

Excellent Care. Every Person. Every Time.

# Bendigo Health Mental Health & Wellbeing Service Patient, Family and Carer Service Guide

For **24/7 Mental Health access and emergency response**,  
please contact Bendigo Health Mental Health Triage Service

## 1300 363 788

### Mental Health & Wellbeing Service



- Community services
- Inpatient services
- Residential services



Excellent Care. Every Person. Every Time.

# Welcome

## To our patients, families and carers

Welcome to Bendigo Health Mental Health & Wellbeing Service (MHMHWS). 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, families and carers to support 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 a person's culture, spirituality, gender identity, relationships and sexuality affect every area of 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 & Wellbeing 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 logo features the words "Smoke Free" in a green, cursive-style font. A green wavy line is positioned above the word "Free".

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 instils 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.

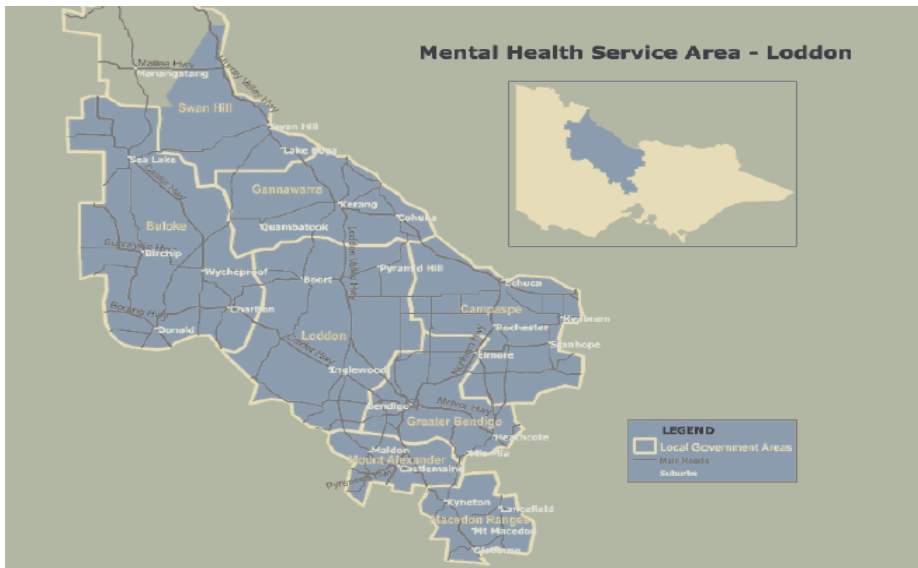
# Contents

<b>Welcome</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>Patients Rights</b>	
<b>Interpreting Services</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>Rights</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>Primary Staff Contact</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>Personal Information &amp; Confidentiality</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>Our Approach to Care</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>Accessing your Health Records</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>Where does BHMHS provide care</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>Care and Treatment</b>	
<b>BH Consumer Register</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>The Mental Health &amp; Wellbeing Act 2022</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>BH Mental Health &amp; Wellbeing Services</b>		<b>Nominated Support Person</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>Accessing BHMHS</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>Second Psychiatric Opinion</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>Aspects of Care</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>Advance Statement of Preferences</b>	<b>36</b>
<b>Forms of Treatment</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>Common terms explained</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>Inpatient Services</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>Accessing Legal Aid</b>	<b>38</b>
<b>Residential Services</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>Mental Health Tribunal</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>Helping safety &amp; recovery</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>Carers</b>	
<b>Community Services</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>Being a Carer</b>	<b>40</b>
<b>Child and Youth</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>Carer Rights</b>	<b>42</b>
<b>Adult</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>Financial Assistance for Carers</b>	<b>43</b>
<b>Older Persons</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>Further Information</b>	
<b>Specialist Programs</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>Good Mental Health</b>	<b>44</b>
<b>Specialist Support Roles</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>Mental Illness</b>	<b>45</b>
<b>Advocacy and Support</b>		<b>Stigma</b>	<b>45</b>
<b>Independent Service Groups</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>Terms you may hear</b>	<b>46</b>
<b>Providing Feedback</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>Common Myths</b>	<b>47</b>
		<b>Useful Contacts</b>	<b>48</b>
		<b>Want more information</b>	<b>50</b>

# Where does Bendigo Health Mental Health & Wellbeing Service provide care?

BHMHWS is a publicly funded Area Mental Health & Wellbeing Service providing mental health 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 (Patient, Family, Carer) Register

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

A member of a group (Committee, Board, advisory committee, reference group or project group) that meets regularly

## Workshops, forums or focus groups

Short-term groups to provided a consumer perspective on specific aspects of care and treatment

## Literacy Review Group

Reviewing information and providing feedback on content, ease of reading, clarity and appropriateness - an informal, off-site process. This includes brochures, fact sheets, and website information

## Quality Improvement

Taking part in quality improvement projects. Reviewing data and processes and assisting to develop improvement strategies.

## Education

Talk with us and share your experiences and thoughts to:

- Increase staff knowledge and skills
- Assist with developing improvement

## 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 9079 for further information.

Image courtesy of iStockPhoto/PhotoReal

# Accessing BHMHWS

## Regional Mental Health Triage Service

If you are concerned about your own mental health or that of someone else, they 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 BHMHWS 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 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  
call triple zero (000)

**In line with the Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System we will be transitioning into the age-based services defined as :**  
**Infant, Child and Youth Area Mental Health and Wellbeing Services (ICY AMHWS) for 0-25-year-olds**  
**Adult and Older Adult Area Mental Health and Wellbeing Services (AOA AHMWS) for people aged 26 years and older .**



# Accessing BHMHWS



BHMHWS 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 BHMHWS 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.

Through- out this region BHMHWS 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, BHMHWS also has clinical teams located in Swan Hill, Echuca, Kyneton, Castlemaine and Maryborough.

# Aspects of Care

## BHMHWS, part of a teaching hospital



BHMHWS 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, 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

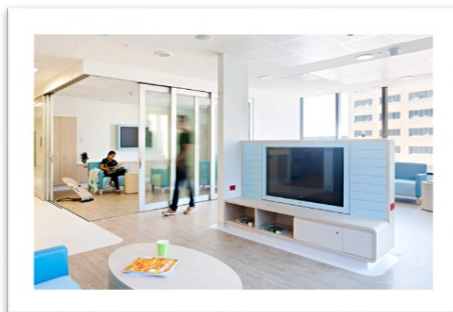
Health services can be complex systems to understand. The structure of BHMHS services can also be a challenge to navigate. Bendigo Health provides public mental health and wellbeing services for our region. Other mental health service providers include Private Practitioners, GPs, Community Support Services 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 Mental Health 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 and/or carer and anyone else involved in providing care.

Before treatment begins patients are fully informed about the plan. The patient and their family and /or 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 over 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.

BHMHWS has four inpatient units, each located in Bendigo:

## Adult Acute Inpatient Unit (AAU)

Bendigo Hospital

**Ph: (03) 5454 7646**

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

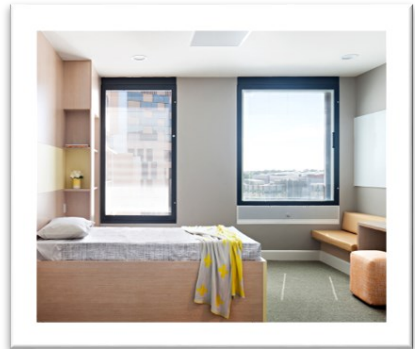
Patients are supported to find ways to manage their illness and identify triggers and coping strategies that assist them in their recovery.

## Parent and Infant Unit (PIU)

Bendigo Hospital

**Ph: (03) 5454 8563**

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.



## Extended Care Unit (ECU)

Bendigo Hospital

**Ph: (03) 5454 7660**

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

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

## Older Persons Acute Unit (OPAU)

Bendigo Hospital

**Ph: (03) 5454 8570**

The OPAU 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.

## 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.



## 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 person's sense of safety, support and comfort while receiving care.

For example, you will see **Discharge Messages** on display in the inpatient units. These are messages of hope written by patients to other patients.



# Residential Services



BHMWHS has four residential units in Bendigo to 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.

Supportive therapeutic environments assist patients to work on their recovery goals. The programs foster links with community and opportunities for work, education and skill development.

## Youth PARC (YPARC)

Havlin Street East, Bendigo  
**Ph: (03) 5454 6270**

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 staff for patients aged 16 to 65 years. Maximum stay of 28 days.

## Community Care Units (CCU)

Kurmala Street, Bendigo  
**Ph: (03) 5454 6510 (option 1)**

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

## Dual Diagnosis Rehabilitation Unit (DDU)

Kurmala Street, Bendigo  
**Ph: (03) 5454 6510 (option 2)**

DDU is a 8 bed specialised rehabilitation program 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. Speak to staff if you have any difficulties or safety concerns with another patient.

## 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 behaviour

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 1 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.

BHMHWS 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)

43 Havlin Street East, Kennington  
Bendigo

**Ph: (03) 5454 6298**

YCMHT is based in Bendigo, with clinicians also in Swan Hill, Echuca and Castlemaine. YMHT 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 0412**

## Short Term Treatment Team (STTT)

43 Havlin Street East, Kennington  
Bendigo

**Ph: (03) 5454 7201**

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

# Adult Mental Health & Wellbeing Services

BHMHWS 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, Bendigo  
**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 0412**

**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**

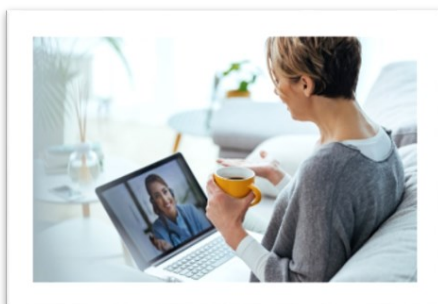
## Telehealth

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



## Older Persons Community Mental Health Team (OPCMHT)

John Bomford Centre (JBC),  
Condon Street, Strathdale, Bendigo  
**Ph: (03) 5454 7604**

The Older Persons Community 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.

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

### **Echuca**

**Ph: (03) 5481 0700**

### **Swan Hill**

**Ph: (03) 5036 1900**

### **Castlemaine**

**Ph: (03) 5471 1000**

### **Kyneton**

**Ph: (03) 5421 2100**

### **Maryborough**

**Ph: (03) 5461 0412**

## BHMHWS 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 BHMHWS Regional Triage Service on 1300 363 788

### Specialist Autism Assessment Service (SAAS)

**Ph: (03) 5440 6506**

SAAS is a program run through Bendigo Health 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 0-18 years of age.

SAAS 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 please speak to a member of the SAAS team.



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

**Ph: (03) 5440 6506**

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 experiencing significant challenging behaviours before they become more entrenched and problematic.

## Women's Mental Health Program

**Ph: (03) 5454 7670**

The Women's Mental Health Program focuses on enhancing gender responsive and sensitive practice within Mental Health & Wellbeing 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

# Support for children & young people in families affected by mental illness



## Families where Parents have a Mental Illness (FaPMI)

FaPMI mainly works with BHMHS staff and with local network partners to influence and promote family inclusive practice to achieve positive outcomes for all family members.

- Education, training, resources and consultation support to the mental health workforce and their network partners
- Development of strong local networks, policy and protocols regarding family-inclusive practice and support to families
- Support for the implementation of peer support programs for parents, children, young people and families
- Management of brokerage funds to support activities for young carers, parent consumers and their families

### Peer support programs

provide an opportunity for children and young people to connect with others who share and understand their experiences while learning about mental illness, learning self-care and coping strategies, and having fun.

## Mental Health Family and Carer Support Team

The Mental Health Family & Carer Support Team consists of a Family and Carer Support Worker and Carer Consultants

They offer short term assistance and support to those who care for someone with a mental illness.

