

My healthcare rights

Australian Charter of Healthcare Rights

These rights apply to all people in all places where health care is provided in Australia. The Charter describes what you, or someone you care for, can expect when receiving health care.



08/2025

I have a right to:

Access

- Health care services and treatment that meets my needs

Safety

- Receive safe and high quality health care that meets national standards
- Be cared for in an environment that is safe and makes me feel safe

Respect

- Be treated as an individual, and with dignity and respect
- Have my culture, identity, beliefs and choices recognised and respected

Partnership

- Ask questions and be involved in open and honest communication
- Make decisions with my healthcare provider, to the extent that I choose and am able to
- Include the people that I want in planning and decision-making

Information

- Clear information about my condition, the possible benefits and risks of different tests and treatments, so I can give my informed consent
- Receive information about services, waiting times and costs
- Be given assistance, when I need it, to help me to understand and use health information
- Access my health information
- Be told if something has gone wrong during my health care, how it happened, how it may affect me and what is being done to make care safe

Privacy

- Have my personal privacy respected
- Have information about me and my health kept secure and confidential

Give feedback

- Provide feedback or make a complaint without it affecting the way that I am treated
- Have my concerns addressed in a transparent and timely way
- Share my experience and participate to improve the quality of care and health services

Helpful Tips

The *Australian Charter of Healthcare Rights* can be a helpful self-advocacy tool but sometimes it may be more challenging to figure out why we are not fully satisfied with our care.

Understanding **informed consent, shared decision-making, and privacy and confidentiality** is important because these concepts are not always clearly explained, understood, or considered, yet they influence your care greatly.

For consumers, this can be difficult to navigate in the moment. Things may feel rushed, unclear, or slightly uncomfortable without there being an obvious problem or clear breach of rights.

Learning to self-advocate involves being able to recognise these situations and navigate them more confidently.

Informed Consent

- You agree to treatment, **after** being given appropriate and accurate information, which helps you to make an informed decision
- You **must be able to understand** the information provided

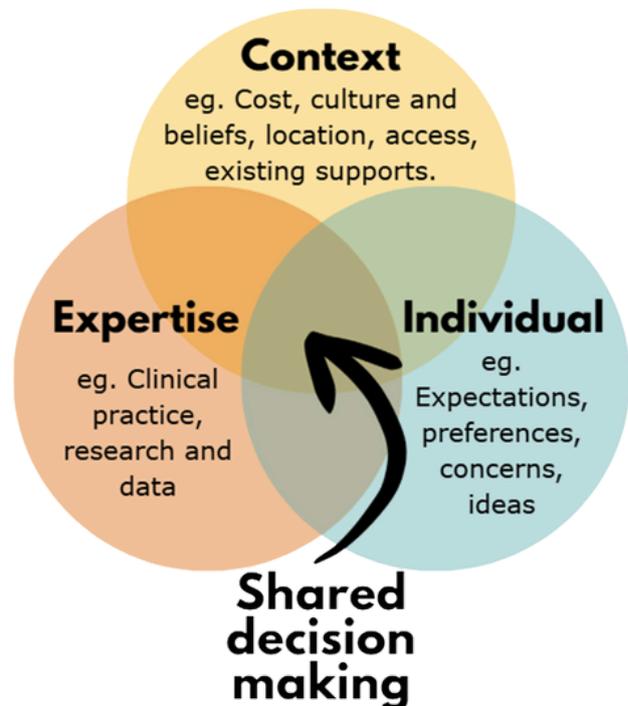
Some questions you can ask to help you give informed consent:

- May I please have a printout (in my preferred language) of some more information about the medication you are prescribing?
- What are the benefits of this medication? What are the side effects?
- I'd like to take some time to read this information before taking this medication. Can we discuss this again at my next appointment?
- Are there any other treatment options for me? What are they?
- What treatment decision would you make if you were in my position?

Shared Decision-Making

...is a collaborative process which considers:

- The consumer's preferences and experiences
- The clinician's professional expertise and perspective
- Contextual factors that impact the decision



Some questions you can ask to be more active in decisions being made about your care:

- How much will this treatment/medication cost?
- My current situation means that I can't afford that treatment option. Are there any other more cost-effective options available?
- My religious/cultural beliefs mean that I can't [do/take/have this kind of treatment]. What else can you recommend?
- Before we discuss my treatment, I need you to know that ...
- Can I please have a conversation with [a support person/my family member/my cultural or religious advisor etc.] before we make a treatment decision?
- I'd like to make this decision with [a support person/my family member/my cultural or religious advisor etc.] in the room please.

Privacy and Confidentiality

- Whenever you engage with a service, your health information must be stored securely.
- You usually **sign a form to acknowledge that you understand** that there are sometimes exceptional situations in which your information might have to be shared without your consent.
- Learning about how services store and use your information is a good opportunity to **practice Self-Advocacy**.

Some questions you can ask to help advocate for privacy and confidentiality:

If you are worried about something specific being shared, or a specific person accessing your information, you can ask:

- “Could you please not share [specific information] about me with [specific person/service]? Can you make a clear and visible note of my request on my file?”
- “Can I read the referral before you send it?”

If you are unsure about whether you want to share something with anyone involved in your care, you can ask questions like:

- “Where can I find your policy on privacy and confidentiality?”
- “How do you store my information? How is it used? Who gets to see it?”
- “Who can access information about me, and under what circumstances?”
- “What are you required to report?”
- Note: If the person/service cannot do what you have asked, they should tell you.