

# A mental health bill of rights

By [Hopeworkscommunity](#)

1. I have the right to be treated with dignity and respect regardless of the severity or numbers of problems or difficulties I may have.
2. I have a right to be treated with honesty. I should be able to expect not to be manipulated into any particular course of treatment. My questions and concerns should be addressed honestly and openly. The treatment recommended to me should be a function of my needs and not the philosophical tenets or personal prejudices of providers.
3. I have a right to have access to all the information I need to make informed choices about any treatment I might seek. The positives and risks of any prescribed medication should be explained. Decisions I make about me should be honored and accepted.
4. I have a right to expect that the treatment recommended for me be a function of my assessed needs and not simply a function of my ability to pay for those services.
5. If legally I am judged not able to make decisions for myself any involuntary treatment should be based whenever possible on guidelines set by me when I was legally competent. These guidelines may include choices of facilities and medications to be avoided.
6. I have a right to have access to the most effective treatment possible. This treatment should focus on helping me to develop the skills and tools I need to maintain stability in my community, personal independence, and success.
7. I have a right to be honest about any issues I have and seek the help I need without fear of retribution, prejudice or discrimination. I should not have to fear loss of job, housing or social position based solely on a mental health diagnosis.
8. I have a right to expect adequate and effective health care. I should have a right to expect that my complaints and concerns be taken seriously and not dismissed as a symptom of my issues.

9. I have a right to expect that any professional dealing with me will realize that there is a significant chance that trauma and injury have been important issues in my life and that they have training on helping people deal with these issues and a trauma informed sensitivity in their interactions with clients.

10. If I am incarcerated or come into contact with the correctional system I have a right to expect that the staff I contact will be trained and skilled in dealing with the types of situations they may encounter me in. I have a right to expect to be safe and to expect not to be traumatized in my interactions with them. I also have a right to expect I will have continued access to needed treatment.

11. I have a right to expect access to substance treatment as needed. I may well have more than one issue to deal with and each issue should be treated as important in and of itself and not simply as a symptom of something else.

12. I have a right to expect I will be treated as more than a mental health diagnosis. My values, my goals, my ideas and my sense of purpose in life should never simply be regarded as a symptom of whatever issues I have. Many many things may be difficult for me but nothing that is difficult for me makes me deficient as a person.

13. I have a right to expect to be treated like other people can care and connect with me and I can do the same with them.

14. I have a right to expect that others will treat me as having the capacity to develop the skills and tools that will enable me to find a better life. Hope will be treated as a realistic perception of me and my life.

15. I have a right to expect that all the problems in my life will not be reduced to expressions of mental health issues. Poverty, hunger, homelessness, racism, crime and many other things are very real problems. I am entitled to same chances to fairness and justice as anyone else.

**Larry Drain, January 18, 2015**