

## ACTION GUIDE – FOR DIGITAL MENTAL HEALTH SERVICE PROVIDERS

### Partnering with Consumers Standard: Healthcare rights

All consumers of healthcare services, no matter how care is delivered, have the right to expect safe and high-quality care. The [Australian Charter of Healthcare Rights](#), developed in collaboration with consumers, clinicians, healthcare managers and policy-makers, describes the rights that healthcare consumers, or someone they care for, can expect when receiving health care, including digital mental health services.

There are seven core principles in the Charter:

1. **Access** – consumers have the right to receive health care that meets their needs
2. **Safety** – consumers have the right to receive safe and high-quality health care and be cared for in an environment that is safe and makes them feel safe
3. **Respect** – consumers have the right to be treated with dignity and respect and have their culture, identity, beliefs and choices recognised and respected
4. **Partnership** – consumers have the right to ask questions about their health care, make decisions with their clinician, and include the people they want in planning and decision-making
5. **Information** – consumers have the right to receive clear information about their health, the different services available, their right to provide informed consent, the right to be informed about healthcare options, and the right to be informed if things go wrong
6. **Privacy** – consumers have the right to have their privacy respected and their personal and medical information kept safe and secure
7. **Give feedback** – consumers have the right to provide feedback or make a complaint.

Digital mental health providers need to ensure these principles are embodied in their service.

#### ACTION IN THE NSQDMH STANDARDS

**Action 2.01** in the National Safety and Quality Digital Mental Health (NSQDMH) Standards requires service providers to use a charter of service user rights consistent with the Australian Charter of Healthcare Rights and ensure that it is easily accessible to service users and their support people. This action guide helps service providers apply the principles of the Charter in an online setting. ▶



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**DRAFTING A CHARTER**

A useful starting point in developing a charter of rights is to map how each individual element of the Australian Charter of Healthcare Rights specifically relates to an online delivery model. Some principles outlined in the Charter relate to actions in the NSQDMH Standards. For example, the importance of ‘Access’ is recognised in **Action 2.11** which requires service providers to optimise the accessibility of the service for users, taking into account potential barriers such as language, age, culture and disability. Other Charter principles including partnering with consumers, and ensuring privacy and safety are also key actions in the NSQDMH Standards.

**SERVICE USER INPUT**

As the focus of a digital mental health service charter is the rights of consumers, it is essential to invite service users to provide input into its drafting. This could be via a service’s user advice group or posting a request for participants on a service’s ‘News and updates’ web page.



**STAFF TRAINING**

Staff training will be helpful to ensure the workforce develops a deep understanding of the service’s charter and to ensure its visibility within the organisation. Training could include information on:

- How the charter was developed and its alignment to the Australian Charter of Healthcare Rights
- What it means for staff to implement the charter
- Specific responsibilities of staff to uphold the charter.

*‘Service providers need to plan how they implement this charter, so that everyone in the organisation, as well as service users, can clearly understand it. Organisational understanding will help improve education around healthcare rights for consumers.’*

Dr Jonathan King, Founder and Chief Growth Officer, Lysn

**CONSUMER VISIBILITY STRATEGIES**

It is important to look at opportunities to increase visibility of the charter among service users. For example, service providers could consider adding the charter to the organisation’s landing page and providing links to view the charter at the point of app registration. Making the charter available in community languages, an Easy English version, and ensuring it is compatible with Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 is also important.

**Top tip:** Consider mapping the different opportunities or ‘touch points’ where a consumer could be made aware of the charter to increase visibility.

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### MEASURING EFFECTIVENESS

Service providers should also consider strategies to monitor the impact of the charter. This could include:

- Using data to measure engagement, such as number of unique downloads, page dwell time and scroll depth rate
- Designing a user survey to seek feedback on awareness, engagement and understanding of the charter
- Surveying staff to understand their knowledge and awareness of the charter.
- Hosting a webinar on service users' rights to communicate the elements of a service provider's charter, including incorporating time for questions and feedback. If the webinar is recorded, with all the participants' permission, it can then be posted on the service provider's website so that future service users can easily access it.

*'We administer regular surveys asking consumers about their experiences ... that's how we engage people in the ongoing design of our service. Some of their ideas have led us to think about new initiatives. We're still learning about what consumer engagement is really meaningful and useful and not tokenistic.'*

Rheza Tan, Clinic Director, MindSpot

**Top tip:** *The Commission provides a range of resources for both health services and consumers on understanding healthcare rights. Check out the fact sheet: [Using the Australian Charter of Healthcare Rights in your health service organisation and Understanding My Healthcare Rights: a guide for consumers.](#)*

### SUMMARY: HEALTHCARE RIGHTS

#### Issue

Protecting service users' rights

#### Solution

Implement a charter consistent with the Australian Charter of Healthcare Rights

#### Barriers

Multiple platforms requiring visibility of the charter, accessibility for service users, knowledge and understanding of the charter by staff

#### Enablers

Executive buy-in, orientating staff to the charter, visibility of the charter across all digital mental health services and products

### FIND OUT MORE

Find more information in the [NSQDMH Standards – Guide for service providers](#). You can also learn more about the NSQDMH Standards and other supporting resources at [safetyandquality.gov.au/DMHS](https://safetyandquality.gov.au/DMHS).

Contact the digital mental health program team at [DMHS@safetyandquality.gov.au](mailto:DMHS@safetyandquality.gov.au).