They provide carers and families with:

- Individual emotional support
- Links to Carer support groups
- Links to supportive networks including respite services
- Workshops and other educational activities
- Information about services and supports
- Strategies for self-care and caring for a person with a mental illness
- Assistance communicating with services
- Financial support through the Carer Support Fund

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

**Ph: (03) 5454 7612**

## Health and Wellbeing Library and Resource Centre



The Olinda Street Library and Resource Centre offers a warm and friendly environment which can be used for groups providing education and support activities for consumers, families and carers.

The BHMHS health and wellbeing 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 families, carers, consumers and staff throughout the region.

## Library and Resource Centre

8 Olinda St, Bendigo

Monday - Thursday 10am to 4pm

**Ph: (03) 5454 7670**

# Specialist Support Roles

## Aboriginal Hospital Liaison Officer

The Aboriginal Hospital Liaison Officer (AHLO) can be accessed for inpatients and provides:

- Patient support and cultural understanding
- Can liaise with other staff on behalf of patients
- Assists patients and their families in understanding hospital procedures
- Assists with admission and discharge planning
- Helps patients to access information on services in the community that have a specific cultural focus and may help with their health and wellbeing

If you would like to speak to the AHLO please speak with any staff member.



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

BHMHWS 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, carers and families engaged with BHMHS in all settings.

The Mental Health Spiritual Care Practitioner 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 or 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, 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.

## Family and Carer Support Worker

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

- Individual emotional support
- Regular support groups
- Educational and social opportunities
- Respite activities
- Linking carers in with support services within their local community

## Mental Health 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 families and 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 or the Family and Carer Support Worker or phone

**Ph: (03) 5454 7612**

## Post Discharge Peer



## Support Workers

BHMHWS employs Post Discharge Peer Support Workers (PSWs). PSWs 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.

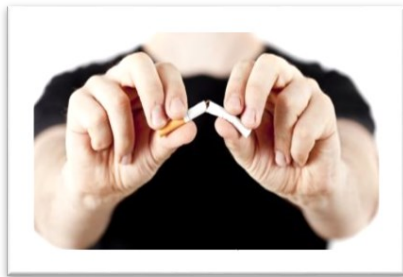
The PSWs support people to establish or re-establish themselves in a community environment, including helping the consumer access the range of community supports they need or seek

The PSWs work within the Adult and Youth Community clinical teams in Bendigo and the regions.

A key part of their work is focused on supporting people who have recently been in hospital, to provide additional support at this time.

## Alcohol, Tobacco and other Drug Specialist Nurse

The dedicated addiction treatment specialist nurse provides clinical support and advice to treating teams on inpatient units caring for patients who are experiencing challenges relating to alcohol, tobacco and or other drugs. The specialist nurse engages the patients in their care and recovery pathways. Based in the Adult Acute Unit the specialist nurse can also provide assistance to the other mental health inpatient units.



## 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 and Wellbeing Act 2022(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 & 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
- Contact IMHA **1300 947 820**  
Email: [contact@imha.vic.gov.au](mailto:contact@imha.vic.gov.au)

## Community Visitors Program

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

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

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

**Ph: 1300 309 337**

# Providing Feedback

BHMHWS aims to provide a quality service that provides care with the best possible patient outcomes.

BHMHWS 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?

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

## Suggestion?

Suggestions about how we can improve the patient, family and carer experience are also welcomed. Sometimes patients, families and carers notice things that may present an opportunity for change and improvement. All service areas have a box for suggestions, big or small we value your feedback

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

BHMHWS 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
- By contacting the Bendigo Health Patient Feedback Coordinator via email, phone or in writing

### Patient Feedback Coordinator

Bendigo Health  
PO Box 126 Bendigo 3552  
**Ph:** (03) 5454 6000

**Email:** [feedback@bendigohealth.org.au](mailto:feedback@bendigohealth.org.au)

After a formal complaint has been made the Patient Feedback Coordinator 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 Coordinator and discuss their outstanding concerns
- Contact the Mental Health and Wellbeing Commission

**The Mental Health and Wellbeing Commission** is an independent service that will listen to all concerns and work towards resolution.



