

THANK YOU FOR YOUR RESPONSES

TO THE

DRAFT MENTAL HEALTH ACT

The National Mental Health Commission of Barbados sincerely thanks the public for your keen interest in the Draft Mental Health Act. We truly value everyone who took the time to read the notes, share comments, ask thoughtful questions, and take part in the public discussions. Your engagement demonstrates how much Barbadians care about creating a fair, modern, and compassionate mental health system. Your voices have helped shape the way forward. Together, we are creating legislation that protects rights, upholds dignity, and enhances care for all.

Thank you for participating in this important national conversation.

The following are the responses to questions and comments made by the public concerning various aspects of the Draft Mental Health Act.

Clarity of Definitions

- The Act clearly defines terms like mental illness, patient, and competent court.
- It follows international standards (DSM/ICD) to reduce confusion.

Protection of Children

- Safeguards ensure children are only separated from hospitalised parents if two professionals agree **that** it is necessary and **if** the Tribunal approves.
- The rights of children under 3 are specifically protected.

Rights of Persons in Care

- People can request to stop medication with proper support.
- Communication rights are guaranteed, with limits **allowed** only in rare cases (e.g., Tribunal decision).
- Seclusion (restricting to a room) is completely banned.
- Restraint can only be used as a last resort, under strict rules.

Duties of Government and Providers' ← (remove apostrophe and separate and bold for a heading)

- Health providers must work only within their training.

- The Government must provide services, housing, rehabilitation, training, and **programmes to reduce stigma.**

Care and Treatment

- Clear rules for voluntary and facilitated (involuntary) admissions, including timelines for appeals.
- Electronic health records must be kept for safe, continuous care.

Justice and Forensic Care

- People in the criminal justice system must be assessed quickly—within 48 hours.
- Reports are required within set timeframes to protect rights.

Research and Data

- Research is allowed only with consent, ethics approval, and Commission oversight.
- Confidentiality of health records is protected.

Rehabilitation and Recovery

- Recovery and reintegration are key goals.
- The Act requires government to provide rehabilitation and community support programmes.

The Draft Mental Health Act is about rights, safety, dignity, and recovery—bringing Barbados closer to international standards while putting people first.