visitors, advocacy groups and staff to enhance service delivery. They contribute to senior management service planning, and also developing and delivering training and education to staff and students at BHMHS.

They have meetings with the patients on both a group and individual basis to gain feedback and provide support. Concerns and suggestions help inform the consultant's advocacy and some are passed onto staff and management to help resolve issues in a timely way.

MH Family & Carer Support Program Carer Consultants

A Carer Consultant is a person who previously or currently cares for a person with a mental illness.

Carer Consultants offer peer support to family/carers by providing:

- Opportunity to speak with another carer
- Information about services and supports
- Strategies around self care and caring for a person with a mental illness
- Links to supportive networks including respite services

- Assistance communicating with services
- Financial support through the Carer Support Fund.

The Carer Consultants also attend senior level meetings to provide and represent a carer perspective in planning and policy formation in the mental health service. They also provide training for staff and education session for families and carers.

Please speak with clinical staff to access Carer or Consumer Consultants.

Ph: (03) 5454 7612

Family and Carer Project Worker

Ph: (03) 5454 7612

The Family and Carer Project Worker provides carers with support, information and education in many ways:

- Individual emotional support
- Regular support groups
- Workshops and other educational activities
- Respite activities
- Linking carers in with support services within their local community
- Carer specific booklets and brochures.

If you would like to speak with the Family and Carer Project Worker, please speak to any BHMHS staff member.



Post Discharge Peer Support Workers

BHMHS employs Post Discharge Peer Support Workers. Peer support workers are people with lived experience of a mental illness. They use this experience to support other consumers and foster hope.

Peer support is based on the belief that people who have faced, endured and overcome adversity can offer useful support, encouragement, hope and mentorship to others facing similar situations.

The peer support workers are a part of the Adult and Youth Community clinical teams in Bendigo. A key part of their work is focused on supporting people who have recently been in hospital so as to provide additional support at this time.



Tobacco Treatment Specialist Nurse

The role of the tobacco treatment nurse is to assist patients of Psychiatric Services who wish to reduce or quit smoking.

The tobacco treatment nurse can be contacted by a referral from your treating team. Please speak to staff if you would like assistance.



Dual Diagnosis Clinician

Dual diagnosis is when a person is affected by both mental illness and the use of alcohol or drugs. The role of the Dual Diagnosis Clinician is to assist patients who want to cease or reduce their substance use.

The Dual Diagnosis Clinician can be contacted by a referral from your treating team. Please speak to staff if you would like assistance.

Advocacy and Support

Independent Mental Health Advocacy



The Independent Mental Health Advocacy (IMHA) is an independent advocacy service for people receiving compulsory treatment under the Mental Health Act 2014 (Vic).

Their role is to assist people to have a say in decisions relating to their assessment, treatment and recovery, including:

- Meeting to discuss and clarify consumers preferences and wishes
- Providing information about the mental health system
- Assisting consumers to understand their rights and how to act on them
- Engaging and advocating on behalf of consumers directly with their treating team, family or other support services
- Providing support and coaching for consumers to advocate for themselves.

Ph: 1300 947 820

Email: contact@imha.vic.gov.au

www: www.imha.vic.gov.au

Community Visitors Program

Community visitors are volunteers who monitor the appropriateness and adequacy of mental health services.

The Community Visitors Program is overseen by the Office of the Public Advocate.

Important things to know about the Community Visitors Program:

- Their role is to help consumers to resolve issues, seek support and make complaints
- Community visitors can visit and inspect bed-based mental health facilities at any time and without notice
- Anyone receiving care in a mental health facility, their family or carer can ask to be visited by a community visitor.

**Are you being treated fairly?
Talk to a Community Visitor
1300 309 337**



**Office of the
Public Advocate**

Providing Feedback

BHMHS aims to provide a quality service that provides care with the best possible patient outcomes. BHMHS invites and appreciates all feedback which can be given in the form of a compliment, suggestion or complaint.

If a person wishes, all forms of feedback can be given anonymously.



