My handbook

Easy English
Wellways National Consumer and Carer Advisory Committee 2017 helped write your handbook. Thank you!

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We are Wellways

If you have mental health issues, we can help you. We want you to be happy with our services. We hope to make a real difference to your life.

At Wellways, we work with:

• people with mental health issues
• their families, carers and friends
• the whole community

We support people like you to live a good life in the community. We work with you so that you can be active and happy.

We are honest and fair. We respect and accept everybody. We believe everyone has the right to belong. This is really important to us.

Your handbook has information about how we work.

If you want to talk to Wellways, you can call our Helpline on 1300 111 500. People who understand mental health issues work at the Helpline. Many of them have experienced mental health issues themselves.

If you prefer, you can go to our website wellways.org You can find useful information on the website. You can read this information whenever you want to.

If you call the Helpline or go to the website, you can get information about:

• mental health issues
• how we work
Who is Wellways?

- Wellways is a non-profit organisation. We use all the money we get from the government and donations to help people like you. We don’t try to make lots of money. We help all Australians live a good and active life in the community.

- We help people with mental health issues and their families to:
  - live better lives
  - imagine how their lives could be made even better

- We also work with the community. We want the community to understand mental health issues better.

- We work to change things. We want people to get good care and information. We are there if you need us.

- We help Australians with mental health issues and disabilities. We provide many different services. We work with young people and older people.

- We respect you and the issues you live with. Many of our staff and volunteers have also been affected by mental health issues or disability. This is very important to our work. It helps us better understand what you may need. We keep this in mind in everything we do.

- Wellways was set up in 1978 by families. They wanted to make the mental health services better. The families wanted to:
  - Offer better help and information to people with mental health issues
  - Help people’s families and carers
  - Help the community to understand what mental health issues are

- We work in ACT, QLD, NSW, VIC and TAS.
What we can help with

Everything we do is aimed at helping you. When you work with us, we will:

- support you live the best life you can
- support you live in the community
- support you gain skills
- support you to become more confident
- make friends with others

We work with:

- people with mental health issues
- their families and friends
- the whole community

We work with many people in the community. We want to live in a community where everyone helps each other. We want to create a welcoming community where you are not judged or made fun of. We focus on hope and encourage you. This is called the Community Recovery Model.
Your rights

When you work with Wellways, you have rights.

Your rights are protected by law. They are also set out in national standards.

We will give you information about your rights in a way that is clear.

We will talk with you about your rights:

- when you first start working with us
- at other times when we are working together

Talk to us if you want to know more about your rights or don’t know what they are.

We will explain your rights and responsibilities to you. We will ask you to sign a document to confirm you understand this information.

For some of the services we offer, you might have to sign another document. This will let you know exactly how we will be helping you.

Talk to a worker or volunteer if you do not understand this information. Do not sign anything you do not understand.

You can talk to a peer worker about our services or your rights and responsibilities. A peer worker is someone who has their own experience in mental health issues, disability and getting better.

On page 25 we included information about who else you can talk to. For example, you can talk to someone independent like an advocate.
Services that are right for you

Our services are of good quality and we hope they will meet your needs. We base our services on research. We listen to people who have experienced mental health issues. We want to know what worked for them.

You have the right to services that:

- are there when you need them
- help you be part of the community
- you can count on
- help you become stronger
- help you reach your goals
- focus on who you are as a person
Choice and control

You are the best person to make decisions about your life. You can also make decisions about what kind of help works for you.

**You have the right to:**

- be part of all discussions about the help you get
- choose who will be helping you. This includes family, friends and carers
- when you can, you can choose your case worker
- talk to a peer support worker
- choose another service. This includes mental health or disability service
- have a say about what help you get and how
- get a second opinion
- refuse service or help
- not to get in trouble if you refuse help
- get independent advice or help when you need to make decisions
- get the help that works for you
- get the help that you need
If you get mental health help, you have the right to:

- write a document to be used in case you become unwell. This is called an ‘Advanced Statement’. In the document, you can say what you want to happen and how if you can’t make decisions

If you get disability help, you have the right to:

- be responsible for your own money
- ask someone you trust to help you with your money
We respect who you are

• We respect you
• You are welcome at Wellways
• We want you to feel safe and respected
• We respect your culture

You have the right to:

• be accepted for who you are

We will respect your:

• culture and religion
• gender and sexuality
• language
• disability and mental health
• lifestyle
• dignity and privacy

• You can have an interpreter if you need
Safety

We want you to be safe at all times and to feel safe when getting help from Wellways.

