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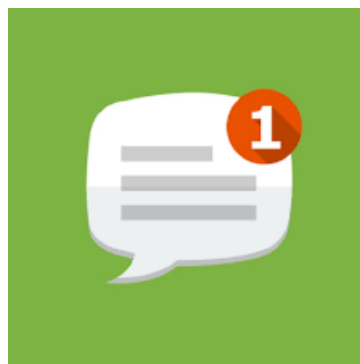
Family Huddle Newsletter



Mental Health and Substance Use Family Support Services

Tips and resources for people who want to be more effective in supporting adults with mental health/substance use concerns.

MESSAGE FROM YOUR HOST



Hello. This month's topic is a continuation from last month's about the Mental Health Act. You will learn important information about the Act that will help you navigate the system when your loved one has been admitted to an in patient psychiatric unit.

When your loved one has been admitted onto the in patient psychiatric unit, I invite you to consider this time as an opportunity for you to take a little breather. There is absolutely nothing wrong with you feeling relieved about your loved one being in the hospital, and it is okay for you to **NOT** visit everyday. Give yourself permission to take care of the things you haven't been able to get to because of the crisis leading up to the admission. It is important for you to replenish your emotional resources so you can be available to support your loved one at time of discharge.



Loved one has been admitted

When your loved one has been admitted to an in patient psychiatric unit, they will have been admitted either voluntarily or involuntarily. This is what we refer to as their 'status' and their status may change over the course of the hospitalization. It is important to know the status at time of discharge. If your loved one is discharged and the status is involuntary, then your loved one will be discharged on Extended Leave under the Mental Health Act.

What is extended leave?

Extended Leave (EL) is when the patient of the psychiatric unit has been discharged but is still a patient of the hospital. When discharged on EL, your love one will have to follow a set of conditions. The most common conditions are (1) take medications; (2) follow up with appointments at the mental health centre.



Why is my loved one on extended leave?

- Your loved one needs further treatment but lacks the insight into their need for continued treatment and are unwilling to continue treatment once discharged.
- Your loved one's mental and physical health may deteriorate (get worse) without the certification but doesn't have to be in hospital. (Fraserhealth.ca)

What happens if my loved one ignores the conditions of the extended leave?

If there is a condition to take medication and your loved one is refusing, the mental health staff can initiate a 'recall' under the Mental Health Act to enforce medication adherence. When staff 'recall' your loved one, they sign a form called a Director's Warrant (Apprehension of Patient). They send this warrant to police who pick up your loved one, take them to hospital, where they will be given their medication. Mental health staff can also 'recall' your loved one if they have been refusing to go to their appointments at the mental health centre. In this case, the police receive the Director's Warrant but this time bring your loved one to the mental health centre for assessment.

For how long does extended leave last?

When your loved one is placed on EL, there are specific time frames within which the mental health team must review and decide if your loved one continues to meet the criteria for EL. If the team decides to keep your loved one on EL, it is referred to as a 'renewal'. The time frames are listed in the graph below. You can consider these time frames as 'check points' to reduce the risk of a person staying on EL indefinitely. After the 6 month renewal, the EL is reviewed once every 6 months.



How will I know if my loved one is going to be taken off extended leave?

The Mental Health Act states that staff must ask your loved one whom they identify as their near relative and notify that person at each time the EL is renewed. Staff notify the near relative by filling out Form 16 called Notification to Near Relative and mailing it to that person. This is how you will be informed about the EL but only if your loved one has identified you as their near relative.



I've heard my loved one has a review panel, what is that?

- As an involuntary patient, your loved one has the right to apply for a review panel hearing immediately upon being admitted to the hospital and once after each subsequent renewal.
- The review is comprised of three or more members appointed from the board and includes a medical practitioner, a lawyer, and a person who is neither a medical practitioner nor lawyer (Gov.bc.ca)
- Think of it like a hearing at court. Your loved one has their moment to speak to the Review panel about the reasons why they believe they should be taken off EL. The staff from the mental health centre are also at the review panel, and they will argue reasons why your loved one should stay on EL. The review panel listens to all sides of the argument and then makes their decision as to whether your loved one no longer meets the requirement for certification. If the review panel decides they do not meet requirements, your loved one is decertified immediately. At this point your loved one no longer has to (1) take their medications; (2) go to appointments at the mental health centre.
- You can ask to attend the review panel. Some families wish to do this and/or others will provide a hand written statement outlining their concerns for their loved one if decertified.

How can I get my loved one on extended leave?

Your loved one has to first meet the criteria for certification, and EL has to be initiated from the in patient psychiatric unit. You can not request that your loved one be put on EL if they are not in the in patient psychiatric unit.

RESOURCES

Fraser Health information about Extended Leave.

<https://www.fraserhealth.ca/health-topics-a-to-z/mental-health-and-substance-use/mental-health-act#.XdhffflKg2w>

The Wellness Recovery Action Plan (WRAP) is a helpful tool to use when your loved one needs hospitalization.

<https://mentalhealthrecovery.com/wrap-is/>

Youtube video about BC's Mental Health Act during hospitalization.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pj4xp5x0PhQ>



Reflective Box

Think about how you can take care of your own needs now that your loved one is safe in the hospital and receiving the required help to get well again. What are some of your own self-care activities that have fallen off to the sidelines because of the crisis leading up to the hospitalization? Can you now take the time and re-engage with those activities?



Family Support Services Education Series

The education series in Langley, New Westminster and Abbotsford have wrapped up. Thank you to the families/friends who attended. Please check our web page for information about future dates for the education series.

<https://www.fraserhealth.ca/health-topics-a-to-z/mental-health-and-substance-use/mental-health-substance-use-family-support-services-and-resources#.XoJlwD9Kq2w>

World Health Day 2020

(April 7)

A day paying tribute to the nurses and midwives around the world who are dedicating their time to the caring of others.

<https://www.who.int/news-room/campaigns/world-health-day/world-health-day-2020>

CONTACT

Mental Health and Substance Use Family Support Services
Monday-Thursday
9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
(hours may vary to include evenings)

1 (833) 898-6200

Are you in a crisis?

Call the Fraser Health crisis line:

604-951-8855 or
1-877-820-7444 (toll free)

Trained volunteers provide emotional crisis support, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.



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