

MENTAL HEALTH TREATMENT OPTIONS

Questions you may wish to discuss with your mental health practitioner Checklist for Carers

Mental Health Council of Australia



When talking to your mental health practitioner, there are questions that you could consider asking. You may not want to ask all of these questions. Tick those that you would like to ask.

About the illness

- What is the condition/illness/diagnosis?

If a diagnosis has been made

- What are the symptoms that suggest this condition/illness/diagnosis?
- What is known about the causes of this condition/illness?
- What tests have already been undertaken?
- Will there be any further tests?
- Will the person I care for recover? When?
- Where can I get written information about this illness?

If a diagnosis has NOT YET been made

- What diagnoses are you considering?
- What tests have already been undertaken?
- Will there need to be any further tests?
- Has the person I care for consented to me being notified of a diagnosis?
- When should I expect to be notified of a diagnosis?



This checklist is provided by the MHCA Pharma Collaboration
The MHCA is the independent national representative body of the mental health sector in Australia.

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About care and treatment

- What are the aims of care and treatment?
- Where can I get written information about the care and treatment plan?
- Who will be responsible for the care and treatment of the person I care for (in addition to me)?
What exactly will they be responsible for?
- Who else will be involved in care and treatment?
- How will you ensure that there is regular communication between yourself and other practitioners involved in care and treatment?
- What will the treatment consist of (i.e. medication, therapy or other)?
- Are there alternative treatment options if the suggested treatments do not work, or suit the lifestyle of the person I care for?
- What will happen if the person I care for refuses treatment?
- What are the signs and symptoms that the person I care for is becoming unwell again?
- Who should I contact in an emergency?
- What can the person I care for do to help themselves recover?
- What can I do to help?
- Do you know any self-help techniques that will help the recovery of the person I care for?
- Are there any local support, self-help or advocacy groups that I could get in touch with?
- Where can I get advice and training in the day-to-day management of this illness?

Sharing information

- Have you asked the person I care for how much information they are happy to share with me?
- Are there any restrictions on what information can be provided to me?
- What sort of information can I expect to receive?
- Will I be informed about important meetings concerning care and treatment?
- Can I see you on my own if I have any questions or concerns about the person I care for?
- Would you like me to provide any other information about the person I care for or the wider family?
- In relation to privacy and confidentiality, are the views of the person I care for marked in their notes?



About medications

- What is the name of the medication?
- Why have you chosen this medication?
- What will the medication do?
- How, when and how often will it need to be taken?
- How long will it need to be taken?
- What results can the person I care for expect from taking this medication?
- How much time or effort will it take to experience benefits?
- What is the normal dosage range for this medication?
- Why is the dosage more/less than the normal dosage range?
- Can the person I care for take a low dose and increase it when necessary?
- Why is the person I care for on different types of medication?
- What do I do if the person I care for forgets to take the medication?
- What will happen if the person I care for stops taking the medication?
- What are the side effects of taking this medication?
- How can we manage the side effects?
- If the person I care for finds that the side effects are unmanageable, what can you do about managing or counteracting them?
- Are there any other medications that could be used if this one does not work?
- What other treatment options does the person I care for have?
- What symptoms would mean that the dose should be changed?
- Who will be monitoring the medication and how often?
- What specifically will be monitored (i.e. the effect, toxicity or something else)?
- How will I know if the medication is working or not?
- Does this medication have any known or suspected interactions with other medications, including over the counter and complementary medicines?
- Can the person I care for take this medication safely with the other medications they are already taking?
- Are there any foods or drinks that the person I care for should not consume while taking this medication?
- Is this medication listed on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) or will there be a private cost to the person I care for?
- Where can I get written information about this medication?
- Will you be making a time to review the progress and if necessary revise the treatment plan with the person I care for?
- Has the person I care for consented to me attending any future appointments?

About other treatments

- Are there any other treatments for this illness?
- What are they? Are they effective?
- What treatments will the person I care for be undertaking? When? Where? How often? With whom?
- How long will the person I care for need to undertake this treatment?
- How will the person I care for know if this treatment is working or not?
- Is this treatment subsidised by Medicare or will there be a private cost to the person I care for?
- Where can I get written information about this treatment?
- Will you be making a time to review progress and if necessary revise the treatment plan with the person I care for?
- Has the person I care for consented to me attending any future appointments?

About hospital admissions

- Will the person I care for need to be admitted to hospital? If so, for how long?
- If the person I care for goes to hospital, which one will it be?
- While they are in hospital, who will be taking care of the accommodation/family/pets/bills etc. of the person I care for?
- Will the person I care for be on a locked ward?
- If the person I care for gets short-term leave from hospital, will I be informed? When and how will I be informed?
- How often will I get to see the person I care for?
- What arrangements will be made for the treatment and care of the person I care for after discharge from hospital?
- I am not able to look after the person I care for when they are discharged, what will happen?
- Am I expected to help with anything, especially medication?

Other questions I want to remember to ask:
