

# WELCOME TO THE MENTAL HEALTH SHORT STAY UNIT (MHSSU)



**Phone:**  
**(02) 6174 5679**

## Visiting Hours

**Weekdays:** 12:30pm – 1:30pm and 4.00pm – 8.00pm

**Weekends:** 9.00am – 8.00pm

**Public holidays:** 9.00am – 8.30pm

If these times are not suitable, please speak with us to make other arrangements. We limit visitors to 2 per person at any one time as space in the unit is limited.

When your visitor arrives they will need to use the intercom on the wall outside the unit to let us know who they would like to visit. We will let you know when visitor is here to see you. You have the right to refuse a visitor. Visitors need to speak with us before their visit if they plan to bring children to the MHSSU. Children must be supervised at all times.

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## Welcome

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This booklet contains useful information for your stay at the Mental Health Short Stay Unit.

## Your Recovery

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Our aim is to provide a comfortable and therapeutic environment to promote your recovery. Our goal is to work with you towards achieving wellness, rather than simply treating any illness.

Please speak with us if you have any questions.

## Your Rights

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People who experience mental illness or mental health problems have the same rights as any other person.

You have the right to:

**Respect:** for your age, culture, language, disability, gender and sexuality;

**Safety:** be treated in the least restrictive environment (*this means you will only be required to be treated in hospital if your symptoms are too severe to safely remain at home or in the community*), receive information about all aspects of your treatment;

**Communication:** be heard, ask questions about your care, state your views and preferences;

**Access:** timely access to services, care that promotes recovery, to decide if and when your family is involved;

**Participation:** participate in decisions about your care, access advocacy if required;

**Privacy:** your privacy and personal information being protected, lawfully access your health record;

**Comment:** comment and give feedback on your care, make a complaint including receiving information on how to make a complaint.

***The ACT Charter of Rights for People Who Experience Mental Health Issues*** is for all people in the ACT who experience mental illness or mental health problems and outlines that rights are equal regardless of age, gender, sexual orientation, religion, culture, language, diagnosis, abilities or income. Please speak with us if you would like further information about these rights.

We are committed to to  
providing a safe environment  
at the Adult Mental Health  
Unit (AMHU)

## Your Belongings

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When you are admitted we will check your bags. We do this to make sure the unit is safe and no prohibited items are brought into the MHSSU. Please limit clothing to around 4-5 changes of comfortable clothes. We may ask that extra items be sent home. The MHSSU does not have facilities for you to wash your clothes.

## Prohibited Items

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For your safety and the safety of everyone at the MHSSU, there are some things that are **not allowed** to be brought into the unit. They include:

- sharps of any kind, including penknives,
- items of glass or crockery,
- plastic bags,
- wire coat hangers,
- prescribed and non-prescribed drugs (*if you are taking a medication that we don't have at the hospital, we may ask you to bring your medication with you*),
- alcohol,
- illegal substances,
- weapons.

## Single Bedrooms

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The single bedrooms have been designed for your privacy and comfort. Each room has a private bathroom with a waterfall shower and a toilet. The light in the bathroom works on a timer. Once you turn it on, it will turn off automatically after fifteen minutes. You can secure some belongings in a small lockable cupboard in your room. Please ask us to lock and unlock your cupboard. Your bedroom door can be opened from the inside using the door handle. Your bedroom door will lock automatically when closed to keep your room secure. Please ask us to unlock your door when you would like to go back into your room. Staff may come into your room. We will knock before entering.

## Telephone Calls

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You can make local telephone calls using a cordless patient phone at no cost to you. Please ask us for access to this phone. We ask that you limit calls from the patient phone. Please speak with your nurse if you need to make a long distance call. You can make national calls in some circumstances.

You are welcome to bring your mobile phone or other electronic devices to the MHSSU but access will be decided by your treating team. For safety reasons we may store your charger in the staff station and charge your phone for you.

Please respect the privacy of others by not using any camera or recording features. It is your responsibility to keep your mobile phone and electronic devices safe.

