

What to know about Mental Health Inpatient Treatment and planning for your treatment after discharge

A mental health hospitalization can be a difficult and confusing time. During this time, it can be hard to keep track of what you should do, what you need to know, and what you can expect from the hospital.

There are things you can do to gain the most from your time spent in the hospital.

Do:

- **Ask questions.** Use this time to learn more about your illness, medication, and treatment options:
 - Does this medication have side effects?
 - Are there alternative medications to consider?
 - What outpatient treatment options are available?
 - What providers (at which locations) are available offering this treatment?
 - Are there other services available, such as peer support or recovery specialists?
 - What does this recommended treatment offer that is different from treatment I have had in the past?
- **Be involved.** Be involved in the plans that are made for you after your hospitalization. This includes the types of treatments or services you will have and the locations and times of your appointments. Talk about plans early in your stay, so there is time to get an appointment with the date, time, and provider you choose. Accept an aftercare appointment you know you can keep.
- **Include your team.** Have your friends and family meet with staff in the unit. This way, your friends and family will understand your illness and aftercare plans. Having someone else hear what your discharge plans are can help you remember the details after your discharge. Working as a team, you, your family and friends, and the hospital staff can make a plan that works for you and helps you stay well.
- **Create a plan.** If you do not have a WRAP (Wellness Recovery Action Plan[®]), make a plan for how to stay well after you leave the hospital. The plan may include:
 - Activities you need to do to stay well, and triggers or warning signs that things are not going well.
 - Steps to take when you don't feel strong and who to call for support.
 - Appointment details for follow-up care after hospitalization.
 - Once you have a WRAP, work with your team to keep it up to date.

It is very important that your treatment continues after your hospitalization stay. Appointments should be set for you within seven days of discharge so that:

- You can continue to receive the support and education you need during your recovery.
- Doctors can help prevent medication errors and bad side effects.
- Therapists, peer supports, and Case Managers can make sure your recovery is going as planned and you are working on your goals.
- You can help prevent your returning to the hospital.

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Additional resource: Mental Health America, <http://www.mentalhealthamerica.net/after-diagnosis>.