

## **Mental Illness in the Family: Part 3 Considering Hospital Care**

Most people with mental illnesses who receive mental health care get that care in their community – at a doctor’s office, community mental health center, support group or other setting. Receiving care near where they work or live helps these individuals pursue full, productive lives.

Deciding whether hospitalization or in-patient care is appropriate can be difficult for individuals and families and should be considered with the consultation of a mental health professional. If in-patient care becomes necessary, this pamphlet will help you ensure the best care possible.

### **Questions to ask.**

#### **Consider before admission:**

- Have you or the individual in need been professionally evaluated? By whom? Do you understand the diagnosis?
- If you or the individual have not been evaluated, why are you seeking admission?
  - a) The person’s safety, or the safety of others?
  - b) A doctor’s recommendation?
  - c) What symptoms the individual is exhibiting cause concern?
- Do you or the individual have an advance directive in place? What does it say About in-patient care?

#### **As the hospital/treatment center at check in:**

- Does your facility treat patients only for this specific diagnosis?
- If the patient has other health or emotional problems will he/she receive treatment for these problems also?
- Does your facility require tests when admitted? If so, what are they?
- Who will perform these tests?
- Who will evaluate the patient when he/she is admitted?
- What are the person’s qualifications/title?
- Will the individual be seen by this professional on a regular basis?
- Is there a consumer advocate we can contact in case of complaints or grievances?

#### **Financial and insurance issues:**

- Does the hospital accept our insurance? If not, what are the alternatives? If it does, what is covered?
- Can coverage be reviewed with a member of the staff?

## What You Need to Know...



- Are there separate charges for physicians, therapists or caretakers? What are these charges?
- How are fees assessed?
- When will billing occur?
- If insurance only covers part of the cost, what other arrangements can be made for payments?

### **Ask the therapist:**

- What can the individual and family expect during the treatment process?
- What can be the expected reactions/behaviors of the patient?
- How should the family respond?
- How can the individual and family prepare for unexpected behavior and possible setbacks?

### **Leaving the hospital:**

- Will someone advise the individual and family about adjustment concerns such as the need for further counseling or a medication schedule?
- What can we expect when the individual is discharged?
- Will he/she be on medications? Which ones?
- How will these medications help? Are they habit-forming? What are the side effects? What is the dosage?

For more information, contact Mental Health America at 414-276-3122, or via Email: [info@mhawisconsin.org](mailto:info@mhawisconsin.org).

Mental Health America is a United Way of Greater Milwaukee Agency.



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