Compliment?

BHMHS and its staff value and appreciate hearing about the positive experiences of family/carers and patients. Highlighting and sharing positive moments helps BHMHS understand what patients and family/carers find valuable and beneficial about their experience with the service. Doing so can also allow BHMHS to share this success with other parts of Bendigo Health to the benefit of all patients and family/carers.

Suggestion?

Suggestions about how BHMHS can improve the patient and family/carer experience are also welcomed. Sometimes patients and family/carers notice things that may present an opportunity for change and improvement. All service areas have a box specifically for suggestions and, big or small, BHMHS values feedback and wants to hear it.

We would love to hear about your experience, please ask a staff member for a Patient Family/Carer Survey to complete or go to <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/FDBRKRM>

Complaint?

Informal Complaints

BHMHS staff will listen to concerns raised by anyone using or visiting any service. If a problem cannot be resolved by talking directly to care staff and managers, a formal complaint may be made. Any BHMHS staff can assist in this process.

Formal Complaints

A formal complaint may be made by:

- Completing a complaints form available from any staff member
- Contacting the Bendigo Health Patient Feedback Co-ordinator via email, phone or in writing.

Patient Feedback Co-ordinator

Bendigo Health

PO Box 126 Bendigo 3552

Ph: (03) 5454 9070

Email: feedback@bendigohealth.org.au

After a formal complaint has been made the Patient Feedback Co-ordinator will help to resolve the concern by:

- Talking to the person making the complaint (if appropriate)
- Investigating the concern raised
- Identifying areas that require improvement
- Sending a formal letter of response within 30 days.

If the person involved is not satisfied with the response by BHMHS they can:

- Contact the Patient Feedback Co-ordinator and discuss their outstanding concerns
- Contact the Mental Health Complaints Commissioner.

The Mental Health Complaints Commissioner is an independent service that will listen to all concerns and work towards resolution.



1800 246 054

mhcc.vic.gov.au

help@mhcc.vic.gov.au

**Level 26, 570 Bourke St
Melbourne VIC 3000**



Consumer Participation Group (CPG)



Consumer Participation Group
LCBHM Region

Who makes up the CPG?

The CPG is made up of people who share a desire to make mental health services as good as they can be and a belief that, for this to be possible, the voice of consumers has to be heard and valued at all levels.

Members include people who use mental health services (consumers) and people who provide them. Consumers provide leadership in the group and set the agenda for meetings. Their knowledge and expertise, gained through lived experience, provides the foundation of the CPG.

What is the role of the CPG?

The CPGs work is about working in partnership with local mental health services to make a difference in the care they provide.

By bringing consumers and providers together, consumer feedback can be sought, given and discussed. It ensures that there is thoughtful exchange about how (and when) consumer feedback will be used and what changes services will make on the basis of that feedback.

Building better mental health services together

Who benefits from the CPG?

Consumers and service providers both benefit. The result of the partnership brings a diversity of experiences and perspectives that:

- Strengthen the local consumer voice
- Brings positive and tangible change to local mental health services.

Contact from consumers and providers is welcome. To get involved or to find out more:

Golden City Support Services
Ph: (03) 5434 2777



Patients

Your Healthcare Rights in Victoria

The Australian Charter for Healthcare Rights in Victoria.

Access: Patients can access services to address their healthcare needs.

Safety: Patients receive safe and high-quality health services, provided with professional care, skill and competence.

Respect: The care provided shows respect to patients and their culture, beliefs, values and personal characteristics.

Communication: Patients receive open, timely and appropriate communication about their healthcare in a way they can understand.

Participation: Patients may join in decisions and choices about their care and about health service planning.

Privacy: Each patient's personal privacy is maintained and proper handling of their personal health and other information is assured.

