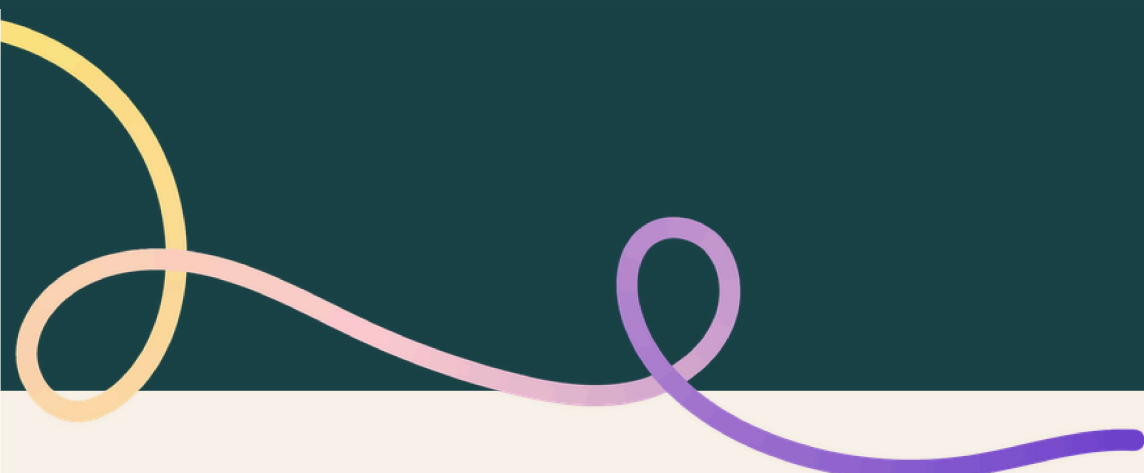


A factsheet about
**Navigating Australian
health services**



Understanding  **Zoe**

<https://understandingzoe.com>

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Navigating Australian health services

A how-to guide for Autistic and AuDHD adults in Australia. Getting support from hospitals, mental health services and emergency care.



Know where to get support

Care that works for you. You can ask any hospital or clinic for changes that make care manageable: a quieter wait, information given step by step, or extra time to take things in. Under the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (section 24 covers services), it is unlawful for a service to refuse reasonable adjustments unless meeting them would cause unjustifiable hardship. If a service refuses, you can complain to the Australian Human Rights Commission. What extra disability support a hospital offers varies by state, so before a planned visit it is worth asking that hospital, or your state health service, what they can put in place.

Support for your mental health. Your usual GP, or the practice you are registered with through MyMedicare, can set up a Mental Health Treatment Plan (going elsewhere may mean no rebate). It gives a Medicare rebate towards up to ten psychology sessions each calendar year, resetting on 1 January. The first referral covers up to six; your GP reviews before the rest. The rebate is only part of each session, so there is often a gap. Each state and territory also runs community mental health services you can look up locally. If low mood, anxiety or exhaustion lasts more than two weeks, treat it as a signal to reach out rather than wait, and the support lines in this guide are there any time you need them sooner.

If it becomes an emergency. Emergencies are a lot to handle, so it helps to let staff know early how you communicate and what makes things easier, such as fewer questions at once, or lower noise and light. A short written summary of your needs can speak for you when talking is hard.

Make your one-page plan

When you are overwhelmed, explaining yourself is the hardest thing. A short summary you prepare in advance can do the talking for you. Fill this in on a calm day, keep it in your phone or wallet, and share it whenever it helps.

My health support summary

My name and how I like to be addressed:

How I communicate best (and what makes it harder):

What helps me feel calm and regulated:

Sensory needs, and what to avoid:

Who to contact, and key health information:

You do not owe anyone your whole story. Share the parts that help you get safe, respectful care.

Ask for what helps

Emergencies are overwhelming, and it is reasonable to ask for what makes care safer for you. Here is what you can ask for, and what the team can do to meet you halfway.

You can ask for

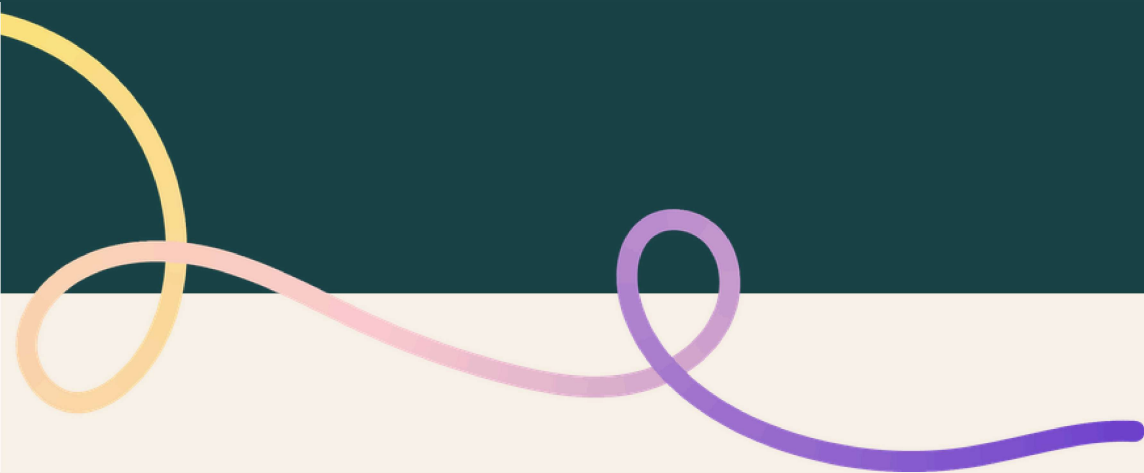
- A quieter space, or the lights turned down
- To keep a comfort or sensory item with you
- Information shown or written, not just spoken
- One thing explained at a time
- A support person to stay with you
- Extra time to answer, and fewer questions at once

The team can

- Bring down noise and bright light where they can
- Tell you what is about to happen before it does
- Walk you through how a treatment will feel
- Give you a moment between steps
- Check how you would rather communicate
- Keep your support person in the loop

If you are thinking about suicide or self-harm, or you just need to talk, these services are open 24/7 and the counselling is free (a 1300 number may cost a local call): Lifeline 13 11 14, Beyond Blue 1300 22 4636, and 13YARN 13 92 76 for First Nations callers. You can also text Lifeline on 0477 13 11 14. In an emergency, always call 000.

Understanding Zoe



Understanding Zoe is the first neuroaffirming AI-powered app that turns every report, observation and moment into an actionable next step, supporting neurodivergent people and those who care about them to thrive.

for more information, you can contact
hello@understandingzoe.com

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