

HCCCHCC

Health Consumers' Council
Your Voice on Health

Patients of Psychiatrists
YOUR RIGHTS



Health Consumers' Council

Unit 13/14 Wellington Fair
4 Lord Street, Perth W.A. 6000
GPO Box C134, Perth W.A. 6839
Ph: 9221 3422 Freecall: 1800 620 780
www.hcc-wa.global.net.au

April 2007
Funded by W.A. Health



HCCCHCC

Consulting a psychiatrist does not need to be an intimidating experience.

You have many rights which are there to ensure your safety, health and well-being.

Knowing your rights means you can have a more effective consultation with your doctor.

It is your treatment and you need to be involved in the decision making process with your doctor.

This brochure outlines your rights as a patient.

Feel free to ask your doctor to explain any of the points you may not understand.

You have the right:

1. to be fully informed of the diagnosis, to know against what criteria in the Diagnostic Statistic Manual of Mental Disorders the diagnosis has been made
2. to have the diagnosis fully explained in language clearly understood by you
3. to a second opinion
4. to an interpreter
5. to decide whether a personal representative, friend or family member is present when discussing diagnosis, treatment etc
6. to decide whether a personal representative, friend or family member is present when undertaking treatment
7. to know if the diagnosis is provisional (yet to be confirmed) and what this means for you
8. to discuss the diagnosis with the psychiatrist and to raise any concerns eg if you think the diagnosis is incorrect
9. to know why you are being referred eg it is for a second opinion, or because of the limited clinical experience of the practitioner
10. to be informed of the risks and relative benefits of proposed treatments and alternative treatments and to choose which one to proceed with
11. to give informed consent to medication and treatment after relevant information is provided in a clear form that you understand
12. to comprehensive information about proposed medication, including why this particular medication is being chosen and what problem it is treating
13. to have the side effects of any medications explained to you thoroughly, and to discuss alternative treatment
14. to be fully informed of the nature of correspondence between the psychiatrist and referring general practitioner
15. to know the principal method or technique the psychiatrist intends to utilise eg psychotherapy, cognitive behavioural therapy, pharmacology etc
16. to know the reason why the psychiatrist has chosen this method or technique, and to have this communicated to your referring general practitioner
17. to raise your own issues and discuss what you want to discuss, and not necessarily what the psychiatrist wishes to discuss
18. to have the fee structure explained to you
19. to have access to information about your condition, including written information and contact details of support groups
20. to stop treatment or medication at any time, subject to any power of a psychiatrist to act without your consent
21. to have any proposed experimental procedures fully explained to you, along with the risks and benefits, before you consent
22. to obtain copies of your medical records (Public health system – Freedom of Information Act 1992; Private Health System Privacy Amendment Privacy Sector 2002). Please note that the Mental Health Act exempts providers from giving you access to your medical records in certain circumstances.