

Self-Advocacy 101: Tips to help you help yourself

- ❖ Don't be afraid to **ask for copies** of your treatment plan or other papers.
- ❖ **Ask questions** about your treatment. What are your medications supposed to do? What are the goals of your counseling?
- ❖ **Be willing to listen.** The staff might have some good ideas and it increases your credibility.
- ❖ **Don't exaggerate.** If you get caught bending the truth—even a little—you lose credibility.
- ❖ If the staff use words you do not **understand**, ask them to say it a different way.
- ❖ **Be prepared.** Get as much information as you can.
- ❖ **Keep notes.** Write down **who** agreed to do **what** and **when**.
- ❖ Never forget **it is your life** everyone sitting around the table is talking about. Don't let them forget either.
- ❖ **Know when to ask for help.** If you feel like you are not being heard, talk to one of the groups listed on back.

Where to get advocacy help

*Division of Behavioral Health Services
Bureau of Consumer Rights
Office of Human Rights
150 N. 18th Ave., Ste. 210
Phoenix, AZ 85007
Phone (602) 364-4574*

*Verde Valley Medical Center
Patient Advocate
Cheryl Prince, 928-639-6263
Available to all patients.*

*Human Rights Committee Coord.
for the Verde Valley Medical Center
Yisel Sanchez, 1-800-421-2124
602-364-4577*

*Arizona Center for Disability Law
See front of brochure.*

Where to file a grievance

*Office of Behavioral Health Licensure
150 N. 18th Avenue, 4th Floor
Phoenix, AZ 85007
Phone (602) 364-2595*

*Verde Valley Medical Center
Any employee must take a grievance.*

*Division of Behavioral Health Services
Bureau of Consumer Rights
Office of Grievance and Appeal
150 N. 18th Ave., 2nd Floor
Phoenix, AZ 85007
Phone (602) 364-4575*

Arizona Center for Disability Law

Protection and Advocacy System for Arizona

Your Rights as a Patient of the Verde Valley Medical Center Senior Lifestyles Behavioral Health Unit

Arizona Center for Disability Law

5025 E. Washington
Suite 202
Phoenix, AZ 85034

100 N. Stone
Suite 305
Tucson, AZ 85701

602-274-6287
800-927-2260
602-274-6779 (Fax)

520-327-9547
800-922-1447
520-884-0992 (Fax)

Web site: www.azdisabilitylaw.org

Email: center@azdisabilitylaw.org

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Services.

Knowledge is Power

Your Life Your Treatment Your Rights

Patients at the State Hospital have many of the **same rights as all members of society**. These include:

- ❖ The right to **vote**—can be limited by guardianship or felony conviction.
- ❖ Freedom of **religion**.
- ❖ The right to communicate with others by **phone** and **mail**. The right to have **visitors** see you in the hospital. All of these can be limited to prevent disruptions to hospital functioning. The hospital must document reasons for restrictions. These decisions can often be appealed.
- ❖ The right to be **free from abuse or neglect**.
- ❖ Hospital staff **cannot discriminate** based on your **race, creed, religion, sex, sexual preference, age, or disability**.

Rights as an Arizonan with a Serious Mental Illness

- ❖ To be treated with **dignity, respect, and consideration**. This means staff cannot call you names or put you down.
- ❖ To be discharged to the **least restrictive setting** as soon as possible—unless this right has been taken away by a criminal court.
- ❖ To be told **what must happen for you to be discharged**.
- ❖ To be involved in making your **Inpatient Treatment and Discharge Plan (ITDP)**. Having a guardian can limit your rights here.
- ❖ The right to have **someone help represent you** in making your ITDP. This person can be a professional or volunteer advocate, an attorney, a friend, or a family member.
- ❖ To take part in **treatment that meets your individual needs**. Different people need and should get different treatment.
- ❖ To be told about the potential **risks and benefits of medications**.
- ❖ You can **refuse medication unless** you are under a **court order** for treatment **and** a **special treatment plan** has been approved.
- ❖ **To file a grievance** if you feel any of your rights have been violated.

Seclusion and Restraint

According to United States and Arizona Law, you have the right to be free from Restraint and Seclusion. The hospital can only restrain or seclude you if all of the following apply:

1. You are a danger to yourself or someone else.
2. They have tried less restrictive things to help you regain control, and they did not work.

Other Seclusion and Restraint Rules

- ❖ Only a doctor or nurse practitioner can order restraint or seclusion.
- ❖ You must be told what has to happen to be released.
- ❖ You must be released once the emergency ends. This means they cannot restrain or seclude you until you agree to take medication or go to group.
- ❖ You must be allowed to use the toilet at least every two hours.
- ❖ You cannot be denied food if mealtime occurs during the restraint or seclusion.
- ❖ You cannot be secluded or restrained because the unit is short-staffed.
- ❖ Leather restraints must be loosened every 15 minutes.
- ❖ Excessive force cannot be used.