Statement of Rights

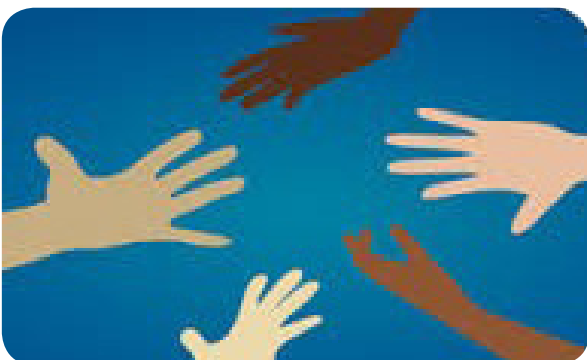
Statements of Rights set out a person's rights when they are receiving services from a mental health service provider.

A statement of rights must be given to the person at key points in their assessment and treatment.

It outlines the person's rights to:

- Communicate lawfully
- Apply to the Mental Health Tribunal at any time for a revocation of a compulsory treatment order
- Make a decision about whether to give informed consent to Electroconvulsive Therapy
- Choose a nominated person
- Make a complaint to the Mental Health Commissioner
- Be legally represented and have support by a carer, family member or friend at a hearing of the Mental Health Tribunal
- Seek the assistance of community visitors.

On entry to any part of BHMHS patients should have their rights explained to them and be offered a written copy. If you did not understand them or would like to have any of them explained further at any time, please ask any BHMHS staff member.



Personal Information and Confidentiality

When a person is using BHMHS, information about the patient, their current condition, their medical and/or psychiatric history and their treatment and care outcomes is collected and recorded.

This information provides the basis for treatment planning and allows the treating team to accurately determine the most effective care.

All BHMHS staff have a legal and ethical obligation to protect the privacy of all patients by keeping these records confidential.

In addition to written information, confidential patient information also includes:

- If a person is or has been a patient of BHMHS
- The reasons why a person is receiving treatment and services
- Any personal information or details about treatment or services, current or past
- Maintaining patient confidentiality means that BHMHS can only share patient information:
 - With BHMHS staff involved in the care and treatment of the patient
 - With other people and agencies with the expressed consent of the patient.

Personal Information and Confidentiality - Exceptions

Under the Mental Health Act 2014, if a patient is unable or refuses to give consent for BHMHS to share information, staff are bound by their wishes with the following exceptions:

- Carers can still be provided with information that they may need in order to provide ongoing care to the patient, or to prepare for their caring role. This may include information about:
 - Treatment and management of the patient's mental illness
 - How to respond to disturbing or concerning behaviors
 - How to better support the patient
- If a patient is under the age of 16, information must be shared with the patient's parents.

Where a family member or friend is not directly responsible for providing care, the Act allows staff to share a patient's health information in general terms; e.g. they can advise whether or not a patient is well enough to receive visitors. No details can be provided.

Under the Family Violence Protection Act 2008 some information can be requested and shared based on specific concerns for risk and safety.

Within the Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 some information can be requested and shared to promote the wellbeing and safety of children.

Care and Treatment

The Victorian Mental Health Act 2014

Each state in Australia has their own legal act regarding the care and treatment of people with a mental illness.

Victoria's Mental Health Act 2014 aims to empower people with a mental illness by:

- Placing them at the centre of decision making about their treatment and care
- Ensuring that their views and preferences are considered and respected
- Promoting voluntary treatment wherever possible
- Encouraging psychiatrists and other mental health practitioners to develop strong relationships with people using their service
- Ensuring patients are provided with the information and support they need to make informed choices by those who are caring for them
- Ensuring that patient rights, dignity and autonomy are respected and protected.

Nominated Person

The Mental Health Act 2014 gives patients the right to choose a Nominated Person to help and support them during their treatment and care.

This person is called their Nominated Person and their role is to:

- Represent the patients views and preferences
- Receive information from the treating team at critical time
- Participate in treatment and care planning and decision making
- Provide support in the event of becoming unwell.

A patient can choose anyone to be their Nominated Person although they are usually someone who is significant to the patient and familiar with the patients views, beliefs and life.

A Nominated Person must be willing, available and able to fulfill the responsibilities of being a Nominated Person and a patient and/or Nominated Person can change their mind at any time.