Good sleep is important in your recovery. To help with this, your mobile phone and electronic devices may be kept in the staff station overnight from 11pm until 7am.

## Valuables

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We recommend that you do not bring expensive items or large amounts of cash to the MHSSU.

Some small electrical appliances are allowed if they are less than 12 months old. Older items cannot be brought to the MHSSU due to the risk of malfunction. We may remove and store these items if they present a risk to you or other people at the MHSSU.

## Complementary Medicines

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Complementary medicines include things like vitamins, supplements, fish oil, natural remedies and herbal preparations. They can be bought from pharmacies, supermarkets or health food stores. When you arrive please give any complementary medicines to your nurse for safekeeping. Talk with your doctor if you would like to use complementary medicines during your stay. If your doctor approves their use, the complementary medicines will be listed on your chart and clinical file and will be given to you by your nurse at the usual medication times.

## Cigarettes

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The MHSSU is smoke-free. Cigarettes are not sold on the Canberra Hospital campus. We ask that visitors do not bring cigarettes or tobacco items into the unit. You must give all cigarette and tobacco items to us for safe keeping. You may have your cigarettes while on leave, however you must give them back to us when you return to the unit.

## Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRT)

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Doctors will discuss nicotine dependence with you when you are admitted. If required, we will provide a full range of NRT including patches and inhalers at no cost to you. We encourage the use of these products to improve your health. Please speak to your doctor if you have any concerns.

Nicotine patches are listed on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS). We will give you a prescription for nicotine patches when you are discharged if you have used them during your stay at the MHSSU. If you hold a concession card you can get a three month supply for the cost of a concession prescription. We recommend the use of NRT is continued for several months after quitting for the best chance of success.

## Support to Help Quit

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Quitline is a telephone support service staffed by professionals who are skilled in assisting people to quit smoking. You may call Quitline from the patient phone on 13 78 48. We also have Cancer Council leaflets available on request. Speak with your nurse for more information.



# WE ARE HERE TO HELP

## Who makes up your treating team?

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Your treating team is made up of a range of staff members. Together they combine their expertise to support your recovery and help you prepare for discharge. You may also hear them called the multidisciplinary team. You can discuss any concerns or questions about treatment with the treating team. Your team may include:

### Consultant Psychiatrist & Psychiatric Registrar

Consultant psychiatrists are the senior doctors in charge of your overall treatment. Psychiatric registrars are doctors who are undertaking further study to specialise in psychiatry. The consultant psychiatrist works with the psychiatric registrar to assess and diagnose your condition and will prescribe appropriate medical treatment and care.

### Registered Nurse

Registered nurses (simply called nurses) are responsible for giving medications, daily care needs, physical assessment needs such as taking your blood pressure or temperature, education about mental health issues and treatment, and offering emotional support. Nurses will change from shift to shift. Nurses write notes outlining your progress for the treating team. Talk with your nurse if you experience any difficulties or have any questions about your care.

### Psychologist

Psychologists can spend time talking with you to discuss and help you work through any difficulties you may be facing. They can recommend services and/or private psychologists that may be able to help you in your recovery. The psychologist may also carry out an individual assessment to help give you and your treating team a better understanding of your symptoms, diagnosis, strengths and weaknesses, and any changes from how you were before you became unwell.

### Social Worker

Social workers can support you, your family including children and your carers, to better manage and understand why you are in hospital, plan for your recovery and coordinate services you and your family may need once you are discharged.

### Occupational Therapist

Occupational therapists (OTs) will talk to you about the everyday activities that are important to you. This can include a variety of things like cooking, spending time with friends or going to work. If you are having problems with doing any of these activities, the OT will help you work out the best way to work through these problems, including recommending services to support you in your recovery.



## Consumer Consultant

The role of the consumer consultant is to share with staff the experiences of people who stay at the unit and use this information to improve the service. The consumer consultant can spend time speaking with you about your experience at the MHSSU. Please let us know if you would like to speak with the consumer consultant.

