

HELP SHEET: CAREGIVERS AND THE RIGHT TO HELP



AS A CAREGIVER FOR SOMEONE WITH SCHIZOPHRENIA

Caregivers can play an important role in helping their loved one manage schizophrenia, but sometimes there's confusion around the role they can have in the treatment process.

So here's some basic information that can help as you sit down with your loved one and the Treatment Team, including the doctor, to find the process that works best for all of you.

Download Help Sheet: [*Working with the Treatment Team*](#) from psychu.org for more on who to talk to.



THE RIGHT TO SHARE

As a caregiver, with your loved one's permission, you may offer important information to the Treatment Team — especially when it has to do with symptoms and side effects.



THE RIGHT TO ASK

Healthcare professionals can only discuss a patient's condition with caregivers if they have their patient's permission to do so. Ask the Treatment Team what's required for permission. Sometimes it's enough for a patient to give consent verbally or by letter.

If you don't have permission from your loved one yet, **10 Good Reasons to Involve Caregivers** can help start the conversation and explain how valuable caregiver involvement can be.



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10 GOOD REASONS TO INVOLVE CAREGIVERS

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10 GOOD REASONS TO INVOLVE CAREGIVERS

Every one of us has the right to privacy, and it's important to acknowledge that. But there are some very good reasons for caregivers to be able to participate in their loved one's treatment. They can:

1. Provide a general medical history and help describe the history of the illness
2. Help track whether symptoms are getting better or worse
3. Watch out for any potential side effects of medication
4. Recognize early warning signs of an acute episode
5. Provide practical support such as providing transportation to appointments
6. Provide a stable, structured environment
7. Help their loved one set attainable goals
8. Participate in therapy if their loved one approves
9. Help their loved one navigate the healthcare system
10. Learn ways to make daily life a little easier



HOW PERMISSION CAN BE GIVEN

Permission to discuss a patient's condition can be given by the patient verbally or by a letter. Some healthcare facilities will have their own consent form. Meet with your loved one and the Treatment Team to talk about how you can be involved and how to get formal consent.



VALUABLE RESOURCES FOR CAREGIVERS

Many other questions about the rights of caregivers and loved ones can come up when you live with schizophrenia. Reach out to the following organizations for more information and resources:

- The National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) is the largest grassroots mental health organization and a good resource for information and support. Visit nami.org
- Mental Health America (MHA) is a community-based nonprofit dedicated to helping address the needs of those living with mental illness. Visit nmha.org

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