Changing Minds
Series 2
The Inside Story

Acclaimed series returns Tues 6 Oct 8.30pm, Wed 7 Oct 9.35pm, Thurs 8 Oct 8.35pm
Surely one of the most important programs in Australian television history” – Sydney Morning Herald

Changing Minds The Inside Story

Series 2 screens on ABC over three consecutive nights – Tues 6 Oct 8.30pm, Wed 7 Oct 9.35pm, Thurs 8 Oct 8.35pm

Following on from the critical acclaim of series one, Changing Minds: The Inside Story journeys with mentally ill patients on their road to recovery, from breaking point to breakthrough.

This second series emphasises the plight of younger patients, aged 18 and over, who are most at risk of developing mental illness. Raw and emotional, profound and at times funny, the three-part series is an intimate observation of daily life in the locked mental health units of Sydney’s Campbelltown Hospital and in the homes of patients cared for by community mental health teams.

The series follows 11 characters whose mental illnesses do not discriminate in age or social standing. They include Nicholas (aged 18), a bullied schoolboy who relieves his anxiety by self-harming; Daniel (20) whose cannabis addiction is masking psychotic symptoms; Taileah (20), a recently graduated nurse whose stress manifests in distressing auditory hallucinations; Nathan (24) whose schizophrenia allows him to chat with Hitler and Muhammad Ali; Joel (18), a rebellious teenager struggling with a tragic past; Fabrice (36), a barrister’s son with persecutory delusions about demons and devils; and David (47) who believes he’s Elvis Presley.

The patients agreed to be filmed while unwell, and formally consented again when recovered, with the discretion and agreement of their psychiatrists.

By following the treating teams in Campbelltown Hospital’s Mental Health Unit – including Dr Mark Cross and Clinical Nurse Consultant Steve Barnes – taboos are challenged and stigmas attacked. It’s sometimes uncomfortable viewing, but the message is clear – help is available, mental illness is treatable. How will your mind change?

Changing Minds: The Inside Story Series 2 screens during Mental As... the ABC’s week long initiative in support of Mental Health Week which aims to encourage Australians to start talking about mental illness and to give to mental health research. Visit abc.net.au/mentalas or SMS “MentalAs” to 0455 021 021 to show your support and make a contribution. #mentalas


For interviews and more information: Rachel Fergus, TV Publicity, on 02 8333 5085, 0416 263 194 or fergus.rachel@abc.net.au.
Changing Minds: The Inside Story
Series 2, Episode 1 – Tuesday 6 October, 8.30pm on ABC

In Sydney’s Campbelltown Hospital, Psychiatrist Dr Mark Cross and mental health teams are kept busy with new admissions across the mental health units.

Taileah is very scared and very fragile. The recently graduated nurse has been caring for her sick mum, but now Taileah’s hearing a voice that tells her to kill people. Ultimately its commands will push her to utter despair that threatens her life.

Twenty-year-old Daniel has withdrawn from society and is afraid to leave the house. It appears he tries to calm his anxiety with cannabis, smoking up to 40 cones a day. But doctors are concerned that his drug addiction is masking underlying mental health issues. When Daniel is taken into hospital to begin a detox program, things quickly begin to spiral out of control.

Troubled teenager Joel arrives on the ward after attempting to take his own life. Having left home at 16, he lives part of the time in a cave. Once admitted to hospital, Joel reveals a tragic past to Dr Cross. Considered to be at risk of harming himself, Joel is detained under the Mental Health Act. However, for the moment his diagnosis remains a mystery.

Michelle arrives at the Emergency Department. A familiar face to staff, she’s previously been diagnosed with schizoaffective disorder. Today, Michelle is on a manic high and even though she came to hospital voluntarily, she is soon scheduled under the Act. Unhappy with being detained, Michelle takes matters into her own hands.

Fabrice, aged 36, also has a long history of mental illness. His psychosis has rebounded after he stopped taking his medication for schizophrenia. Haunted by visions of demons and devils, the doctors now need to find an alternative treatment.

Mother-of-two Lynda has a family history of bipolar disorder. Her latest manic episode was triggered by a build-up of stress from her five jobs. Usually, Lynda is caring and likes to help other people. But when unwell, she becomes overly intrusive and concerned with other patients’ problems. Today, she’s writing a list of suggestions to improve how the hospital is run.
Changing Minds: The Inside Story
Series 2, Episode 2 – Wednesday 7 October, 9.35pm on ABC

After absconding from hospital, the very loud and manic Michelle returns voluntarily to Campbelltown’s Emergency Department. Once again she’s willingly admitted, but then protests her detention under the Mental Health Act.

Rebellious teenager Joel smuggles cigarettes, lighters and other contraband onto the ward. The decision is made that Joel can be discharged for follow-up care in the community. It’s a decision he’s not happy about.

Daniel’s detox from cannabis is having both a physical and a psychological effect. He’s feeling sick and numb, and then tries to self-harm with Joel’s contraband lighter. It’s then when he reveals his deepest secret to the staff.

Clinical Nurse Consultant Steve Barnes visits Nathan, who’s in denial about his schizophrenia. Alcohol and methamphetamine amplify the voices in Nathan’s head, which he believes everyone can hear. After being found asleep on the side of the road, Nathan becomes floridly psychotic.

David, aged 47, is also admitted to the ward. Amongst his erratic behaviour, he claims to be Elvis Presley. David has cycled through years of symptoms of his bipolar disorder and this is his 18th admission to hospital. David’s mood is good-natured, until he meets fellow patient Michelle.

Lynda, who has bipolar disorder, recounts the extraordinary moment that led her to the psychiatric unit. After a sleepless night, the normally upbeat mother-of-two clashes with another patient and hits rock bottom.

After a change of medication, Fabrice’s parents are summoned to the hospital for a family meeting. Fabrice’s erratic behaviour is settling down, but is it enough for the discharge he’s desperate for?
Changing Minds: The Inside Story
Series 2, Episode 3 – Wednesday 7 October, 9.35pm on ABC

After a week of treatment in hospital, Nathan and Clinical Nurse Consultant Steve Barnes have it out. Nathan wants to go home, but not before Steve extracts the truth of his drug-taking.

Nicholas, aged 18, is admitted to the youth mental health unit with psychotic symptoms and depression. A victim of schoolyard bullying, he relieves his anxiety by cutting his skin and has scars the length of his body. He’s one of 200,000 Australians who each month deliberately self-harms. After thinking about his future he reveals his plans to Dr Cross.

Also presenting to the ward is 29-year-old Jason. With a long history of schizophrenia, he was brought to hospital by police after claiming that aliens were trying to abduct him. Jason, who’s homeless, believes that some of his bones are shattered and broken.

Young mother Jessica arrives in Emergency after phoning Lifeline. While riding the rollercoaster highs and lows of her bipolar disorder, she finds a friend in Lynda, who shares her condition.

With Lynda’s mania under control, she gets ready to return to the outside world, but not before offering David some sage advice.

Steve takes Daniel home on leave and, in an emotionally-charged reunion with his grandparents, more is revealed of Daniel’s tragic childhood. Having quit his cannabis addiction, Daniel then takes a dramatic step to avoid future temptation.