

Advance statement of preferences guide – child and youth

October 2025

An advance statement of preferences can be made if you are having compulsory treatment or are worried you might have compulsory treatment.

What is an advance statement of preferences?



An advance statement of preferences:

- is a document you can make
- explains what you want to happen if you receive compulsory treatment
- can be made by you at any time, even if you are in hospital
- can be written, a video, a voice recording – the choice is yours.

What is compulsory treatment order?

A compulsory treatment order means:



- a psychiatrist can give you mental health treatment even if you do not want it.

A psychiatrist is a doctor who diagnoses and treats mental health issues.

The law also calls mental health issues as mental health illness.

Why can I be put on a compulsory treatment order?



You can be given compulsory treatment if your psychiatrist thinks:

1. you appear to have a mental illness
2. you need immediate treatment. This may be either:
 - to prevent your illness getting worse
 - to prevent serious harm to yourself or to others
3. if you are put on a compulsory treatment order, you will receive the treatment
4. compulsory treatment is the least restrictive option for you in that time.
 - least restrictive means you need to be given as much freedom as you can, based on your individual circumstances.

Treating team uses my advance statement of preferences to know what I want



Your treating team must take all reasonable efforts to do what you have in your statement.

If the treating team choose not to follow your statement:

- they must tell you about the reasons in writing within 10 business days.

Your statement can include:

- treatment/healing preferences
- non-treatment preferences such as for care and support.



If you express a preference for a treatment/healing, the treating team can only require you to have a different treatment if they either:

- think that your preferred treatment isn't medically suitable
- cannot offer you your preferred treatment after making all reasonable efforts to do so.

Advance statement of preferences can help me.



What does an advance statement of preferences do?

- it helps your voice to be heard
- it allows you to express your experience of mental health in your own words
- it helps you participate in treatment decisions when you may not be able to
- it tells your treating team what treatments, such as medication, you like or don't like
- it tells your treating team how to support you when you are distressed.

How can I make an advance statement of preferences?

1.



You can make advance statement of preferences in many ways.

You can either:

- use the form on next page
- make your own
- use the form available on www.health.vic.gov.au



If you want, you can ask someone (like IMHA advocate) to support you to make one.

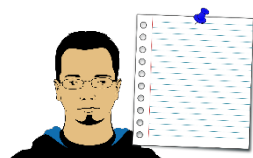
2.



You can include:

- what helps you understand information
- what treatment options you want and don't want
- what care and support you want and don't want
- what helps you make decisions.

3.



You must include the date and your signature.

A witness must watch you sign. A witness is any adult you choose who is 18 years of age or over.

Witness must say in the advance statement of preferences:

1. they have seen you sign the document
2. their full name
3. the date and their signature.

4.



You have now made an advance statement of preferences.

You can give a copy of this to your treating team and/or support person.

5.



You can cancel your advance statement of preferences any time.

To do this either:

- you can make a new advance statement of preferences. This will automatically cancel the old one
- you can use the revoke (cancel) form available at www.health.vic.gov.au

For more information on the *Mental Health and Wellbeing Act 2022*, visit website www.health.vic.gov.au

How to contact IMHA and find out more

You can:

- visit the website www.imha.vic.gov.au
- send an email to contact@imha.vic.gov.au
- call the IMHA phone line [1300 947 820](tel:1300947820), which is staffed by IMHA advocates 9:30am – 4:30pm seven days a week (except public holidays)
- You can ask to speak with a First Nations Advocate
- call the IMHA rights line on [1800 959 353](tel:1800959353) to hear a recording about your rights
- ask a mental health service provider, carer, kin or other support person to assist contacting IMHA.



imha.vic.gov.au