Advance Statement

The Mental Health Act 2014 provides process and encourages a person to complete an Advance Statement. This is used to detail a patient's treatment preferences, choices and views.

The purpose of an Advance Statement is to empower patients and ensure that their views and preferences, especially at times when they are unwell and may have difficulty voicing these, are heard, considered and respected.

A patient's Advance Statement is a legal document and can include information about:

- previous treatments they found effective and helpful
- treatment that has been less helpful or ineffective in the past
- preferences regarding their treatment plan, recovery goals and options
- helps support the involvement of family/carers when ever possible to advocate for your preferences if you become unwell.

A patient's Advance Statement has to be considered by the treating team when planning treatment and care. It can be updated at any time.

Getting a Second Opinion

A second psychiatric opinion can be requested by a patient, whether they are a voluntary or a compulsory patient at anytime during their care and treatment.

A patient's Nominated Person, carer or guardian can also request a second opinion.

The second opinion can be requested if a patient would like to clarify their:

- Legal status
- Treatment options, choices and plans
- Diagnosis.

A patient's treating psychiatrist can also request a second opinion to assist with treatment planning and options.

A second opinion can be made privately at the patient's own cost or within the service for free.

Compulsory patients can also access the second psychiatric opinion service if a local alternative is unavailable.

For further information please speak with staff.

More information about the Mental Health Act, Nominated Persons, Advance Statements and getting a second opinion is available in the Mental Health Act 2014 handbook and can be obtained by asking your nurse or clinician or found on the Department of Health website:

www.health.vic.gov.au/mentalhealth/mhact2014

Mental Health Act 2014 (MHA)

Common Terms explained

Advance Statement

A document written by a person stating their treatment preferences should they become unwell and need compulsory treatment.

Assessment Order

Allows a person to be detained and taken to a designated Mental Health Service to be reviewed by a consultant psychiatrist.

Capacity

A person's ability to give informed consent to a particular treatment at a particular time. A person's capacity can fluctuate.

Compulsory Patient

A person who is subject to an Assessment Order, Temporary Treatment Order or Treatment Order.

Electroconvulsive Treatment (ECT)

A safe and effective medical procedure used to treat some mental illnesses, particularly severe depression and other mood disorders.

Mental Health Tribunal

An independent body and a key safeguard in the compulsory treatment of people with a mental illness. The role of the tribunal is to review people on treatment orders and determine whether the criteria for compulsory mental health treatment apply on an individual basis, and if so, determine the length of the compulsory treatment order.

Nominated Person

A person can nominate someone to receive information and to provide them with support and assistance in exercising their rights if they are subject to a compulsory order under the MHA.

Statement of Rights

Documents that explain a person's rights under the Mental Health Act 2014 while being assessed and treated for a mental illness. A statement of rights must be provided at key points during a person's assessment and mental health treatment.

Temporary Treatment Order

Allows the provision of compulsory mental health treatment that can be provided in an inpatient or community setting.

Treatment Order

The Mental Health Tribunal may make a Treatment Order for a person subject to a Temporary Treatment Order where compulsory mental health treatment is deemed necessary. Treatment can be provided in an inpatient or community setting.



Mental Health Tribunal

The Mental Health Tribunal conducts hearings to make decisions about whether a person should be subject to a Treatment Order enabling compulsory treatment and for how long.

Your treating team will prepare a report on Compulsory Treatment, which outlines why they think you need to be treated under a Treatment Order. They must give this report to you at least two days before your hearing. The tribunal members will read your treating team's report just before your hearing starts.

The patient's treating team can ask the tribunal to decide that the patient cannot see all or part of their documents. Staff will provide an explanation and advice on what documents you can access.

The tribunal also wants to know what you think about the need for a Treatment Order and what, if any, support you think you need for your mental health.

For further information please speak with staff or access:

www.mht.vic.gov.au

Accessing Legal Advice



Lawyers And Legal Services

Victoria Legal Aid provide free, confidential information about the law.