You have the right to:

- get help that includes everything you need.
- be free from abuse and discrimination
- be free from neglect
- not be forced to do things
- be treated fairly
- stay in places that are safe, clean and secure
- have easy access to everything you need
- get help that does not stop you from doing things and going to places
- have choices
- not be controlled

You have these rights unless you or someone else is in danger.

Safety of children

Children and young people have the right to be safe and feel strong. They have the right to be well.

This means:

- we will never put up with abuse and neglect of children and young people
- we will always make sure that the places children stay in are safe
- we will always help children, young people and their families. We want them to feel well and strong

We always have to follow the law when it comes to children and safety.
Family, friends, carers and other people

You have the right to choose who knows about your situation. You have the right to choose what help you get. You can decide if your family, friends, carers or other important people should be involved.

We can help you find other people who can also help you.

We can give these people information about support that they can get.

**You have the right to:**

- choose who comes to meetings
- choose who can talk to us
- bring a support person with you
- choose who can get information about your care and the help you get
- ask a family member, carer or friend to help you talk to us
- ask for another person to help you talk to us
Privacy

We care about your privacy. We won’t tell anything you say to us to anyone you don’t want us to. We will protect your privacy. We can only share private information if you or someone else is in danger. We also have to share private information if the law says so.

When we work with you, we sometimes ask for information about you and the help you get. But we only ask for information if it is important. Sometimes the law says we have to keep this information at our office.

When we say ‘information,’ we mean things about you. It also means private information.

Information about you is things like your name, address and phone number.

Private information means things like information about your health and how you are feeling.

We must protect your privacy. This means that we:

• keep information about you in a safe place
• respect your safety, privacy and dignity
• make sure the information is not lost or used in the wrong way
• make sure the information is correct and complete
• make sure the information makes sense to the service you use
Privacy (continued)

You have the right to:

- complain if you feel that we have not kept your information private
- know why and how we keep your information
- know how we use your information
- know who your information may be shared with
- know when your information may be shared
- let us ask you for the information
- not let us ask you for the information
- look at the information
- take copies
- talk to your peer worker about the information
- ask us to explain the information to you
- ask us to change the information if you feel it is wrong
- ask us to give the information to your family, friends or someone else you choose
- refuse to have brochures or other materials sent to you
Tell us what you think

We want you to tell us what you think about our services. The best way for us make services better is to find out what you have to say.

You have the right to:

- make a complaint
- tell us what is working for you
- tell us what we can do better
- talk to a support person
- ask a support person to help you when talking to us

You can do this at any time.

We have to:

- listen to your complaint
- treat you with respect
- keep your complaint private
- respond to your complaint fairly
- tell you what we can do better
- tell you what has happened with your complaint
- make sure you do not get into trouble for making a complaint
- use your complaint to make our services better
- use your complaint to check what is working
- use your complaint to check what is not working
Tell us what you think (continued)

How can you tell us what you think?

You can make a complaint to a worker, coordinator or manager. You can also talk to someone you trust, like a peer worker or a support person. You can ask for this person to help you.

You can also make a complaint:

- through our website [www.wellways.org/contact-us](http://www.wellways.org/contact-us)
- by calling our Helpline: 1300 111 500
- by writing a letter

Appeals

If you are not happy with the way we have dealt with your complaint you can contact our Chief Executive Officer. You can also ask for help to resolve the complaint from:

- the Mental Health Complaints Commissioner Ombudsman
- Disabilities Services Commissioner Ombudsman in your state or territory.

More information is on page 25 of your handbook
Your responsibilities

When you work with us, you also have some responsibilities. You have the right to know what these responsibilities are. You have the right to know what happens if you don’t keep your responsibilities. Different services and programs may have different responsibilities. We will explain these to you in writing.

You are responsible towards everybody at Wellways. This includes you, other people, staff and volunteers.

**Your responsibilities are to:**

- respect people’s rights
- respect people’s privacy
- help people feel safe at Wellways
- help make sure there is no violence at Wellways
- tell us about what you need
- tell us if you have any problems as soon as you can
- help people feel welcome at Wellways.
Have your say and get involved

We want you to have a say and get involved in what we do.

You have the right to:

• have a say in what help you get
• have a say in how we can help you
• tell us what you think about Wellways
• tell us how we can do things better
• tell us what you think about the health care system
• tell us how the health care system can do things better
• change how the system works for you and other people
• give us your opinion about our programs and services
• tell us how our programs and services could work better
• work on your skills and confidence
• have a say and get involved

Ways to get involved

• Subscribe to our newsletter on line. To subscribe, go to wellways.org
• Follow Wellways on Facebook and Twitter
• Become an advocacy member
• Tell us what you think online, in person or by filling in a survey
• Come to a local listening space. These are informal meetings with staff and people who use Wellways. You can tell us what you think in person
• Contact Wellways to talk about what you can do. We have forums, committees and other roles
More information

You can find out about our work, plans and the legal information at wellways.org

This includes our:

- Community Recovery Model
- Reconciliation Action Plan
- Peer workforce framework
- Participation framework
- Participant Rights and Responsibilities Policy
- Integrated Family Support Framework
- Child Safety Policy

Our website also information has about mental health and disability. Visit wellways.org or call our Helpline on 1300 111 500.
Appendix A

Contact details of State and Territory Commissions where you can make a complaint or appeal a decision.

**Australian Capital Territory**

Disability and Community Services Commissioner:

Health Services Commission
Office Address: Level 4, 12 Moore Street Canberra ACT 2601
Postal Address: GPO Box 158 Canberra ACT 2601
Phone: (02) 6205 2222
SMS: 0466 169997
TTY: (02) 6205 1666
Website: hrc.act.gov.au/health

**Queensland**

For complaints and appeals about *children’s services* and *disability services* contact Queensland Office of the Public Guardian:

Office of the Public Guardian
Office Address: Level 4, 154 Melbourne Street South Brisbane QLD 4101
Postal Address: PO Box 5653 West End QLD 4101
Email: child@publicguardian.qld.gov.au
Phone: 1800 661 533

**New South Wales**

New South Wales (NSW) Health Care Complaints Commission (HCCC):

Office Address: Level 13, 323 Castlereagh Street (corner of Hay Street) Sydney NSW 2000
Postal Address: Locked Mail Bag18 Strawberry Hills NSW 2012
Phone: (02) 9219 7444
Toll free: 1800 043 159
TTY: (02) 9219 7555 or contact the National Relay Service on 133 677
Email: hccc@hccc.nsw.gov.au
Website: hrc.act.nsw.gov.au
Tasmania

Tasmanian Health Complaints Commissioner (HCC):

Office Address: Ground floor, 99 Bathurst Street Hobart TAS 7000
Postal Address: GPO Box 960 Hobart TAS 7001
Toll Free: 1800 001 170
Email: health.complaints@ombudsman.tas.gov.au
Website: healthcomplaints.tas.gov.au

Victoria

Mental Health Complaints Commission (MHCC)
Office address: Level 26, 570 Bourke Street Melbourne VIC 3000
Toll free: 1800 246 054
Email: help@mhcc.vic.gov.au
Website: mhcc.vic.gov.au

Office of the Disability Commissioner (DSC)
Office address: Level 30, 570 Bourke Street Melbourne VIC 3000
Free call: 1800 677 342 (landline)
Email: complaints@odsc.vic.gov.au
TTY: 1300 726 563
Website: odsc.vic.gov.au
Skype: You can call over skype at any time during the working week. Please make an appointment first. You can make an appointment by calling, faxing or emailing the ODSC. You can also use TTY.

Commonwealth funded programs

If you are part of the Children Young People and Families (CYFE) or Carer Support Program, you can talk to the Commonwealth Department of Social Services (DSS) to make a complaint about how we treated your complaint. You can use the information below to get in touch with the DSS Complaints team.

Postal Address: DSS Feedback, GPO Box 7576, Canberra Business Centre ACT 2610

National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)

The NDIS is still not ready everywhere. Until it is being used by everyone who needs it you should talk to the Complaints Commissioner in your State if you want to make a complaint.

Registered Training Organisation (RTO)

Australian Skills and Qualification Authority (ASQA):

ASQA will listen to complaints about their training. These complaints must come from their students. ASQA will only listen to complaints when there are no other options.

You can talk to the ASQA using their website: https://rms.asqa.gov.au/registration/newcomplaints.aspx
Mental health and disability information, support and referral advice
9am to 9pm Monday to Friday (excluding public holidays)

Wellways respectfully acknowledges the traditional custodians of the lands and waters of Australia.
We are committed to inclusive communities.