

- Where NTCAT approval is required, two (2) authorised psychiatric practitioners will apply in writing for NTCAT to review your case.
- All reasonable efforts must be made to consult your primary carer before NTCAT will authorise ECT.
- If you are an involuntary patient and ECT is required to save your life or to prevent you from suffering serious mental or physical deterioration, then NTCAT's approval is not required.
- NTCAT must be notified that emergency ECT has been performed following the treatment.

Other rights

- As well as the rights already explained, you also have the right to:
 - be treated with dignity and respect
 - be fully informed about services, treatment and options in a clear and open way, in a language you understand
 - be included in decisions and choices about your care
 - contact people by mail, phone or electronically, and be visited (this right may be restricted)
 - privacy and confidentiality of your personal information
 - access your medical records (this right may be restricted)
 - keep your personal items secure while you are in hospital
 - an interpreter

Further information

The information in this brochure relates to the laws set out in the *Mental Health and Related Services Act 1998*. Information about the Act is summarised in the following set of brochures:

- Referral to hospital for an examination (Form 9)
- Voluntary treatment in hospital
- Treatment in the community
- Involuntary treatment in hospital
- Receiving treatment for a mental illness

More information is also available from <https://nt.gov.au/wellbeing/mental-health>

Northern Territory Mental Health Access Line (24hrs, 7 days)

Free call: 1800 682 288

Community Visitor Program

Free call: 1800 021 919

NT Civil and Administrative Tribunal (NTCAT)

Free Call: 1800 604 622

Health and Community Services Complaints Commission (HCSCC)

Free Call: 1800 004 474



We can book an interpreter for you

Receiving treatment for a mental illness

This brochure provides you with information about what your rights are and what you can expect if you are having treatment for a mental illness.



What is mental illness?

- Mental illness is a general term for a group of illnesses that affect the mind or brain.
- These illnesses affect the way a person thinks, feels and acts.
- Many people who have a mental illness, and are treated, recover well or even completely.

What is treatment?

- The treatment that you receive from a mental health service is 'psychiatric treatment', which can include psychological support and therapy, medication, electroconvulsive therapy (ECT), emergency psychiatric treatment and other health care.
- It is your right as a patient to receive the best possible treatment, and your treating team will talk to you about treatment options.
- You will be involved in developing your treatment, support and discharge plan, and your consent (agreement) will always be sought.
- If you are a voluntary patient you cannot be given any treatment for your mental illness without your agreement (or the agreement of someone who can make decisions on your behalf, such as a guardian, parent or family member).
- Before agreement to treatment is given you must be given all the information that you want and need in a language that you understand.

Can you be treated against your will?

- You can be treated against your will if:
 - It is needed to save your life or to prevent you from causing serious harm to yourself or another person; or
 - you are an involuntary patient (but your agreement will still be asked for).

What can you do if you are dissatisfied with your treatment?

- You should start by talking to your treating team and discussing what your options are.
- If you are a voluntary patient you can make your own decisions about what treatment you are willing to accept.
- You can ask for a second opinion from another authorised psychiatric practitioner if this will help you decide what you want to do. Your treating team can help arrange this for you.
- You may be able to ask the NT Civil and Administrative Tribunal (NTCAT) for a review of your case. Your treating team and the Community Visitor Program, will be able to help you with this request.
- If you are unhappy about something, you can make a complaint to your mental health facility, a Community Visitor, the NT Ombudsman or the Health and Community Services Complaints Commission (HCSCC).

Medical treatment (for physical health)

- While you are a patient, you can agree to any medical treatment you may need.
- If you are unable to agree, someone who is authorised to make decisions on your behalf, can consent for you.
- If you are an involuntary patient in hospital and need urgent medical treatment, your doctor does not need to get approval to give it to you, however he or she must notify NTCAT afterwards.
- If you are an involuntary patient in hospital, you may be granted leave to go to another facility and get treatment there.
- While you are on leave you are still an involuntary patient and must continue to follow your treatment plan and return when the leave ends.

Electroconvulsive therapy (ECT)

- ECT is a treatment for a number of mental illnesses.
- If your medication has not improved your condition, or if your illness is very severe, your treating team may recommend ECT for you.
- ECT can be provided to voluntary patients with their agreement or, if you are unable to agree to the treatment, with the agreement of someone who is authorised to make decisions on your behalf, such as an appointed guardian.
- NTCAT must approve for ECT for involuntary patients.