They provide information about your rights and advice on legal problems about:

- Family and relationship breakdown
- Trouble with the police
- Going to court
- Getting fair treatment
- Money worries.

For people who are on a low income or benefit, Legal Aid may sometimes pay for a lawyer if needed.

Central Office

350 Queen Street
Melbourne Victoria 3000
Monday–Friday 8.45am–5.15pm

1300 792 387

www.legalaid.vic.gov.au

Accessing your Health Records

Under the Freedom of Information (FOI) Act, people are able to request access to their medical and psychiatric records through the organisation holding those records.

Freedom of information

www.foi.vic.gov.au

Any request for access to BHMHS records must be directed through Bendigo Health. After receiving a valid request, the Freedom of Information Officer has 45 days to provide a response.

Can a request to access medical and psychiatric records be denied?

There are circumstances where a request to access records can be denied in full, or in part. Depending on the reasons for denying access, the applicant has a range of appeal options:

- Contacting the Freedom of Information Officer again
- Review by the FOI Commissioner
- Conciliation from the Health Service Commissioner (HSC)



Freedom of Information Officer

Ph: (03) 5454 8307



FOI Commissioner

Ph: 1300 842 364

www.foicommissioner.vic.gov.au



**Office of the Health Services
Commissioner**

Ph: 1300 582 113

www.health.vic.gov.au/hsc/

Being a carer or family member

Having a close friend, partner or family member diagnosed with a mental illness can be a distressing experience and for some a relief. The concerning behaviour of the person they care for can, with diagnosis, be understood as something caused by an illness, something that can be treated and from which they can recover.

A diagnosis can, however, come as a shock. It means having to accept that this person will need time to get well and that they may need continued care and support during that time. Being a carer is not easy, but it can also be a fulfilling and satisfying role.



Who is a Carer?

A carer is anyone whose life is affected due to their caring relationship with a person who has an emotional or mental illness.

A carer can be a parent, partner, child or adolescent, grandparent, sibling, son/daughter, relative, neighbour or friend.

If you provide full or part time emotional, practical or financial support to someone with a mental or emotional illness, you are a carer.

It is important to remember:

- Individual differences occur in the experience of emotional and mental illness
- The impact on carers can be experienced in many ways
- The age and developmental stage of the person they care for will affect the role and legal obligations of the carer
- Individual and personal factors are taken into account in any decision-making process relating to treatment and care
- Carers are not alone - there are people and services there to help
- The needs and experiences of carers are important too.

Talking with Staff

Communication with the clinical treating team is important. BHMHS understand that sometimes this can be difficult for family/carers who may be tired, distressed or confused.

Some tips that may be useful when carers are speaking to BHMHS staff about the person they are caring for include:

- Before making a call or visit, write down any questions you want to ask or points you would like to raise
- If you don't understand what is being said, it is okay to ask for clarification
- Make some notes during the conversation so that you can keep track of what is said and can look back over it later if you need to.



Having Input

We know that the best patient outcomes are achieved when the patient, carer and family are all involved in treatment planning and decision making.

Family/carers are therefore an important member of the treatment team and they play a vital role in the support and recovery of the person.

Family/carers should expect to remain informed and involved in the care and treatment planning processes from entry to the service to discharge.

So that family/carers can fully and confidently participate in and support the recovery of the person they are caring for they will be:

- Provided with information about the nature of the mental illness
- Assisted with skills to support the patient to manage their symptoms
- Provided with information about when and how to voice a concern they have about the welfare of the patient
- Involved in and fully informed about discharge planning.

Know Your Rights as a Carer

The Victorian Charter Supporting People in Care Relationships

The Carers Recognition Act and the Victorian charter supporting people in care relationships are about the people in the relationship.



