



Mental Health: Checklist for Carers



Berkshire Healthcare
NHS Foundation Trust

The following checklist of questions has been designed to help friends, family and carers get all the information they need about the diagnosis and treatment of the person they care for.

You may not want or need to ask all the questions listed but you may find that they help you in preparing to meet with members of the multi-disciplinary team (psychiatrists; doctors; nurses; occupational therapists; physiotherapists; support workers etc).

You can record the answers to the questions in the space provided within the booklet.

You may not need to ask all the answers at the same time and you may choose to ask the questions over a period of time. You may also have additional questions which aren't covered so we've left space at the end for you to add your own questions. However, the checklist will give you a starting point, allow you to make notes during discussions and help you keep a record of useful information.

With thanks to the Royal College of Psychiatrists who developed the checklist and who have granted permission for us to reproduce the questions.



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About the illness:

What is the diagnosis or problem?	
If a diagnosis has not yet been made, what are the possibilities?	
Why has this happened to them?	
Will the person I care for recover?	
What symptoms suggest this diagnosis/illness?	
What is known about the causes of this illness?	
What is likely to happen in the future? Will it get better or worse?	
Where can I get written information about this illness?	





About the assessment:

What assessments have already been done?	
Are there any other assessments that might need to be done?	
Are there any physical problems that have been discovered? If so, what will need to be done?	
Has the culture and background of the person I care for been considered?	
Will I be involved in the assessment process? If not, why not? If yes, how?	





About care & treatment:

What are the aims of the care and treatment?	
What is your plan for treatment?	
Will the person being cared for have a say in their plan? If not, why?	
Will I be involved? If so, how?	
Who else will be involved in the treatment? Will I have a named nurse/care co-ordinator or similar role to link in with?	
How long will the person being cared for need treatment?	
What happens if they refuse treatment?	
Would talking treatments (e.g. cognitive behavioural therapy) be helpful? Are they available locally?	





Sharing of Information:

Have you asked the person I care for about how much information they are happy to share with me?	
Will I be informed about important meetings concerning their care and treatment?	
Can I speak or meet with any staff (doctors/nurses etc) on my own?	
Would you like to ask me for any other information about the person I care for or the family?	
Can I tell you things that will not be shared with the person or other members of staff?	
Are their views on confidentiality clearly marked on their notes?	





Care and Support:

What can I do to help?	
Are there any local self-help or carers' groups that can help me understand the illness?	
How can I get advice and training in the day-to-day management of the illness?	
Are there any local groups that can provide support or help to me as a carer?	
As a carer, I understand I am entitled to a carer's assessment. Who do I contact to access the assessment and discuss my needs?	
What is the difference between a carer, a nearest relative and a nominated person?	





Getting Help:

How can I get in contact with you?	
How do I arrange to see you?	
Who do I contact if I'm worried about the behaviour of the person I care for?	
What do I do if I'm worried that the person I care for is becoming ill again?	
Who do I contact in an emergency? What help might be available?	
How can I get a second opinion?	





Medication:

What medication is to be used and how?	
Is the lowest effective dose being prescribed?	
Can a low dose be taken at first and increased if necessary?	
How often will the medication be reviewed?	
Will I be involved in future discussions about the dose or type of medication?	
What should the benefits of this medication be? In the short term? In the long term?	
What are the possible side-effects of this medication? In the short term? In the long term?	





Managing the Medication:

Why have you chosen this particular medication?	
How long will the medication have to be taken for?	
Are there any other medications that could be used if this one does not work?	
What symptoms might mean that the dose should be changed?	
What should I do if the person I care for experiences unpleasant side-effects?	
What will happen if they stop taking the medication?	
Do you have any written information about this medication to give to me?	





Hospital Treatment:

Does the person I care for need to be admitted to hospital? If so, how long for? Are there any alternatives to hospital admission?	
If they have to go to hospital, which hospital will it be?	
Will they be on a locked ward?	
If they get short-term leave from hospital, when and how will I be informed?	
How often will I be able to see them?	
Are there any restrictions on what they can take with them to hospital?	
What are the practicalities regarding clothes, washing, laundry etc.?	





Discharge from hospital:

What arrangements will be made for their care and monitoring after discharge from hospital?	
If I am not able to look after the person when they are discharged, what will happen?	
Am I expected to help with anything, especially medication?	
Do you know of any self-help techniques that will help their recovery?	
Will their progress be monitored following discharge?	





Any other general questions:

You may find it helpful to make a note of any general questions you want to ask.
We've left this section blank for your to add your own bespoke questions.

