

PRIVATE PSYCHIATRIC HOSPITALS

There are times when we don't realise that we have become very unwell and need to be in hospital. What we do know often is that we are struggling with everything and it is always a good idea to talk to your private psychiatrist about this. When it comes to making the decision about whether you should be in hospital, this decision should be made by you and your psychiatrist together! Keep in mind that hospitalisation can be a positive and helpful experience. Trust yourself enough to get the help you need, when you need it most. If you are able to be hospitalised early on in your illness, you may not need to stay as long and your care may not need to be complicated.

What we need to know

Not all private hospitals provide mental health services. For those that do, some have mental health units within the larger hospital, while for others, this is their sole purpose.

For admission to a private hospital, your psychiatrist may have an agreement with the private hospital to have his/her patients admitted there. This is important to know, as not all private psychiatrists have this arrangement in place with every private hospital in your state and this could limit your choice of which private hospital you can go to.

Private hospitals charge a fee for the time you are a patient and *mostly* these fees are covered by your health insurer. The payments made by health insurers can differ depending upon some very important factors. The most important would be whether you have chosen to be covered for psychiatric conditions in the first place, or the level of cover you have chosen. Another factor could be whether your health insurer has a contract with the particular private hospital you are choosing to go to. All costs **not** covered by your health insurer are payable by you, so it is very important that you know exactly what 'out of pocket' costs you might face.

What services do private psychiatric hospitals provide?

Private hospitals offer a wide range of services for people with a mental illness or mental disorder. Not all private hospitals with mental health services provide every service. Private hospitals may provide services such as:

- Crisis intervention
- Admitted acute inpatient services
- Electroconvulsive Therapy (ECT)
- Day patient services
- Programs – half day and/or full day - including things such as Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (CBT)
- Hospital-in-the-Home services
- Drug and Alcohol services – admitted or same day services
- Support and education for carers

What should private hospitals comply with?

Where applicable, private hospitals should be bound by:

- Private Health Insurance Act 2007
- National Health Act 1953
- Relevant State and Territory Mental Health Acts
- State and Territory Private Hospital and Day Hospital Facility Licensing Acts
- Australian Government Privacy Act 1998

There are others like the Disability Discrimination Act 1992, National Standards for Mental Health Services, National Practice Standards for the Mental Health Workforce, National Mental Health Policy and Plan etc.

If you have any complaints about the private hospital, firstly use the complaints processes available to you within that hospital. Should you need further assistance, the **Health Services Commission** in your state or territory may be able to assist.

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Private Mental Health
 Consumer Carer Network (Australia)
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