As a carer you can expect to:

- Be respected and recognised
 - As an individual with your own needs
 - As a carer
 - As someone with special knowledge of the person in your care.
- Be supported as an individual and as a carer, including during changes in care relationships
- Be recognised for your efforts and dedication as a carer and for the social and economic contribution to the community arising from your role as a carer
- Have your views and cultural identity taken into account, together with the views, cultural identity, needs and best interest of the person for whom you care, in matters relating to the care relationship, including when decisions are made that impact on the carer and the care relationship
- Have your social wellbeing and health recognised in matters relating to the care relationship
- Have considered in decision making the effect of being a carer on your participation in employment and education.



Financial Assistance for Carers

Being a carer can often have a significant financial impact due to extra expenses or reduced time and opportunity to undertake paid work. To help with this there are several types of assistance available.



Centrelink can provide assistance to carers through:

A Carer Payment

A payment for people who are unable to work while caring for someone.

A Carer Allowance

A supplementary payment that may be paid on top of other payments.

For more information and to check eligibility, contact Centrelink:

Monday - Friday 8am - 5pm
Ph: 13 27 17

www.humanservices.gov.au

Anglicare Financial Counselling



Anglicare's financial counsellors provide a free and confidential service to anyone experiencing financial difficulties.
Freecall: 1800 244 323

The Carer Support Fund

A fund that is available for those caring for people who are currently engaged with BHMHS. The fund is to help with:

- Unexpected costs associated with taking on the role of a carer
- Managing a crisis
- Support to avert a crisis.

The fund cannot be used as ongoing assistance or to help the person receiving care directly. BHMHS staff can assist carers to access this fund.

FaPMI Brokerage Fund

(FaPMI - Families where a Parent has a Mental Illness)

A capped fund, set up to assist and support families with dependent aged children where a parent has a mental illness. It promotes positive outcomes for families by providing:

- Direct help to assist children and family members to connect with each other and the community
- Assistance with accessing support programs and initiatives with a family focus including peer support groups and parenting programs.

FaPMI Coordinator
Ph: (03) 5454 7612

Good Mental Health

What is it?



Good mental health is a sense of wellbeing, confidence and self-esteem.

Being mentally healthy helps people to:

- Form and maintain positive relationships
- Deal with life's challenges
- Enjoy and appreciate day-to-day life and other people around them.

Tips for maintaining good mental health include:

- Talking about your feelings
- Exercising regularly
- Eating healthy food
- Spending time with friends and loved ones
- Spending time relaxing
- Setting realistic and achievable goals
- Accepting help and support when needed
- Getting enough sleep
- Avoiding illicit substance or abuse of alcohol
- Not smoking.

Mental Illness

What causes it?

Mental illnesses are a range of health problems that significantly affects the functioning of a person's mind, how they behave and how they interact with others.

The exact cause of mental illness is still unknown. What is known is that mental illness results from complex interactions between a person's mind, their body and their environment.

Factors that can contribute to the onset of a mental illness include:

- Long-term and acute stress
- Biological factors including genetics, chemistry and hormones
- Misuse of alcohol and use of drugs
- Social factors including isolation and family breakdown
- Physical illness and injury
- Traumatic events and exposure to violence.





Stigma

What's the harm?

As well as dealing with the effects of a mental illness, stigma and prejudice can be another major source of stress.

Stigma is at its most harmful when the prejudiced views and responses of others shape the way a person living with a mental illness sees themselves.

When this happens it can bring with it feelings and experiences including:

- Shame and disgrace
- Loss of hope
- Distress and anger
- Increased isolation
- Reluctance to seek and accept help and support.

It can leave people feeling ashamed and embarrassed and can lead to a relapse or worsening of their mental illness.

Families and mental health staff can also be affected by the harm that stigma causes.

Working Together to Stop Stigma

BH is proud to be a signature to the Murray Primary Health Network Stop Mental Illness Stigma Charter.

Everybody plays a role in creating a mentally healthy community that promotes inclusion and supports recovery. A lack of understanding and a fear of the unknown is a large part of why stigma about mental illness still exists.

