



How I should be cared for in a mental health hospital

A summary guide



This is part of a set of information about the **Use of Force Act**. There is a:

- Booklet called, '**Ensuring hospital care is safe and supportive**'. It explains the care that you can expect in a lot of detail. It has practical examples and lots of checklists.
- Summary called, '**How I should be cared for in a mental health hospital**'. It has some key points that you should know about the care you might experience. It also tells you about the restrictive practices that might be used and what your rights are.
- Evaluation checklist called, '**Am I getting good care?**'. It can help you see whether your care is good and assess whether restrictive practices are being used correctly.



This summary guide has been written by people who have been in hospital and understand what it might be like for you. It tells you what you can expect. It also explains some of the law and good practice about how staff should care for you.

How staff should care for you

Staff should be kind and treat you fairly. They should take time to get to know you. Staff should ask you questions and listen to your answers, so they can understand your choices, eg cultural preferences. It's important for you and staff to work together to make decisions about your care.

Getting extra support if you need it

Everyone should be given the same opportunities to get the care they need. If you need extra help, staff should make 'reasonable adjustments' to support you. For example, staff should give you written information if this is easier for you to process. If you have cultural needs or preferences, staff should respect your choices.

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It is important for hospitals to be calm and therapeutic places where different staff work together to give you the most helpful care and treatment.

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Restrictive practices in hospital

When you are in hospital, you may have to do certain things or be stopped from doing things to keep you and others safe. These are known as 'restrictive practices'. There may be 'blanket rules' that everyone must follow. For example, people might not be able to go outside whenever they want because the door is locked. Or it might be something that happens to only one person. For example, if a person is taken to a quiet space so they can calm down.

Types of restrictive practice



... to make someone do something they don't want to do, or stopping someone doing something they want to do

How and when staff can use restrictive practices

There are strict rules about how and when staff can use restrictive practices.

1. Staff must try everything they can to support a person before they use a restrictive practice.
2. Staff can only use a restrictive practice if there is no less harmful way of doing something.
3. Restrictive practices should only be used to make sure people are safe and get the treatment they need.
4. Restrictive practices must be the 'least restrictive' - reducing a person's freedom as little as possible.
5. Restrictive practices must be 'proportionate' - nothing more than a person absolutely needs to stay safe.
6. Restrictive practices must NEVER be used as a punishment, to humiliate a person or make them feel less human.
7. Nobody should be restrained because of their race, culture, gender, ethnicity, age, sexuality, disability, religion or beliefs.



Why post-incident debriefing is important

Restrictive practices can be distressing for people to experience or see happening. If you experience an incident or a restrictive practice as traumatic, staff should give you post-incident debriefing.

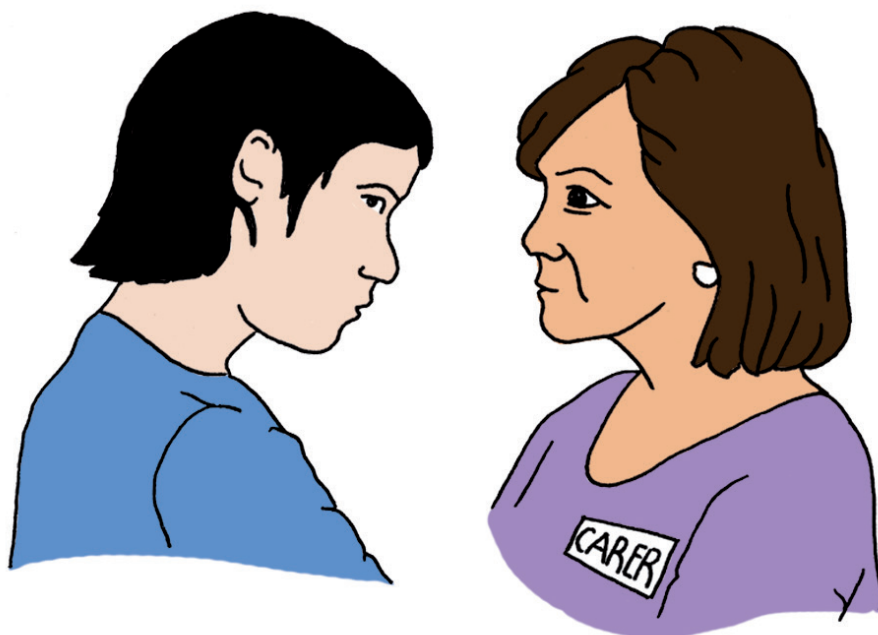
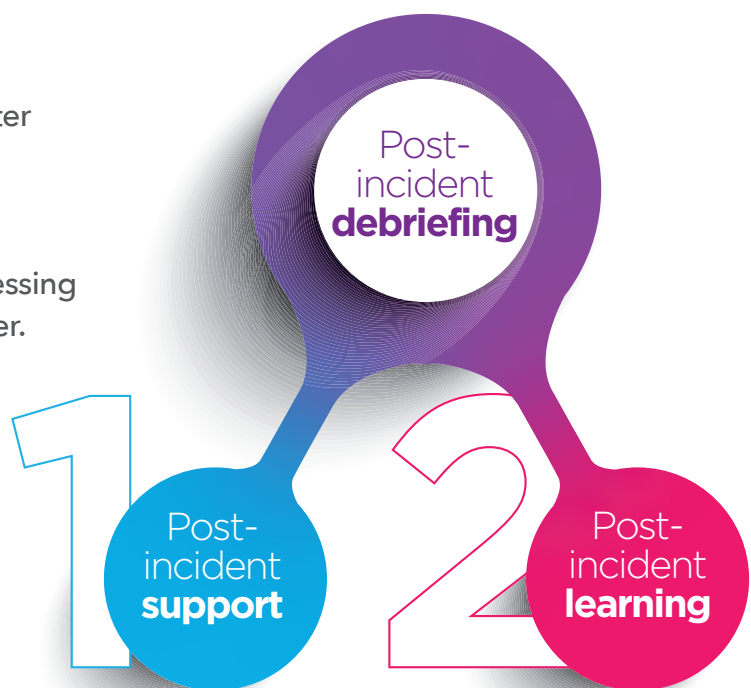
There are two stages to post-incident debriefing:

1: Post-incident support

is when staff check that you are ok, comfort you and help you feel safe after an incident or distressing event.

2: Post-incident learning

happens about a week after the distressing event, when everyone is feeling calmer. Staff should talk with you (and your family/carers, if you want) about how your care can be improved so that the same thing doesn't happen again. Nobody should feel blamed or judged for what happened. People should feel empowered to work in new ways that are more supportive and helpful.



What if you have worries about your care and treatment?

If you think that you have been treated unfairly or that staff have not used restrictive practices in a way that respects your rights, it is important that you tell someone. This is so they can help make sure it doesn't happen again.

People you can speak to:

- a member of staff that you trust in your ward
- your family and/or friends
- a chaplain
- your Independent Mental Health Advocate (IMHA)
- a cultural advocate in your community
- a solicitor/lawyer

Organisations that can help:

- Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) in your hospital
- Care Quality Commission (CQC) via this link

<https://www.cqc.org.uk/contact-us/how-complain/complain-about-service-or-provider>



Useful phone numbers:

Family/friends:

Advocate:

Solicitor/lawyer: