



Carers Can Ask Treatment and Discharge Planning Resource

Purpose of Resource

To help you, as a carer, have an informed conversation with a service about treatment, discharge planning and post discharge support.

This resource provides questions that may help you (carer) to find out about treatment and discharge planning. Some of these questions can take time to answer due to the often complex nature of mental health and alcohol or other drug issues. The questions are suggestions only and not intended as an exhaustive or prescriptive list.

General Tips

It's in everyone's best interests for all parties to have clear, respectful lines of communication and good relationships. Effective engagement between carers and the various services involved in the care of the client can assist in achieving better treatment and discharge outcomes.

Questions should always be asked in a sensitive and respectful manner.

If you don't get the service you expect, you have the right to ask to speak with another person at the service or to make a complaint to the agency or the Mental Health Complaints Commissioner (for complaints about public sector mental health services). Resolving disputes at the local level is usually best for all concerned.

Providing feedback (positive or negative) to the service can assist that service to identify ways to provide the best care possible.

Definition of Carer

Carers are family members and friends who support someone who is frail aged, has dementia, an ongoing disability, an acquired brain injury or a chronic or mental illness. The person they care for has difficulty managing at home or in the community without support.

I want to ask a question about...

Consent/Information Sharing

Consider asking these questions:

- Has he/she said that I'm his carer?
- Are there any consent issues I need to be aware of?
- What are my rights if he/she doesn't provide consent?
- Has he/she been asked how he would like me to be involved?
- Has he/she agreed to sharing information with me?
- What information am I entitled to?
- How do I share information that I believe is relevant with the treating team?

Discharge Planning

Consider asking these questions:

- Has he/she been asked if he/she is ready to be discharged?
- Can I be included in the discharge planning?
- Can you explain why he/she is being discharged?
- Who has been involved in making the decision?
- Are both mental illness and drug and alcohol issues being addressed in an integrated manner?
- Have culture and background been taken into consideration?

Strengths Information

"This model emphasises that people have strengths and an inherent capacity to learn, grow and change even when they present with vulnerabilities. Their strengths are in their passions, in their skills, in their interests, their relationships and their environments. The focus of the relationship between the mental health clinician and the consumer is on personal goals based on these strengths and finding niches in the community where these strengths can be used and valued. Through this, consumers develop their skills and a greater sense of hope and control." (Source P.5 St Vincent's Hospital Melbourne publication: Adult Mental Health Information for Consumers, Families and Carers)

Strengths

Consider asking these questions:

- Can we talk about his/her strengths? I'd like to support them.
- What decisions and choices has he/she made about his/her illness?
- Can we talk about how he/she is understanding and feeling about the experiences that have led them to being in this situation?
- What goals has he/she been pursuing through this service?

Discharge Summary

Consider asking these questions:

- Is it possible to receive a draft of the discharge plan prior to discharge so I can have further input if need be?
- Is there a written discharge summary?
- Who will receive it? Eg. GP, other services?
- Will I get a copy?
- Does everyone know what they need to do next?

Carer's Role in Discharge

Consider asking these questions:

- Am I part of the discharge plan?
- What am I expected to do? (eg medication, relapse, transport, making appointments etc)
- Can we talk about it?
- Has he/she agreed to me doing those things?
- What happens if I can't do those things?
- Can I have help in supporting him/her? What sort of help can I get?

Relapse

Consider asking these questions:

- How will I know if he/she is relapsing?
- What might the early warning signs be?
- Does he/she know what they are?
- What do I do if I notice these early warning signs?
- Who should I contact?
- Is there a written relapse plan?
- Has he/she made a written plan about what he/she wants to happen if he/she becomes unwell? (e.g. advance statements)

Treatment

Consider asking these questions:

- How can I be involved in treatment planning?
- Can you explain the diagnosis and prognosis?
- How might that make him/her behave?
- Has a dual diagnosis screen and assessment been done?
- What treatment has he/she received? How does it work?
- How do we know if the treatment is working?
- Has he/she agreed to the treatment plan?
- Is this treatment compulsory? If yes, what is the process and review date?
- Will treatment be in the public or private system? How much will it cost? I.e. Medications, services etc

Medications

Consider asking these questions:

- Can you explain how the medication works, any side effects and any interactions it may have with alcohol or other drugs?
- What should I do if he/she seems to be having a bad reaction?
- What should I do if he/she doesn't take his/her medication?
- Is there a record of what medications have been tried? Has this been shared to avoid any mistakes?
- Is there a record of his/her reactions to past medications?

Referrals

Consider asking these questions:

- Who have you made referrals to?
- Have they been accepted?
- How long will the referral last?
- Does he/she need to go to a GP for another referral?
- Does everyone know what they are meant to be doing?
- Has he/she agreed to this?
- Has he/she met the new clinician/ GP/support worker?
- Can you tell me about the services you have referred him/her to?
- Do I need to do anything about this?
- How do I support him/her?
- What happens if he/she doesn't go?