Helping to stamp out stigma starts with acknowledging that those living with a mental illness are entitled to the same rights, opportunities and respect as everybody else. It includes:

- Being empathetic and sensitive to the experiences of others
- Learning about mental illness
- Not labelling those with a mental illness or using offensive or hurtful terms
- Acknowledging and listening to any one effected by mental illness with an open mind and without judgment
- Talking openly about mental illness - it is not something to be ashamed of.
- Remember it is often the small things that make the biggest difference.

Remember it is often the small things that make the biggest difference.



Terms you may hear

Episode of care

Refers to the time period from admission through to discharge from a particular BHMHS service team.

Clinical treating team

Includes all BHMHS clinical staff involved in the treatment and care of the patient.

Psychiatrist

A person who is registered as a medical practitioner in the specialty of psychiatry.

Medical practitioner

A person who is registered to practice in medicine as a doctor or medical officer (MO).

Registrar

A medical practitioner who is studying to become a psychiatrist.

Psychologist

A person who has studied psychology.
A psychologist cannot prescribe medication.

Mental health practitioner

A person who is employed by a mental health service and is a registered psychologist, nurse, occupational therapist or social worker.

Treatment

The things done in the course of professional skill to remedy mental illness, alleviate symptoms, reduce the ill effects of mental illness and support recovery.

Restrictive intervention

Seclusion or bodily restraint.

Seclusion

The sole confinement of a person to a room or any other enclosed space from which they are unable to leave.

Bodily restraint

A form of physical or mechanical restraint that stops a person having free movement of their limbs.

Psychosis

A term used to describe a condition that affects the mind, resulting in disturbances in a persons perception or thought processes.

Mental illness

A medical condition characterised by a significant disturbance of thought, mood, perception or memory.

A person is not to be considered to have a mental illness just because they:

- Express or refuse/fail to express a particular political or religious opinion, belief or activity, philosophy, sexual preference or orientation
- Engage in sexual promiscuity, immoral, illegal or antisocial conduct or behaviour
- Have a cognitive or intellectual disability
- Solely use/abuse drugs or alcohol
- Have a particular economic or social status
- Are a member of a particular cultural or racial group
- Are or have previously been involved in relationship conflicts
- Have previously been treated for a mental illness.

Mental Illness

Common myths

Only a few people are affected by mental illness

One in five Australians will experience a mental illness during their lifetime. Mental illness is common and affects people of all ages, gender and socio-economic and cultural backgrounds.

People develop a mental illness because they are weak

A mental illness is not caused by a personal weakness or character flaw. Seeking and accepting help is a sign of strength and courage.

People with a mental illness will never get better

With the right kind of help, treatment and ongoing support, recovery is possible. It is possible for people with a mental illness to manage their symptoms, achieve recovery and lead healthy, productive and satisfying lives.

People with a mental illness should just 'pull themselves out of it' or 'will it away'

Mental illness is not caused by a personal weakness and cannot be 'cured' simply by personal strength just as ignoring it will not make it go away.

All people with a mental illness are aggressive and violent

Having a mental illness does not make someone more dangerous or violent than those who do not have a mental illness. In fact, they are more likely to harm themselves, or to be victims of violence than to harm someone else.

People with schizophrenia have more than one personality

Schizophrenia is often mistakenly confused with multiple personality disorder. While people diagnosed with schizophrenia experience symptoms including hallucinations and delusions, it does not manifest through multiple personalities.

Electroconvulsive Therapy (ECT) or 'shock treatment' is painful, dangerous and barbaric

ECT is a safe and effective medical procedure used to successfully treat some mental illness. The procedure, conducted while the patient is under anaesthetic by trained professionals, is not painful. While there are risks associated with ECT, as with all medical procedures, ECT has given hope and a new lease on life to many with a severe and debilitating mental illness.

Useful Contacts

Your local GP can be a good source of support and information. Referrals to psychologists and other mental health clinicians which are made by a GP qualify for a Medicare rebate. Check the yellow pages for local GPs.

