

→ **Culturally appropriate treatment options that are inclusive of the whānau.**

Mental health services are legally required to take into account your cultural, religious, social and ethnic needs, as well as your values and beliefs.

→ **Submit a complaint about mental health services.**

You have the right to complain to the District Inspector of Mental Health, the Director of Area Mental Health Services, and the Health and Disability Commissioner if you are unhappy with mental health services.

→ **A service that welcomes whānau participation**

You have a right to a service that recognises the importance of your participation and invites you to take part in service planning, implementation and evaluation.

Some people with a mental illness prefer not to involve their whānau in treatment and support. The extent to which whānau members are involved is ultimately the decision of the person with a mental illness, and mental health services need to respect their wishes.

However, whānau and primary caregivers have legal and other rights to information and support.

It takes each of us to make a difference for all of us.

It's whānau ora, and it is the foundation that inspires every aspect of our work.

Yellow Brick Road New Zealand (YBR) is a national organisation that specialises in providing support for whānau who have a loved one experiencing mental health challenges.

After 40 years of experience working with people around New Zealand, we know that if the family of a loved one experiencing mental distress are correctly supported and empowered, the path they walk leads to increased wellbeing for the whole whānau.

We will walk alongside any family in New Zealand who needs support, knowledge, advocacy and empowerment as their loved one journeys towards mental wellbeing.

If you are concerned about a whānau member, we can help you.

Contact us to find out more

Our services are free and confidential. Contact us today to find out more.

Northern Region

0800 732 825

Central North Island

0800 555 434

South Island

0800 876 682

yellowbrickroad.org.nz



Supporting families
towards mental wellbeing

**Yellow
Brick
Road**

**Know your
whānau rights**

**What to expect from
mental health and
addictions services.**



Do you have a whānau member using mental health and/or addiction services?

This brochure explains how you and your whānau should be treated according to mental health standards and human rights.

Whilst it is not legislated, this guide will help you to ensure your rights are upheld and that you are treated with dignity and respect at all times.

Whānau has the right to:

→ A family-centred approach to treatment and support.

Research shows that when the family is integrated into the treatment team, better care, management, and other wellbeing outcomes are achieved for the person with mental health challenges.

You have a right to services which educate and inform your whānau about mental illness and addiction. Mental health services must support and protect the rights of families.

→ Be treated with dignity and respect.

This is a basic right which must be adhered to by all health services when dealing with clients of their service.

→ Be taken seriously when expressing concerns about a family member's behaviour.

A caring relationship with whānau should be fostered and supported by mental health services. Your concerns mustn't be ignored or avoided by mental health workers.

Whānau, as users of health services, have the right to communicate with health workers and have open, honest, and effective discussions. You should be listened to.

→ Provide relevant information about a family member's history, in confidence.

There is nothing to prevent you from advising a health practitioner about matters relating to the treatment of your family member. Your confidentiality and privacy must be respected.

→ Receive information about mental illness, including diagnosis, treatment and possible side effects of treatment.

Your family member may refuse consent for a health professional to give you specific information. However, you are still entitled to education and general information about mental illness, addiction and strategies for coping.

→ Receive information about relevant services and support available in the community.

All services for individuals and whānau should be coordinated. Ask about help with accommodation, employment, education, recreation and economic support.

→ Be included in care planning, implementation and review.

Working together ensures the goals for treatment, care and recovery are understood and agreed to by everyone involved. Your needs and those of your whānau member will change over time. A good service will treat you as equal partners in care, ensuring the chances for recovery are maximised.

→ Know how to contact other members of the caregiving team

This is an essential component of 'coordinated care'. If you are supporting a person in the community, you must know who to ask for help if you need advice or assistance in your caring role.

→ Rapid response in all situations, especially in an emergency.

This is a basic consumer right. Every mental health service which provides emergency assistance is required to do so within a specified time limit – usually 4 to 6 hours. Families and consumers should be aware of service responsibilities.

→ Be consulted about their whānau member's wellness plan

Hospital discharge and wellness plans should be developed in collaboration with families and caregivers. It is a legal requirement that information about discharge from compulsory treatment is given to primary caregivers.

→ Support to help you cope with caring for your family member

The best treatment for mental illness and/or addiction includes not just supporting the person with the illness but supporting the whānau and other caregivers as well. You should be given information, education and support to help you cope whilst looking after your loved one.

→ Time out when needed to help prevent burnout and manage stress levels.

It is important to take time out and in a way that works for you. Carer Support is available to someone providing full-time care (more than 4 hours per day). To discuss Carer Support, contact mental health services at your local DHB.

→ Seek other opinions regarding the diagnosis and treatment of a whānau member.

You have the right to professional assistance that is effective and helpful. A second opinion is standard practice in all branches of medicine.