MENTAL HEALTH  
COMPLAINTS  
COMMISSIONER

**1800 246 054**

[mhwc.vic.gov.au](http://mhwc.vic.gov.au)  
[help@mhcc.vic.gov.au](mailto:help@mhcc.vic.gov.au)

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



# Patient Rights



## Your Healthcare Rights

The Australian Charter of Healthcare Rights describes the rights of patients and other people using the Australian health system. These rights are essential to make sure that, wherever and whenever care is provided, it is of high quality and is safe.

The Charter included seven key rights.

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

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

**3. Respect:** The care provided shows respect to patients and their culture, beliefs, values and choices recognised and respected

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

**5. Partnership:** Patients may join in decisions and choices about their care and about treatment planning and include the people they want in decision making

**6. Privacy:** Each patient's personal privacy is maintained and health information is kept secure and confidential

**7. Give Feedback:** Patients can provide feedback or make a complaint and have concerns addressed in a transparent and timely way

# Statement of Rights

A Statement of Rights sets out a person's rights, and the processes that apply, while a person is receiving a mental health and wellbeing service under the *Mental Health and Wellbeing Act 2022*

The relevant statement of rights must be given to a person and specified support people at key points during their assessment and treatment.

When a person is given a statement of rights, all reasonable steps must be taken to ensure that the person understands the rights set out in the document.

## Contents of statements of rights

A statement of rights provides information relevant to a person's circumstances, including rights to:

- information, support and help making decisions
- communicate
- feel safe and respected
- make an advance statement of preferences
- choose a nominated support person
- apply to the Mental Health Tribunal for a revocation of a compulsory treatment order

- seek a second psychiatric opinion
- make a complaint to a service provider or the Mental Health and Wellbeing Commission
- be legally represented
- instruct a non-legal mental health advocate to provide support
- seek the assistance of a Community Visitor

Statements of rights also include information about the rights of First Nation people to have their unique culture and identity respected.

**On entry to any part of the service 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**

# Privacy & Confidentiality

## 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
- To maintain confidentiality 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

## Information sharing

The *Mental Health & Wellbeing Act 2022*, includes new principles for the disclosure, collection and use of personal information and health information and a new ground of complaint to the Mental Health Wellbeing Commission if proper consideration is not given to the principles by a mental health and wellbeing service provider.

The *Mental Health & Wellbeing Act 2022*, adopts a consent-driven approach to information sharing. As a general rule, consumer consent is required for the sharing of health and personal information, and consumers are able to withdraw this consent at any time

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



# Accessing your Health Records

## Freedom of Information

Freedom of Information Officer

Ph: (03) 5454 8307



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

[www.foi.vic.gov.au](http://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 FOI Officer again
- Review by OVIC
- Conciliation from the Health Complaints Commissioner

Office of the Victorian  
Information Commissioner

1300 006 842

[www.ovic.vic.gov.au](http://www.ovic.vic.gov.au)



Office of the Victorian  
Information Commissioner

The Health Complaints  
Commissioner

1300 582 113

[www.hcc.vic.gov.au](http://www.hcc.vic.gov.au)



# Care & Treatment

## The Mental Health and Wellbeing Act 2022

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

The *Mental Health and Wellbeing Act 2022* contains a number of principles to guide the provision of mental health services. Psychiatrists, doctors and staff at mental health services, as well as the Mental Health Tribunal, must consider these principles when deciding what happens to you.

The principles promote and better protect human rights. The principles reflect the values of our community and provide the basis for compassionate treatment, care and support.

The principles require mental health and wellbeing service providers to:

- support the dignity and autonomy of people living with mental illness or psychological distress
- ensure people are involved in decisions about their treatment, care and support
- recognise the role of families, carers and supporters ensure the service system responds to the diverse needs and preferences of Victorians

### Supported decision making principle

Under the Act people receiving mental health and wellbeing services are to be supported to make decisions and to be involved in decisions about their assessment, treatment and recovery including when they are receiving compulsory treatment. The views and preferences of the person receiving mental health and wellbeing services are to be given priority.

### Supporting people when communicating information about assessment, treatment and care

Under the Act anyone who is required to communicate with a consumer, family member, carer, guardian, nominated support person or complainant must take reasonable steps to:

- explain what they are communicating
- answer questions as clearly and completely as possible
- provide appropriate supports to help the person understand the information, make decisions and communicate their views

# Care & Treatment

## The Mental Health and Wellbeing Act 2022

### Nominated Support Person

A nominated support person is somebody who you nominate to receive information and support you while you are receiving treatment as a compulsory patient under the Act

#### Role of the nominated support person

The nominated support person must be consulted about treatment and can:

- support you
- help represent your interests
- receive information
- help you to exercise any of your rights under the Act

#### What you must consider when making a nomination

- think about who is the best person to assist you
- the person must be willing, available and able to undertake the duties and responsibilities of the role
- the person should advocate for what you say you want, not what they want or think is in your best interest

### Second Psychiatric Opinions

You have the right to get a second psychiatric opinion about:

- whether the treatment criteria apply to you
- your treatment and its possible effects on you

You can ask your treating team to reassess you, or to get a second opinion from a different psychiatrist.

The act allows you to request a second opinion at any time. Requests for second opinions can also be made by:

- a person you ask to do so on your behalf
- your guardian
- a parent (if you are under 16)
- the Secretary of the Department of Human Services, if you are on a custody or guardianship to Secretary order

#### A different second opinion won't necessarily mean your treatment changes.

If the psychiatrist providing a second opinion thinks that the criteria for a treatment order do not apply or the treatment should be changed, your treating psychiatrist must reassess you as soon as practicable.

## Advance Statement of Preferences

An advance statement of preferences sets out a person's treatment, care and support preferences if they become unwell and receive compulsory assessment or treatment

### Contents of an advance statement of preferences

An advance statement of preferences sets out a person's treatment, care and support preferences and may include information about:

- treatment they find effective
- treatment that has been less effective in the past
- their views and preferences about electroconvulsive treatment
- support preferences to assist them to communicate and participate in decision-making
- preferences about who may be provided with their health information, including the name and details of any person to be informed that the person is receiving compulsory assessment or treatment
- the name and contact details of their nominated support person or advocate
- preferences about who may make a complaint to the Mental Health and Wellbeing Commission on their behalf

## Psychotropic Drug Advisory Service

The Psychotropic Drug Advisory Service (PDAS) is a Victorian state-wide specialist service, based at Alfred Health. PDAS provides independent information on psychiatric medicines to health professionals, consumers, families, carers, and supporters.

PDAS can provide you with tailored information about mental health conditions and the medications available to help you and your treating team make informed decisions about choosing the right medicine.

Having information that is appropriate to your situation can help you to discuss your medication experience and options with your treating doctor or team.

**AlfredHealth**

Ph: 03) 9076 8036

[PDAS@alfredhealth.org.au](mailto:PDAS@alfredhealth.org.au)

# Mental Health & Wellbeing Act 2022

## Common Terms explained

### Assessment Order

An assessment order enables an authorised psychiatrist to examine the person without the person's consent to determine whether they have mental illness and need compulsory mental health treatment.

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

### 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

An independent tribunal that makes decisions about treatment orders and whether people can receive Electroconvulsive Treatment (ECT)

Detailed information about the Mental Health & Wellbeing Act 2022, is available in the ***Mental Health & Wellbeing Act 2022 handbook*** and can be obtained by asking your nurse or clinician or on the Department of Health website:

[Mental Health and Wellbeing Act 2022 Handbook | health.vic.gov.au](https://www.health.vic.gov.au/mental-health-and-wellbeing-act-2022-handbook)

# Accessing Legal Advice

## The Mental Health Tribunal

**Mental Health  
Tribunal**



The Mental Health Tribunal is an independent tribunal established by the Mental Health & Wellbeing Act 2022.