Aboriginal Family Counselling
(03) 9403 3300

ACSO
1300 022 760

Alcoholics Anonymous
0447 754 111

Anglicare
Bendigo- (03) 5448 1100
Castlemaine - (03) 5470 6266
Echuca - (03) 5482 0900
Kyneton - (03) 5421 2000
Maryborough - (03) 5460 4144
Swan Hill - (03) 5036 3200

Bendigo Community Health Services
(03) 5448 1600

Bendigo & District Aboriginal Co-op
(03) 5442 4947

Beyond Blue
1300 224 636

Castlemaine Community Health
(03) 5479 1000

Centacare
(03) 5443 9577

Centre Against Sexual Assault (CASA)
(03) 5441 0430

Centre for Non-Violence
(03) 5430 3000

Child FIRST
1800 260 338

Cobaw Community Health
Gisborne - (03) 5421 1666
Kyneton - (03) 5421 1666
Woodend - (03) 5421 1680

Commonwealth Respite & Carelink Centre
1800 052 222

Drug and Alcohol Direct Line
1800 888 236

Echuca Regional Health
(03) 5485 5400

Family Drug Support
1300 368 186

Gamblers Anonymous
(03) 9696 6108

Haven; Home, Safe Housing Services
(03) 5444 9000

Headspace Bendigo
(03) 5434 5345

Headspace Swan Hill
Ph: (03) 4010 7100

Health Services Commission
1800 136 066

Inglewood & District health Service
(03) 5431 7000

Kids Helpline

1800 551 800

Loddon Campaspe Community Legal Centre

(03) 5445 0909

Lifeline

13 11 14

Macedon Ranges Health Services

(03) 5428 0300

Mallee Family Care (Swan Hill)

(03) 5032 4479

Maryborough District Health Service

(03) 5461 0333

Mensline Australia

1300 789 978

Mental Illness Fellowship Helpline

1800 985 944

No to Violence/Men's Referral Service

1300 766 491

Northern District Community Health Centre

Boort - (03) 5451 0260

Cohuna - (03) 5451 0250

Kerang - (03) 5451 0200

Pyramid Hill - (03) 5455 7065

Quambatook - (03) 5457 1300

Nurse on Call

1300 606 024

Office of the Chief Psychiatrist

(03) 9096 7571

Office of the Public Advocate

1300 309 337

Victorian Ombudsman

1800 806 314

Parentline

1300 301 300

Partners in Recovery

(03) 5441 7004

Post and Antenatal Depression Association (PANDA)

1300 726 306

Refugee & Immigration Legal Centre

(03) 9413 0101

Safe Steps (family violence service)

1800 015 188

Salvation Army (Bendigo)

(03) 5440 8400

State Trustees

1300 138 672

Suicide Helpline

1300 651 251

Swan Hill & District Aboriginal Co-op

(03) 5032 5277

Switchboard (formerly Gay and Lesbian Switchboard)

(03) 9663 2939

Victorian Civil & Administrative Tribunal (VCAT)

1800 079 413

Women's Health Loddon Mallee

1800 350 233

Victorian Mental Illness Awareness Council (VMIAC)

(03) 9380 3900

Want more information?



www.beyondblue.org.au 1300 224 636



Crisis Support. Suicide Prevention.

www.lifeline.org.au 13 11 14



Helping all Australians affected by mental illness lead a better life.

www.sane.org 1800 187 263



The help you need, where and when you need it.

<http://au.reachout.com>



National Youth Mental Health Foundation.

www.headspace.org.au

1800 650 890



Gay and Lesbian Health Victoria

<http://www.glhv.org.au/>

[03] 9479 8760

Want more information?



www.carersvictoria.org.au www.youngcarers.net.au
1800 242 636



www.lmmhcn.org.au
1800 068 978



Children of Parents with a Mental Illness – Keeping families in mind
www.copmi.net.au



Supporting mental health recovery

Supporting Mental Health Recovery
www.mindaustralia.org.au



Representing Victorian Mental Health Carers
www.tandemcarers.org.au

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Important: Please respect the privacy of our staff and other patients.