## Carer Consultant

The role of the carer consultant is to share with staff the experiences of family members and carers of people who stay at the unit and use this information to improve the service. The carer consultant is available part time to meet with families and carers. Please let us know if you or your family member/carer would like to speak with the carer consultant.

## Spiritual Support Services

Pastoral or spiritual care can be an important part of a person's recovery. Spiritual Care is provided during a hospital stay to any person who requests it. You do not need to be religious or have a faith to benefit from spiritual care. Spiritual Support Services can provide emotional and pastoral support to you whilst you are in hospital in a way that is responsive to your needs.

If you do have a faith and belong to a religious group, Spiritual Support Services may be able to provide you with someone from that church or faith to support you. Weekly Catholic, Anglican and Uniting Churches Chapel services are held, well as Sunday church

services. (Your doctor will need to approve leave for you before you can attend.)

Please let us know if you would like assistance from Spiritual Support Services.

## Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Liaison Officer

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander liaison officer works with and supports Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people and can provide advocacy, support and referral to other services. We can make arrangements for you to speak to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander liaison officer.

## Questions to ask the Treating team

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When speaking with someone from the treating team, it's a good opportunity to ask questions and clarify information. Below is a list of some relevant questions that may apply to your stay at the MHSSU:

### About the diagnosis:

- What diagnosis have I been given?
- What signs/symptoms suggest this?
- What is known about the cause of this diagnosis?
- What is likely to happen in the future?
- If a diagnosis has not been made, what are the possible diagnoses?
- Are there any general health implications associated with this diagnosis?

## About your assessment:

- What assessments have been done?
- Are there other assessments that might be needed?
- Are there any physical problems that have been discovered?
- If so, what treatment is needed?

## About care and treatment:

- What are the aims of my care and treatment?
- Who else will be involved in my treatment?
- How often will you or someone from my treating team see me?
- What is your treatment plan for me?
- How long will I need treatment?
- What happens if I refuse treatment?
- Can I choose when I leave?
- Who will I need to see about my treatment when I leave?
- What is my legal standing under the Mental Health Act? How does this affect me?
- How will my family/friends/children/carers be involved in discussions concerning my treatment?

## About medication:

- What medication is being/will be used?
- What are the benefits of the medication? – short term and long term
- What are the possible side effects of the medication? – short term and long term
- How long does this medication take to work?
- Does this medication interact with other medications and/or complementary therapies (such as vitamins, supplements, natural remedies)?
- Why has this medication been chosen for me?
- How long will I need to take this medication?
- Are there other medications that can be used if this one doesn't work?
- Are there ways to manage my illness other than medication?
- What else can I do to improve my wellness and recovery?
- What will happen if I stop taking my medication?
- Do you have any written information about my medication?

## About discharge from hospital:

- How long will I stay in hospital?
- What arrangements will be made for me after leaving hospital?
- When will these arrangements start?
- What supports are available for my family/children when I leave hospital?
- Can I choose when to end my hospital stay?

# DAILY ROUTINES

## Meals

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We are happy to cater for different dietary requirements. Please ask your nurse for more information.

**Breakfast:** 8.00am

**Lunch:** 12:00pm

**Dinner:** 5.00pm

Please collect your meal from the meal trolley at the times above. There is a table and chairs in the lounge area where you can eat your meals. We ask that you do not take crockery and/or cutlery into your bedroom.

Special meals are prepared to celebrate holidays such as Christmas and Easter.

## Other Food and Drink

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Tea and coffee are available from the beverage bays located in the lounge areas.

Please check with us about bringing other food items into the MHSSU. There are some restrictions for health reasons.

## Medication

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Medication plays an important part in the recovery process. It can be helpful in stabilising mood and treating symptoms of mental illness. For information about medication side effects and what to expect, speak with your doctor. Please let us know if you are worried about any side effects you may experience.

Sometimes medication can take time to start working. Please make sure you tell us about all complementary medicines you take (such as vitamins, supplements and natural remedies), as some of these may interact with your prescribed medications.

