

Mental Health treatment plans – a consumer's perspective



As a patient with mental illness I would want you to look at my support structure and actively ask me if I would like to bring a friend, carer or support worker to the appointment when my mental health treatment plan is to be written. This will provide me with someone to actively listen, participate where perhaps I am not able to, remind me of what was said during the appointment, and assist me to maintain the plan. Understand that it is important to engage my support person so that they feel included in the process.

In the first instance, please check my physical wellness in case there are some contributing factors to my mental ill health. Please listen to any signs and symptoms I may be telling you about and do not dismiss them as due to my mental illness. Please ensure relevant tests take place to rule out other illnesses and put in place timely dates to remind me of the importance of my physical check ups.

Identify barriers to accessing services you are referring me to, such as cost, transport, point of recovery, willingness to co operate, and waiting lists. Encourage your administration staff to make the referring appointment for me in case there is a delay or a waiting list, and then liaise with you, so that you can help in assisting me manage effectively until I can be seen.

Look at me. Please do not spend the whole time typing at the keyboard. I know there is a lot of paperwork to be filled out but I am still there with you. There may be pressing issues I need to talk about, that unless I am prompted and you look at me, I might not engage.

Check with me the medication I am currently taking so that you do not include irrelevant medications I have used in the past and therefore may not be taking currently. Ensure that I am actually taking the medication you have prescribed for me.

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Remember, I am going to receive a copy of this plan. Please do not refer to things that may further trigger my illness such as referring to a miscarriage as a resolved issue.

Explain to me the differences between mental health professionals and the skills they use, so that I can help in working out who I best need to see. Equip yourself with local Community information so that you can inform me of other services that I can access support from.

If you do not have the expertise in the area of my diagnosis please ensure that you refer me to someone who does and who can educate me.

Help me to develop a clear management plan in case I become acutely unwell. Encourage me to share this with my carer and help me to inform you of what I would want to happen if I am too unwell to make decisions that would be in my best interest.

Put in timely review points and advise and encourage me to book appointments ahead with you. Also encourage me to prompt the service to which I am being referred to, to feed information back to you, so that you can be the central person to my care as you are the most accessible person who is able to provide holistic patient centred care that will assist me in my recovery journey.

Ensure that if medication has been prescribed that it has a set date for review and that I am made aware about side effects and the method of taking and the dosage.

At the end of the consultation please print me a copy and go through the plan carefully with me explaining what I need to do next and once agreed upon, I can sign to give my approval"