

Independent Mental Health Advocacy (IMHA)

6-step Guide to Self-Advocacy

**STEP
1**

Identify the Issue

- What is the problem?
- Identify your preferences and/or needs that aren't being met.
- What do you want to change?
- Who is the decision-maker or figure of authority?

**STEP
2**

Know Your Rights

- Refer to the Australian Charter of Healthcare Rights. Do you believe any of your rights are not being respected?

**STEP
3**

Identify Solutions

- What is your ideal solution? You can brainstorm with someone you trust.
- Are you willing to compromise? Where?
- Are there solutions you haven't considered yet? You can reflect on what has worked in the past.

**STEP
4**

Develop Plan

- How, to whom, and when will you communicate? Write down and practice what you want to say.
- What will help you to advocate for yourself?
- How can you maintain your wellbeing before, during and after self-advocacy?
- Consider your strengths. When have you self-advocated and it went well?

**STEP
5**

Enact Plan

- Communicate your concerns.
- Take notes (during or soon after).
- Check in with yourself throughout the process. You can always take a break or ask to reschedule if you need to.

**STEP
6**

Review

- What happened?
- What went well? What didn't go well?
- What would you like to be different?
- What next? What can you do if your self-advocacy wasn't "successful"? Are there other options?