### Medication times:

Approximately 8.00am, 12.00pm (noon), 5.00pm and 8.00pm. This may be delayed if the unit is very busy.

For medication outside of these times please speak to your nurse.

## Taking Leave from the MHSSU

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Your treating team may decide that you are able to spend some time away from the unit. This is called “Leave”.

Leave might be for a short time (such as 15 minutes) or a longer time (such as several hours). Your treating team will decide how long your leave will be. Leave is arranged with the approval of the consultant psychiatrist on your treating team. We will make a note of when you leave and return to the unit. Your doctor will consider your health and safety and may approve accompanied leave (with another person, either staff or a family member, friend or carer) or unaccompanied leave (by yourself).

## FACILITIES

### Hospital Cafe & Gift Shop

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Cafe Zouki is located inside the main foyer of the Canberra Hospital. A selection of fresh sandwiches, salads, cakes, soup, hot drinks and other food is available. Please check with us before bringing food into the unit.

The Hospital Gift Shop, also in the foyer, sells sweets, magazines and small gifts. The Gift Shop is open 7 days a week.

### ATM

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There are two ATMs in the main foyer of the Canberra Hospital, located opposite the gift shop. Most cards are accepted.

We ask that large amounts of money are not brought into the unit.

### Pharmacy

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There is a pharmacy located in the main foyer of the Canberra Hospital, located opposite the enquiries desk. They are open Monday to Saturday, and closed on Sunday.

# ADVOCACY

Advocacy is when someone speaks on your behalf to promote your point of view.

There are a number of advocacy services in the ACT. Some services offer individual support while others focus on improving systems. They include:

## Individual Advocacy

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### ACT Disability, Aged and Carer Advocacy Service

ADACAS is an independent community organisation that provides free advocacy and information for people with disabilities, including psychiatric disability, and vulnerable older people.

Advocacy involves providing information, assisting with creating options, communicating wishes and representing your views to others.

An ADACAS advocate can assist you to assert your rights or interests or to have your needs met. You can use the patient phone to contact ADACAS on (02) 6242 5065.

## Public Advocate of the ACT

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The Public Advocate provides advocacy for people who may not be able to advocate for themselves or represent their own best interests. The Public Advocate monitors how services are provided to people within the MHSSU to make sure that the rights of people are protected and their best interests promoted.

An advocate regularly visits the MHSSU and is available to speak with or you

can use the patient phone to contact the Public Advocate's Office on (02) 6205 2222.

## Systems Advocacy

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### Official Visitors

Mental Health Official Visitors are independent of the ACT Health Directorate and are appointed directly by the ACT Attorney-General. Their role is to assess inpatient mental health facilities in the ACT to make sure the best possible care is provided. Official Visitors visit the MHSSU each month. They also visit when requested or to follow up complaints or concerns. Official Visitors provide recommendations on their findings to the MHSSU, the Public Advocate and the Minister for Health.

You can use the patient phone to contact them on (02) 6205 5045.

### ACT Mental Health Consumer Network

ACT Mental Health Consumer Network (ACTMHCN) is an independent consumer-led organisation advocating for the interests of people with mental illness living in the ACT.

ACTMHCN does not provide individual advocacy, but trains and supports people to engage in systemic advocacy. This improves mental health services based on the individual and collective experience of people with mental health issues.

You can use the patient phone to contact ACTMHCN on (02) 6230 5796.

# LEGAL INFORMATION

## Legal Aid ACT

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Legal Aid ACT provides a number of free services for people accessing mental health services in the ACT. People who have been detained in hospital under the Mental Health Act 2015 can be advised and assisted by a legal aid duty lawyer at the hospital. Legal Aid ACT can also assist people with applying for a grant of legal assistance if they need ongoing legal assistance or representation with various legal matters including criminal, family, guardianship, debt or other legal matters.

You can use the patient phone to call the Legal Aid ACT Helpline on 1300 654 314 (8:30am – 5:00pm) weekdays.

## Mental Health Act 2015

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The *Mental Health Act 2015* is the legislation that relates to the treatment, care, support, rehabilitation and protection of people with a mental disorder or mental illness in the ACT.

