

Planning Your Recovery

Both you and your family or other close supporters may use the following as a reference to understanding the six main areas important to people with mental illness when they leave hospital.

Recovery: Your Next Steps

A number of people are involved when you are discharged from hospital. Overall coordination of the plan, however, is usually the responsibility of one person. It may be your mental health worker, a designated nurse, and social worker or other team member depending on the hospital and mental health's patient care system. It is important for you and your family/supporters to find out who this person is. Once in the community, you and your mental health worker and supporters can address your longer term needs. Your plan should consider the following:

Medication

Medication information is generally given by your doctor or a nurse and can be listed as soon as it is known. It will be useful to record information on the expected outcomes and side effects from the medication, along with dosage, times, and any other special directions – such as the need to take the drugs with food or milk. Following the directions will reduce the possibility of a relapse and re-hospitalization.

Tell your doctor if you:

- Have had in the past, any allergic reactions to any foods or drugs.
- Are taking any medications on a regular basis, or if you often use any non-prescription drugs.
- Are being treated for a different condition by another doctor
- Have diabetes, kidney or liver disease.
- Are pregnant or breast-feeding
- Are taking vitamins or mineral supplements or are on a special diet.
- Use alcohol or tobacco.

Where to Live

Not all people will have a home to return to once they are discharged from the hospital. Appropriate residential planning can help give people with mental illness the basic support they need to remain in the community and to avoid a relapse and the possibility of a re-admission to hospital. It is important that arrangements for your housing are made before you leave. Your mental health worker or Employment Assistance Worker can assist you to find the most appropriate and available housing option.

Some boarding homes provide medication supervision while others do not. Group homes may expect clients to be responsible for their own medication. There may be semi-independent and subsidized housing options available where support is provided in your own home.

Follow-up / Community Care

Continuity of care and medication monitoring are very important for all people with a mental illness. In addition to an appointment with your psychiatrist, you may be referred to day programs, support groups or alcohol and drug misuse programs.

Follow-up / Physical Health Care

Despite the fact that you see doctors more often, physical illness is more frequent among persons with mental illness than in the general population. Psychiatric symptoms can cause you to neglect physical health problems, so follow-up care in the community is important to promote health maintenance and prevention of physical illness. Include dental and eye care in your recovery plans.

Education, Financial Assistance & Other Needs

Before leaving hospital, you and your family/supporters should have good basic education about symptom recognition. This can also be a good opportunity to seek information regarding the effects of other medical problems on your mental illness. You can also review your knowledge of the latest birth control options, prevention of AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases.

You may require assistance obtaining transportation to and from aftercare appointments. Talk to your Employment Assistance Worker or your local Human Resources office is available to help applying for financial assistance and/or Disability Benefits. If you have such needs or information requirements seek the help of your mental health worker. Please see www.mhr.gov.bc.ca for more information.

Activities of Daily Living

Most people with a mental illness find they need to relearn some social skills to better cope with their illness in their day-to-day life. This and other basic life skills retraining are important aspects of your recovery. Appropriate rehabilitation options can be identified and recorded as soon as they are identified.

Your mental health worker will help you identify these programs.

My mental health worker's name is:

Phone #