

- ECT can be provided to a child voluntary patient (14–17 years) with their consent, or if they are unable to give informed consent, with the consent of their parent or guardian. The approval of the Mental Health Tribunal is also required.
- ECT can be provided to adult voluntary patients (18 years and over) with their consent, or if they are unable to give informed consent, with the consent of someone who is allowed to make decisions on the patient's behalf, such as a guardian.
- ECT can only be provided to involuntary patients with the approval of the Mental Health Tribunal.

Where Mental Health Tribunal approval for ECT is required, your psychiatrist will apply in writing to the Tribunal and the Tribunal will review your case.

If you are an adult involuntary patient and ECT is urgently required to save your life or to prevent you from causing serious physical injury to yourself or another person, then the Chief Psychiatrist can provide approval to commence ECT whilst the Tribunal's approval to continue with ECT is being sought.

Further information

The information in this brochure relates to the laws set out in the *Mental Health Act 2014*. Information about the Act is summarised in the following set of brochures:

- Being referred to a psychiatrist for an examination
- Inpatient treatment orders
- Community treatment orders
- Information for voluntary patients
- Receiving treatment for a mental illness
- Information for personal support persons
- Nominated persons: how to make a nomination and what it means.

Other brochures are available from:

- The Mental Health Tribunal
- The Mental Health Advocacy Service
- The Mental Health Law Centre.

For more information about the *Mental Health Act 2014* and other resources, visit the Mental Health Commission website: www.mhc.wa.gov.au or phone (08) 6553 0600.

This document can be made available in other languages and alternative formats on request.

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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 receiving treatment for a mental illness.

What is treatment?

The treatment that you can receive from a mental health service is 'psychiatric treatment' which can include medication, electroconvulsive therapy, emergency psychiatric treatment and other health care.

It is your right as a patient to receive the best possible treatment, and your psychiatrist and other team members 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.

Can you be treated against your will?

If you are a voluntary patient you cannot be given any psychiatric treatment without your informed consent (or the informed consent of someone who can make decisions on your behalf, such as a guardian). Informed consent means that you have been given all the information you want and need, and you fully understand your decision to agree to the treatment.

If psychiatric treatment is necessary to save your life or to prevent you from causing serious physical harm to yourself or another person, it can be given to you without consent. This is called emergency psychiatric treatment.

If you are an involuntary patient (on an inpatient treatment order or community treatment order) you may be given psychiatric treatment without your consent, but it should 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 psychiatrist if this will help you decide what you want to do.

If you are an involuntary patient you can ask either your psychiatrist or the Chief Psychiatrist (t: (08) 6553 0000) to arrange a further opinion for you. The independent psychiatrist will examine you and provide his or her opinion in writing. Your psychiatrist has to take this into account, but is not obliged to follow the further opinion.

After receiving a further opinion you can also ask your psychiatrist, or the Chief Psychiatrist, to arrange an additional opinion, however this may be refused.

If you are still dissatisfied, you can ask the Chief Psychiatrist to consider your case. The Chief Psychiatrist may or may

not ask your psychiatrist to reconsider the decision regarding the treatment.

Medical treatment (for your physical health)

While you are a patient, you can give consent to any medical treatment you may need. If you are unable to give consent, someone who is allowed 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 the Chief Psychiatrist afterwards.

If you are an involuntary patient in hospital, you may be granted leave to go to another hospital 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 psychiatrist may recommend ECT for you.

There are restrictions on when ECT can be provided. These are:

- ECT cannot be provided to anyone under 14 years of age.