People with a mental illness or mental disorder must be treated in a manner that is least restrictive of their human rights. This means that a person will only be required to receive treatment in hospital when there are concerns for their safety or the safety of others.

The *Mental Health Act 2015* aims to protect the rights of people while making sure they have access to high quality and appropriate care.

Please ask us if you would like a copy of the *Mental Health Act 2015*.

## Decision Making Capacity:

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Under the *Mental Health Act 2015* you have capacity to make a decision about your treatment, care or support for a mental disorder or mental illness (decision making capacity) if you can do all of the following (with assistance if needed):

- Understand when a decision needs to be made about your treatment, care or support;
- Understand the facts of the decision;
- Understand the main choices available to you in relation to the decision;
- Weigh up the consequences of the main choices;
- Understand how the consequences affect you;
- Make the decision based on the above information; and
- Communicate the decision in whatever way you can.

We can provide more information about decision making capacity.

## Advance Agreement:

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An advance agreement is a document stating your preferences for mental health treatment, care and support. It is used when your mental disorder or mental illness significantly affects your ability to be involved in decisions about your treatment, care and support.

An advance agreement can include:

- your particular preferences for treatment;
- your preferences, such as practical arrangements for looking after your property or pets when you are in need of treatment, care and support;
- contact details about important people, such as carers, guardians, legal representatives or a nominated person.

We can provide more information about advance agreements. Please let us know if you have previously made an advance agreement.

## Advance Consent Direction:

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An advance consent direction is a document stating treatment that you consent to receiving if your mental disorder or mental illness means you don't have decision making capacity.

An advance consent direction can include:

- treatment, care or support you are willing to receive;
- medications or procedures you are willing, and not willing, to receive; and
- people who may, and may not, be given information about your treatment, care and support.

We can provide more information about advance consent directions. Please let us know if you have previously made an advance consent direction.

## Nominated Person

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You can nominate someone to be your *nominated person*. A nominated person can help you by ensuring your interests are respected if you require treatment, care or support for your mental disorder or mental illness.

We can provide you with more information about nominated persons. Please let us know if you have a nominated person.



## **ACT Human Rights Act 2004**

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Human rights are universal and enjoyed by all individuals in the ACT regardless of differences in gender, disability, nationality, race, religion etc.

If you would like more information about human rights or have concerns, you can ask us for a brochure about the ACT Human Rights Commission or use the patient phone to contact them on (02) 6205 2222. You can also visit their website at [www.hrc.act.gov.au](http://www.hrc.act.gov.au)

## **Health Records (Privacy and Access) Act 1997**

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By law, Mental Health, Justice Health and Alcohol and Drug Services (MHJHADS) are required to maintain records on specific areas of care that are provided.

The Health Records (Privacy and Access) Act 1997 states the circumstances under which this information may be shared with others. It also provides an opportunity for people to access their personal health information.

If you have concerns regarding your privacy, you can discuss these concerns with us or use the patient phone to contact the ACT Human Rights Commission on (02) 6205 2222.

## **Privacy Act 1988**

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This is law that applies throughout Australia, regulating the handling of personal information about individuals. This includes the collection, use, storage and disclosure of personal information, and access to and correction of that information.

If you have concerns regarding your privacy, you can discuss these concerns with us or use the patient phone to contact the ACT Human Rights Commission on (02) 6205 2222.

## FOR CARERS, YOUNG CARERS AND FAMILIES

Connection with family is a very important part of the recovery process.

For visiting hours and restrictions please see the front of this booklet. If these times are not suitable, please speak with us to make alternative arrangements.

You have the right to refuse a visitor. If you refuse a visit and your visitor is distressed by this refusal, they may like to speak with a staff member.

### For Parents and Children

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We support keeping parents and children connected however the safety and needs of children will be given priority. Talk with us about ways you can stay in touch with your children when in hospital and how you might best explain to them what has been happening.

There are support services that can work with families where a parent has a mental illness. Talk with a social worker if you would like more information about these services.

