

INPATIENT CARE

Inpatient treatment is when an individual receives care at a general or specialty hospital with 24 hour care from mental health professionals (as opposed to “outpatient” treatment, which means that the person is receiving care in the community, without staying overnight in an inpatient setting).

WHEN IS HOSPITALIZATION NECESSARY?

There are many circumstances that may necessitate an inpatient stay. Here are a few examples:

- The person is in crisis and needs to be hospitalized in order to ensure their physical safety or the safety of others.
- The person is in crisis and needs an environment that allows them to focus solely on achieving wellness, with 24 hour access to mental health professionals.
- The person is making a major medication change and needs 24 hour access to mental health professionals to ensure a healthy transition.
- The person arranges periodic inpatient stays as a form of wellness maintenance.

HOW DO I GET INPATIENT CARE?

If you are voluntarily seeking inpatient care, first find out if your insurance covers inpatient care. You can find this information by calling your health plan. Next, identify hospitals in your area that provide mental health and/or substance use services. Call the hospital and ask to speak with the intake worker. Ask them if the hospital accepts your insurance. If you need help with this

process, call your local NAMI or NAMI Wisconsin (contact information on pages 73-81).

IF I CHOOSE TO BE HOSPITALIZED, CAN THE HOSPITAL CHOOSE NOT TO RELEASE ME?

If the treating provider believes that the person meets the criteria for an emergency detention, he/she can decide to detain the person until they no longer meet the criteria. This relatively rare process is referred to as a “Treatment Director’s Hold.” See pages 52-53 for more details.

WHAT IS A DISCHARGE PLAN?

Discharge planning is a process meant to ensure a smooth transition from one level of care to another (in this case, from inpatient to outpatient). The process includes a meeting with providers and a physical document called the discharge plan. This process must include assistance with:

- Securing appropriate housing
- Applying for benefits (if needed)
- Assistance obtaining outpatient community services

At your request, family members or other supporters can attend the meeting to ask questions and review the discharge plan with you.



Tips FOR READJUSTMENT POST-HOSPITALIZATION

Everyone experiences the transition from inpatient to outpatient treatment differently. Each person has unique needs. Here are a few tips to make the transition a little smoother for everyone.

STRUCTURING TIME. After spending time in a highly structured environment, it can be jarring to return home to unstructured time (especially if unemployed or on leave from work/school). Supporters should be aware of this and ask the person what type of support they need (if any) with managing time.

TIME ALONE. Some people may need plenty of solitude to process their experiences. Solitude is different from social withdrawal and can be healthy. Others may want constant company. Others may want more limited, but reliable social interactions (e.g. weekly movie night, lunch on weekdays, etc.). Others may need people to just “be” with them — without too much conversation, stimulation or planned activities. Ask the person’s preference!

TAKING IT SLOW. There is no standard for when you “should” be back to work, school or other regular activities. Taking steps forward is important but the pace and stride are up to you!

HELPING CHILDREN UNDERSTAND. If there are children in your family, especially young children, this can be a very stressful and confusing

experience. Talk with a trusted mental health professional about the best ways to help children understand the situation.

GIVING GUIDANCE TO FAMILY AND FRIENDS. When someone is hospitalized, people who love them feel intense fear, confusion and a strong urge to “fix it.” These emotions can make family members seem overbearing and irritating, leading to tension and arguments. To reduce the tension, tell family and friends what you need from them and what makes you feel worse. Try to remember that what your family and friends really want is to support, protect and help you heal. You can help them go about that in the right way by clearly stating your needs.

