

Health guide

Self-advocacy



- Take notes. If you prefer information to be written down so you can remember it you can take notes during the appointment or ask the health professional to write something down for you.
- Ask for help. Health services and seeing health professionals can be overwhelming, especially if you are worried about your own health.



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Everyone has the right to good health and to access healthcare. People experiencing homelessness face health inequalities, they are often excluded from information and services. That's why Groundswell produces accessible health guidance for people experiencing homelessness, so they can make informed decisions about their health.

All our health guides are created alongside people with experience of homelessness and reviewed by relevant professionals.

What is self-advocacy?

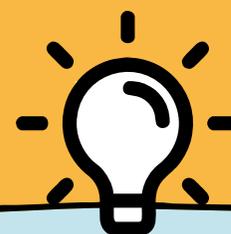
Self-advocacy is about having your say and being heard about the things you want, need or like. You do it when you speak up for yourself, when you decide what YOU want to do about something now or in the future.

Self-advocacy means:

- Understanding your strengths and weaknesses, developing personal goals, standing up for yourself, and making decisions about the choices you have.
- Making sure people who make decisions about your treatment involve you in the decisions.
- Making sure you have the support that would help you meet your needs.

We know it can be frustrating when you walk out of an appointment and realise that you didn't get what you wanted. Often bad experiences with health professionals or anxiety can make it hard to get what you want to achieve.

It can take time to build up the confidence to do this. Here's are some ways to be your best self-advocate:



- ✓ Speak-up about the things that are important to you.
- ✓ Ask people for explanations if you don't understand, there are a lot of complicated terms and acronyms within health services.
- ✓ Make time to explain what it is that you want or need, ask questions, and explain feelings about a decision or treatment.
- ✓ Use a diary (paper or on your phone) to keep a record of your appointments. This gives you responsibility to manage your appointments and plan how to get there on time.
- ✓ Arm yourself with information; you may have read online or in a leaflet about a health issue, medication, or treatment option. If something isn't suggested but you want to know more, let the health professional know what you have read or heard somewhere.
- ✓ Believe in yourself; you know yourself and you know if something doesn't seem right for you.
- ✓ Talk clearly; don't rush and ask if they understood what you were saying. Speak how you would like to be spoken to, without aggression.