

Deciding about your mental health care



Easy Read of

**Advance statement for mental health care:
Findings from a pilot study**

By Ayah Wehbe, Christiane Purcal

with help from Council for Intellectual Disability (CID)

More information:



<https://www.arts.unsw.edu.au/social-policy-research-centre/our-projects/advance-statements-mental-health-care>



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About this report



This Easy Read report is about making an **Advance Statement** for mental health care.

An **Advance Statement** is called **AS** for short.



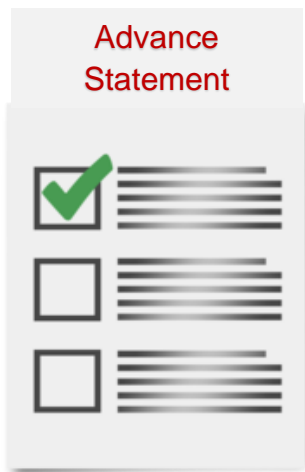
An **AS** is used to improve mental health care.

It gives people with mental health challenges more control when they feel unwell or stressed.



People can use the **AS** to give information or instructions to service providers.

People can write down what they want to happen and how to support them in a mental health crisis.



Forms can support mental health consumers to write their own **AS**.

This study was about a new form for writing an **AS**.

Mental health consumers, their families and mental health staff made the new form.

The research team



Researchers from the Social Policy Research Centre or **SPRC** did the project.

They worked with



- Nepean Blue Mountains Local Health District



- Aftercare NSW

Aftercare is now called Stride.



- Mental health consumers, their families and mental health staff.

How we did the study

There were 3 parts to the study.

1. Review of AS

We looked at other research reports in this area.



We also talked to people about their expectations of **AS**.

2. Making a new AS form

A group of mental health consumers, their families and mental health staff made a new **AS** form.



The people who made the new **AS** form all live in the Nepean Blue Mountains Local Health District.



3. Testing the new AS form

Different people, their families and mental health workers tried out the form.



We talked to **36** people who had tried out the form.



We wanted to know what people liked about the form and how it could be improved.

We talked to people about

- What the **AS** form is for
- How the **AS** form is written
- How people can make an **AS**



We also talked to people about

- How the **AS** form is stored
- How the **AS** is used
- How an **AS** can help people



We talked to people from different backgrounds and life experiences.

What the review found

AS in Australia and NSW



Every state and territory in Australia has different mental health laws.



Some states and territories have laws on **AS** for people with mental health challenges.



NSW has no law on **AS** for people with mental health challenges.

If you live in NSW, you can still write an **AS**.



You can write an **AS** when you are well.

You cannot write it when you feel unwell or distressed.



If you are a voluntary patient, the treating team can use your **AS**, but they do not have to.

If you become an involuntary patient, the treating team can use your **AS**, but they don't have to.

What other studies found



Some studies found that **AS** did not reduce people being admitted to hospital.

Some studies found that **AS** may reduce involuntary treatment.

It may improve the experience of patients.

We need more research about **AS**.

What we found in testing the new AS form

What a good AS form looks like



Some people could not understand the words in the **AS**.

The **AS** needs easier words.

The **AS** should look different to other NSW Health forms.

What information is important on the form



It would be good to have a summary at the start of the **AS**.



The **AS** should remind treating teams to ask open questions about everyday life.

This will help the person feel safe and understood.

Other things to include in the **AS** are



- medication



- information about the person's everyday life.



It is important to update the **AS** often.

Preparing the AS



All consumers who had an **AS** had help from a support worker to complete it.

People who are homeless or do not use services might find it hard to prepare an **AS**.

More needs to be done to support these people complete an **AS**.



When preparing the **AS**



- be in a place where you feel comfortable



- complete the form at a time that suits you

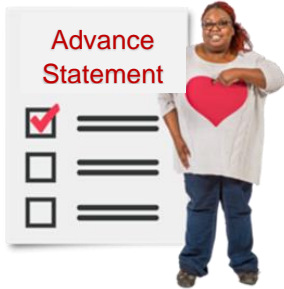


- have someone you trust help you complete the form.

Storing and finding the AS



No one who had an **AS** kept a copy of it.



They would like to have their own copy.



It is hard to find people's **AS**.

It could be stored in a person's electronic medical records.



Some hospital staff might not look for or read an **AS** in a crisis.



If hospital staff read an **AS**, it can improve the support they give the person in hospital.

Having an **AS** could make a person's hospital stay shorter.

What next



This research helps inform people with mental illness, families and mental health staff about **AS**.



The **Mental Health Consumer and Carer Council** in the testing area will work with the Local Health District to improve the **AS**.



They want to tell people about the **AS**.

easy read
Please fill in
this easy read
form

Your name

Address

Phone

They want to make the **AS** form easier to read and fill out.



They also want to train mental health staff.



They want to make resources to support people to make decisions.