Carer Supports

Consider asking these questions:

- Who can I contact if I need help myself?
- Who do I contact if things go wrong?
- What sort of support can I have? (eg respite, counselling, peer support, advocacy)
- Do I need a referral?

Re Accessing the Service

Consider asking these questions:

- Can he/she use this service again?
- When?
- Who do we contact?
- What is the process if he/she needs to come back?
- How will he/she access treatment after being discharged?

Relevant Emergency Contacts

Consider asking these questions:

- Can you give me emergency contact numbers for my area?
- How do I know which one to call?
- When is it the right time to call?
- What do I do if we are not at home in an emergency?

After Discharge

Consider asking these questions:

- If he/she doesn't follow the plan, what will you do?
- Will I be able to contact you or ask for advice after he/she is discharged?
- If not you, who or what service should I speak with?
- What psycho social supports are available? e.g. education, employment, recreation, community managed mental health services, housing, legal, financial etc

Risk

Consider asking these questions:

- Has he/she been educated about possible risk issues?
- Is there a risk of him/her overdosing?
- What is the likelihood that his/her mental health condition will relapse?
- What is the likelihood that he/she will relapse in relation to alcohol or other drug use?
- Has a risk assessment been recently completed? What were the results?
- What self harm or suicide risk exists?
- Who can I contact if I feel I can't manage his/her risk issues?

Anything Else?

Consider asking these questions:

- Is there anything else I need to know?
- Can you tell me where to get more information about his/her illness?
- How else can I help him/her once he/she leaves here?
- Where can I find out more?

Other Resources that Might Help

Privacy, Confidentiality & Information Sharing – Consumers, Carers & Clinicians: A position statement and issues paper by the National Mental Health Consumer & Carer Forum 2011. Download from: <http://www.nmhccf.org.au/Publications-info>

Adversity to Advocacy: The lives and hopes of mental health carers – Mental Health Council of Australia, Oct 2009.
<http://www.mhca.org.au/index.php/component/rsfiles/download?path=Publications/MHCA%20CEP%20webLR.pdf&Itemid=539>

Communicating with carers and families: Information sharing for better outcomes (2007). <http://www.chiefpsychiatrist.health.wa.gov.au/publications/>

Carers guide to information sharing with mental health clinicians: communicating for better outcomes (2007). <http://www.chiefpsychiatrist.health.wa.gov.au/publications>

Treatment questions checklist.
<http://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/about/campaigns/partnersincarecampaign/checklistforcars.aspx>

Carers Recognition Act 2012 <http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/about-the-department/documents-and-resources/policies,-guidelines-and-legislation/carers-recognition-act-2012>

Find a Hospital Mental Health Service:

<http://www.health.vic.gov.au/mentalhealth/services/index.htm>

Austin Psychiatric Triage (information, assessment and referral 24 hours a day, 7 days a week) Ph: **1300 859 789**

Austin CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services) Ph: 03 **9496 3620** (business hours/after hours call Psych. Triage)

Northern Hospital Psychiatric Triage: **1300 874 243**

St Vincent's Hospital Psychiatric Triage: **1300 558 862**

Find an Alcohol or Other Drug Service:

DIRECT LINE (Statewide alcohol and other drug counselling, information and referral) 24hrs/7days Ph: **1800 888 236**

YoDDA (formerly YSAS Line) (24 hour free helpline for young people)
Ph: **1800 458 685**

Carer Helplines:

Mind Carer Helpline: **1300 550 265** (9am-5pm, Monday to Friday)

Family Drug Help: **1300 660 068** (9am to 9pm Monday - Friday)

www.familydrughelp.com.au

Find a Mental Health Community Support Service:

Formerly called PDRSS, there will now be a single point of entry in each catchment

Intake assessment services for Mental Health Community Support Services Victoria:

Neami National Ph: **1300 379 462**

EACH Ph: **1300 785 358**

ACSO Ph: **1300 022 760** (rural areas)

On the following page there is a guide to Mental Health Community Support Services by Local Government Areas.

Mental Health Community Support Services by Local Government Area

<p>If you live in these areas call Neami Intake 1300 379 462</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Bayside2. Brimbank3. Frankston4. Glen Eira5. Hobsons Bay6. Hume7. Kingston8. Maribyrnong9. Melbourne10. Melton11. Moonee Valley12. Moreland13. Mornington Peninsula14. Port Phillip15. Stonnington16. Wyndham17. Yarra	<p>If you live in these areas call EACH Intake 1300 785 358</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Banyule2. Boroondara3. Cardinia4. Casey5. Darebin6. Greater Dandenong7. Knox8. Manningham9. Maroondah10. Monash11. Nillumbik12. Whitehorse13. Whittlesea14. Yarra Ranges
<p>If you live in a rural area call ACSO 1300 022 760</p>	