### Phone Calls

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Family and friends are welcome to call the MHSSU on (02) 6174 5679 between 10.00am and 8.00pm seven days per week to speak with you and staff.

## Support

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Social workers are available for your family and/or carer throughout your stay to offer support and linkages to other services.

Please let us know if your family member and/or carer would like to speak to a social worker.

### Carers ACT

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Carers ACT is the recognised expert voice with, and for, carers while being the major provider of carer services and supports in the ACT.

Carers ACT offer support such as information and advice, counselling, respite, support groups, educational and social activities. You can contact them on 1800 242 636 (free call from landlines).

## SUPPORT AFTER DISCHARGE

Planning for discharge begins as soon as possible after you are admitted. The aim is for you to be well prepared to return to the community with appropriate supports in place. At the end of your stay at the MHSSU, it is important you are clear about:

- instructions about medication dosages, side effects and potential interactions with other medications,
- including over the counter and complementary medicines
- any follow up appointments
- any information for family or carers
- who to call in an emergency or for advice.

## Crisis, Assessment and Triage Team (CATT)

The Crisis Assessment and Treatment Team (CATT) provide a 24-hour, seven day a week service used for assessment and treatment of mentally ill people in crisis situations.

**CATT Mental Health Triage Service:**  
1800 629 354 (24 hour service)

## Community Mental Health Teams

Community Mental Health Teams provide mental health assessment, treatment, clinical management, crisis management, family support and referral for people with mental health issues. The teams operate during business hours and referrals are received from a range of sources, including individuals, their families, GPs or community organisations.

**City Mental Health:**  
(02) 6205 1338

**Woden Mental Health:**  
(02) 6205 1488

**Belconnen Mental Health:**  
(02) 6205 1110

**Tuggeranong Mental Health:**  
(02) 6205 2777

**Gungahlin Mental Health:**  
(02) 6205 1110

**Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services South:**  
(02) 6205 1469

**Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services North:**  
(02) 6205 2676

**Perinatal Mental Health Consultation Service:**  
(02) 6205 1469

**Children of Parents with Mental Illness (CoPMI) Coordinator:**  
(02) 6205 1110

If you need support outside of business hours, please contact the Crisis, Assessment and Treatment Team on 1800 629 354.

## FEEDBACK

We are committed to continuous quality improvement and appreciate that comments, complaints and feedback provide an excellent opportunity to understand our service from your perspective.

Providing feedback about issues makes sure they are acted upon to prevent similar problems occurring in the future. During or after your stay you may wish to either comment on a positive experience or report a negative experience.

The ACT Health Consumer Feedback program is called Listening & Learning. By listening to and learning from consumer feedback, it is possible for us to truly appreciate what people believe is quality and safe health care.

In the first instance any issues should be raised with staff on the unit wherever possible.

Comments, compliments or complaints can be provided as follows:

- Directly through any staff member,
- By speaking with the consumer or carer consultant,
- Through the Consumer Engagement Feedback Team on (02) 6207 7627,
- Completion of a Consumer and Carer Feedback form (available from us or in brochure racks throughout the hospital), or,
- Email to [HealthFeedback@act.gov.au](mailto:HealthFeedback@act.gov.au)

If you are not satisfied with the way your comment or complaint has been resolved you can lodge a further complaint with:

- Health Services Commissioner on (02) 6205 2222 or [humanrights@act.gov.au](mailto:humanrights@act.gov.au)
- Public Advocate of the ACT on (02) 6205 2222 or [pa@act.gov.au](mailto:pa@act.gov.au)

## NOTES

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## NOTES

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## NOTES

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## NOTES

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### Accessibility

If you have difficulty reading a standard printed document and would like an alternative format, please phone 13 22 81.



If English is not your first language and you need the Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS), please call 13 14 50.

For further accessibility information, visit:  
[www.health.act.gov.au/accessibility](http://www.health.act.gov.au/accessibility)

[www.health.act.gov.au](http://www.health.act.gov.au) | Phone: 132281 |

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