The tribunal decides whether patients need compulsory mental health treatment. They protect patient rights by conducting hearings to identify the least restrictive way people can receive treatment they need.

### What the tribunal does

The tribunal can decide:

- if you meet the criteria to receive compulsory treatment
- if you should be on a community treatment order instead of an inpatient treatment order
- to take you off a community, inpatient or temporary treatment order
- the length of your treatment order
- whether or not you meet the requirements for electroconvulsive treatment in certain cases

For further information please speak with staff or access:

[www.mht.vic.gov.au](http://www.mht.vic.gov.au)

## Victoria Legal Aid

Focuses on protecting the rights of Victorians and representing those who need it the most.

### How we can help

Our lawyers regularly visit the mental health inpatient units in Bendigo.

If you have a Mental Health tribunal hearing coming up, you can get advice and support to help you prepare, and a lawyer may be able to represent you at the hearing.

We also have a range of mental health and disability resources that can help you



**1300 792 387**

[www.legalaid.vic.gov.au](http://www.legalaid.vic.gov.au)

# Accessing Legal Advice

## Mental Health Legal Centre

The Mental Health Legal Centre provides free, professional and confidential legal services to people in Victoria with lived experiences of mental illness or involvement with the mental health system

MHLC offers free legal advice over the phone on a range of matters to mental health consumers.

If you have a Mental Health Tribunal Hearing coming up and know the date of the hearing you can call our office to arrange representation.



**(03) 9629 4422**

[www.mhlc.org.au](http://www.mhlc.org.au)

## Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service

The VALS Civil and Human Rights practice provide legal advice, referrals and casework for civil law issues. We can assist you with your Mental Health Tribunal matters.

### **Want to get in touch to discuss options?**

Feel free to call the VALS Civil and Human Rights practice team for a yarn about your legal issue. If its not something we can assist with, we will do our best to link you with someone who can.



**Victorian Aboriginal  
Legal Service**

**1800 064 865**

[www.vals.org.au](http://www.vals.org.au)

# 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 and carers who may be tired, distressed or confused.

Some tips that may be useful when carers are speaking to 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

## Seeking Support

### **BHMHS Mental Health Family & Carer Support Team**

For more information or to access their supports.

**03) 5454 7612**

### **Carer Gateway**

Carer Gateway is an Australia-wide carer support network. They provide:

- Phone counselling
- Online carer forums
- Online self-guided coaching
- Skills courses
- Information about respite

[www.carergateway.gov.au](http://www.carergateway.gov.au)

**1800 422 737**

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

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

So that families and 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
- Given the 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

## Mental Health and Wellbeing Act 2022

The Act recognises the important role played by families, carers and supporters of people experiencing mental illness and psychological distress.

The Act supports the involvement of carers and of parents of children and young people in the assessment, treatment, care, support and recovery of people receiving mental health and wellbeing services.

The Act also sets out the circumstances when a person's health or personal information may be disclosed to family members or carers.

Under the Act, families, carers and supporters can make a complaint to the Mental Health and Wellbeing Commission in relation to their experience in that role.

## Carers Recognition Act 2012

The Act recognises, promotes and values the role of carers. The Act formally acknowledges the important contribution that people in care relationships make to our community and the unique knowledge that carers hold about the person in their care.

## The Victorian Charter Supporting People in Care Relationships

The Victorian charter reflects and supports the *Victorian Carers Recognition Act 2012*. The charter encourages organisations and services to better respect the important role carers have in our community.

### As a carer, you can expect to:

- Be respected and recognised 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
- Have the effect of being a carer on your participation in employment and education considered in decision making
- Have your social wellbeing and health recognised in matters relating to the care relationship

# 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.

## 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

Families where a Parent has a Mental Illness (FaPMI)

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**



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](http://www.humanservices.gov.au)

## Anglicare Financial Counselling



Anglicare's financial counsellors provide a free and confidential service to anyone experiencing financial difficulties.

**Free call: 1800 244 323**

# 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

## People don't have a mental illness just because they:

- Have a cognitive or intellectual disability
- Use or 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
- Engage in sexual promiscuity, immoral, illegal or antisocial conduct or behaviour

## 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.

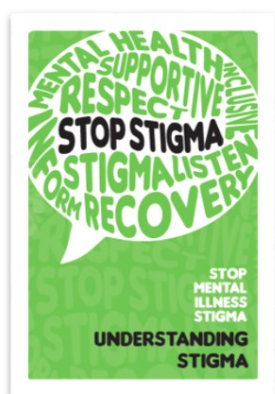
Stigma is at its most harmful when the prejudiced views and responses of others shape the way a person living with a mental illness sees themselves.

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 signatory 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 affected 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.

# Common Terms

## **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.

## **Restrictive intervention**

Seclusion or bodily restraint.

## **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**

Care provided to remedy mental illness, alleviate symptoms, reduce the ill effects of mental illness and support recovery.

## **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.

## **Mental illness**

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

## **Psychosis**

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

# Common myths about mental illness

## **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.

## **Aboriginal Family Counselling**

(03) 9403 3300

## **ACSO**

1300 022 760

## **Alcoholics Anonymous**

0447 754 111

## **Anglicare**

Bendigo - (03) 5440 1100

Castlemaine - (03) 5470 6266

Echuca - (03) 5482 0900

Kyneton - (03) 5421 2000

Maryborough - (03) 5461 0200

Swan Hill - (03) 5036 3200

## **Bendigo Community Health Services**

(03) 5406 1200

## **Bendigo & District Aboriginal Co-op**

(03) 5442 4947

## **Beyond Blue**

1300 224 636

## **Castlemaine Community Health**

(03) 5479 1000

## **CatholicCare**

(03) 5438 1300

## **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**

1300 88 22 33

## **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**

(03) 4010 7100

## **Independent Mental Health**

**Advocacy (IMHA)** 1800 959 393

## **Inglewood & District health Service**

(03) 5431 7000

## **Kids Helpline**

1800 551 800

## **Lifeline**

13 11 14



**Loddon Campaspe Community Legal Centre**

(03) 5445 0909

**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 Health & Wellbeing Centres**

1800 979 730

**Mental Health and Wellbeing Commission**

1800 246 054

**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

**Orange Door**

Loddon—1800 512 359

Mallee—1800 290 943

**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 8410

**State Trustees**

1300 138 672

**Suicide Helpline**

1300 651 251

**Swan Hill & District Aboriginal Co-op**

(03) 5032 8600

**Switchboard (formerly Gay and Lesbian Switchboard)**

(03) 9663 2939

**Victorian Civil & Administrative Tribunal (VCAT)**

1300 018 228

**Victorian Mental Illness Awareness Council (VMIAC)**

(03) 9380 3900

**Victorian Ombudsman**

1800 806 314

**Women's Health Loddon Mallee**

1800 350 233

## Want more information?



<http://www.beyondblue.org.au> 1300 224 636



Crisis Support. Suicide Prevention.

<http://www.lifeline.org.au> 13 11 14



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

<http://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.

<http://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](http://www.carersvictoria.org.au) [www.youngcarers.net.au](http://www.youngcarers.net.au)

1800 242 636



[www.lmmhcn.org.au](http://www.lmmhcn.org.au)

1800 068 978



Children of Parents with a Mental Illness – Keeping families in mind

[www.copmi.net.au](http://www.copmi.net.au)



**Supporting Mental Health Recovery**

[www.mindaustralia.org.au](http://www.mindaustralia.org.au)



Representing Victorian Mental Health Carers

[www.tandemcarers.org.au](http://www.tandemcarers.org.au)

Excellent Care. Every Person. Every Time.

# Connect with us

Join the conversation and keep up to date with the latest news, events and health messages



**Important:** Please respect the privacy of our staff, consumers, families & carers



Excellent Care. Every Person. Every Time.