Alcohol and/or Other Drug Intake

Call Odyssey ReGen on 1800 700 514 for alcohol and other drugs intake service if you live in the cities of

- Banyule
- Darebin
- Melbourne
- Moonee Valley
- Moreland
- Nillumbik
- Whittlesea
- Yarra

For other queries you can call DIRECT LINE: 1800 888 236 for advice

Carer Services/Supports

Tandem (Previously called: Victorian Mental Health Carers Network)

<http://tandemcarers.org.au/>

Carers Victoria <http://www.carersvictoria.org.au/advice>

Victorian Mental Illness Awareness Council (VMIAC)
<http://www.vmiac.org.au/research.php>

Carer Links North Ph: 9495 2500
<http://www.respitenorthandwest.org.au/services-and-support>

Austin Mental Health Carer Consultants Ph: 9496 5000

St Vincent's Mental Health Carer Consultants Ph: 9288 4141

Link to Mental Health ACT 2014 resources:
www.health.vic.gov.au/mentalhealth/mhactreform/resources.htm

Aboriginal Resources

Victorian Aboriginal Health Service Family Counselling Services
Ph: 03 9403 3300 Fax: 03 9403 3333
Hours: Monday-Thursday 9am - 5pm, Friday 9am - 4pm
Address: 238-250, Plenty Rd, Preston, Vic
Access to 5 beds at St Vincent's Mental Health Acute Inpatient Service
If calling after hours phone St Vincent's Hospital Psychiatric Triage: 1300 558 862
Website: http://www.vahs.org.au/family_counselling.html

Multicultural Resources

Telephone Information Line 24 hrs, 7 days a week – recorded information about involuntary patients, community treatment orders, electroconvulsive therapy and the Mental Health Review Board:

English 9679 9838	Croatian 9679 9828	Mandarin 9679 9837	Turkish 9679 9835
Arabic 9679 9825	Greek 9679 9829	Serbian 9679 9834	Vietnamese 9679 9836
Cambodian 9679 9826	Italian 9679 9830	Somali 9679 9832	
Cantonese 9679 9827	Macedonian 96799831	Spanish 9679 9833	

Telephone Interpreting Service 24hrs/7 days a week - Ph: 131 450
<http://www.mhima.org.au/resources-and-information/Translated-information/translated-mental-health-information-resources>

Action on Disabilities in Ethnic Communities Ph: 9480 1666 <http://www.adec.org.au>

Gay Lesbian Bisexual Transgender Intersex Resource

Gay and Lesbian Switchboard

Volunteer organisation provides a free, confidential, anonymous general telephone counselling, referral and information service for Victorian and Tasmanian gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and intersex (GLBTI) community and its supporters

Hours: Mon - Thurs 6-10pm (Wed 2-10pm)

Fri, Sat, Sun & public hols 6-9pm

Melbourne: 9663 2939

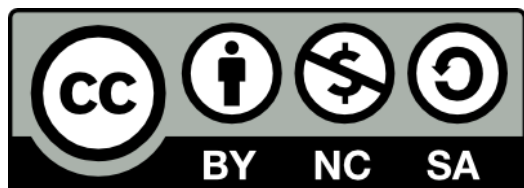
Regional Victoria: 1800 184 527

Website: <http://www.switchboard.org.au/>

Guide to Mental Health Terminology

<http://www.health.vic.gov.au/mentalhealth/termnlgly.htm>

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This resource was developed by the Discharge Planning Sub Committee of the North East Dual Diagnosis Youth network (NEDDY). It was initially based on the following source: Discharge Planning for Adult Community Mental Health Services - Office of Chief Psychiatrist 2002. We then drafted the resource and consulted with carers and staff of mental health and drug and alcohol services. The questions are suggestions only and due to the number of people that provided input into the resource we make no claim to their originality. Thank you to all carers, staff and agencies (Neami National, Mental Illness Fellowship Victoria, Nexus and YSAS) involved. We thank all who have contributed to this resource and hope it is of use to carers.

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Brief Version: (You can use this page to make notes when talking with services)

Consent/Information Sharing
Discharge Planning
Strengths
Discharge Summary
Carer's Role in Discharge
Relapse
Treatment
Medications
Referrals
Carer Supports
Re Accessing the Service
Relevant Emergency Contacts
After Discharge

Risk
Anything Else

Even Briefer Version: Reminder Card

(You can cut this out, fold it and take it with you when talking with services).

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Treatment & Discharge Planning. Ask About:

Consent	What Do I Need to Do?
Diagnosis/Prognosis/Treatment	Relapse
Formal Discharge Plan	Contacts to Support me
Referrals	Re accessing Service
Strengths	Emergency Contacts

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Services:

Your Local Triage Ph:
DIRECT LINE Ph: 1800 888 236
Mind Carer Helpline: 1300 550 265 (9am-5pm, M to F)
Family Drug Help Ph: 1300 660 068

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