



Open Doors



Working with Individuals who Experience Mental Health Issues.

What the Transition Specialist Needs to Know.



Mental Health

What is Mental Health?

- According to the Office of Health and Human Services, Mental Health is defined as our emotional, psychological, and social well-being. It affects how we think, feel, and act. It also helps determine how we handle stress, relate to others, and make choices. Mental health is an important aspect of every stage of life.
- Mental or emotional health refers to your overall psychological well-being. It includes the way you feel about yourself, the quality of your relationships, and your ability to manage your feelings and deal with difficulties.
- The state of our mental health tends to naturally go up and down. Our mood fluctuates greatly depending on the events in our lives. Despite these fluctuations we are generally able to manage and cope with our everyday life.



What is Mental Illness

- A mental illness is a disease/condition that impacts a person's thinking, feeling or mood, and may affect his or her ability to relate to others, and function on a daily basis. (NAMI)
- Mental Illness is a broad term that refers to a wide array of Mental health conditions/disorders that affect your mood, thinking and behavior. (Mayo Clinic)
- Many people have mental health concerns from time to time. But a mental health concern becomes a mental illness when ongoing signs and symptoms affect the individuals ability to function in daily life.
- Mental illness, like physical illnesses, is on a continuum of severity ranging from mild to moderate to severe.
- Mental health conditions are unique to each individual. Individuals with the same diagnosis may have very different experiences.



Issue or Illness

Mental health conditions are not necessarily easy to diagnose.

- Sometimes changes in mental health are a normal reaction to a change in life (depression after the death of a loved one, or a divorce, or the onset of an illness) and sometimes it is something more.
- Sometimes symptoms that look like a mental illness can actually be caused by something physical.
- Trying to tell the difference between what is within the realm of expected behaviors, and what might be the signs of a mental illness isn't always easy.
- There's no easy test that can let someone know if there is mental illness



Some possible symptoms of mental health conditions

Each condition has its own set of symptoms but some common signs of mental illness in adults and adolescents **can** include the following. Note that some of these symptoms may also be a typical reaction to a life situation, and not indicate mental illness.

- Excessive worrying or fear
- Feeling excessively sad or low
- Confused thinking or problems concentrating and learning
- Extreme mood changes, including uncontrollable “highs” or feelings of euphoria
- Prolonged or strong feelings of irritability or anger
- Avoiding friends and social activities
- Difficulties understanding or relating to other people
- Changes in sleeping habits or feeling tired and low energy
- Changes in eating habits such as increased hunger or lack of appetite



Possible Symptoms Continued

- Difficulty perceiving reality (delusions or hallucinations, in which a person experiences and senses things that don't exist in objective reality)
- Inability to perceive changes in one's own feelings, behavior or personality ("lack of insight")
- Abuse of substances like alcohol or drugs
- Multiple physical ailments without obvious causes (such as headaches, stomach aches, vague and ongoing "aches and pains")
- Thinking about suicide
- Inability to carry out daily activities or handle daily problems and stress
- An intense fear of weight gain or concern with appearance (mostly in adolescents)



Causes of Mental Illness

- Although the exact cause of most mental illnesses is not known, Mental illnesses, in general, are thought to be caused by combination of biological, psychological, and environmental factors.
- Most mental health professionals believe that there are a variety of contributing factors to the onset of a mental illness.
- A mental health condition isn't the result of one event. Research suggests multiple, interlinking causes.



Possible Contributing Factors

Biological Factors

- **Physical factors:** According to research an individual's genetic make-up and/or their brain chemistry can contribute to being at risk of developing a mental illness
- **Family History:** According to the research, mental illness is more common in people whose blood relatives also have a mental illness.
- **Traumas to the brain** can also sometimes lead to changes in personality and in some cases 'trigger' symptoms of an illness.

Psychological factors: such Experiencing a traumatic event, severe psychological trauma, an important early loss, such as the loss of a parent or neglect

Environmental factors: Exposure to environmental stressors, nutrition, inflammatory conditions, toxins, misuse of alcohol or drugs, traumatic experiences, prenatal exposure to virus/chemicals



Types of Mental Illness

There are over 200 classified forms of mental health conditions. Some of the major categories include the following:

Anxiety Disorders

- Generalized anxiety disorders
- Phobias
- Panic disorder
- Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder
- Post Traumatic Stress Disorder

Mood Disorders

- Clinical Depression
- Bipolar Disorder
- Dysthymic Disorder

Psychotic Disorders

- Schizophrenia
- Schizoaffective disorder

Trauma- and Stressor-Related Disorders:

- posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD),
- acute stress disorder
- adjustment disorders.



Living with Mental Illness

According to NAMI, the National Alliance on Mental Illness,

- Approximately 1 in 5 adults in the U.S.—43.8 million people experience mental illness in a given year.
- 1 in 25 adults in America live with a serious mental illness.
- Most individuals with mental illness can, and do live in the community.
- Some people living with a mental illness can manage it rather easily. Others, however – especially those with severe and persistent mental illness – may struggle to manage their illness throughout most of their lives.

As a Transition Specialist you will be working with individuals who have mental illness

Although having a mental health issue can be a barrier to transitioning from a nursing home to the community, there are resources and supports to overcome the barriers.



Why the ILC philosophy is a perfect match

The ILC philosophy really is a perfect match for assisting individual with mental illness in so many ways:

- We have a person first perspective. We work with the person, not the illness. A person is not “a bipolar”, they are someone with a bipolar disorder.
- We look at what the individual can do, not what they can't or might not be able to do
- We have access to information regarding the resources in our communities.
- We are person focused, ability focused, solution focused,



What the Transition Specialist needs to know.



How do you know when someone has a mental illness

- **Ask them.** Most people who are transitioning from a nursing home will share all kinds of information about themselves if you ask questions, and listen.
- **History and Physical:** This is a medical document usually completed annually. It should list all medical issues including mental health issues.
- **Medication list:** This should tell you the medications someone is receiving and what the medication is for.
- **PRI/SCREEN** - This is an assessment which is completed on admission and periodically afterward to determine the individual's level of care. The SCREEN portion specifically deals with mental health issues and whether or not the individual needs specialized treatment for them.
- **UAS** – Uniform Assessment System



ASK Questions

You'll be surprised just how much information people will share if you just ask. You can't ensure someone's mental health needs are met if you do not know they exist. It is OK to ask.

Questions to ask :

- **“Why were you admitted to the nursing home?”** What led to your admission?
- **“Why is it that you are still here?”** What is it that is it that is keeping you here?
- Do you have any history of mental health issues, depression, anxiety, panic attacks, anything like that?
- Are you currently experiencing any mental health issues?
- If they say yes, ask them to tell you about it.
 - Are you on any medications for this?
 - Have you ever received treatment ? What kind of treatment? Counseling? Psychiatrist, day program, etc.?
 - Have you ever been hospitalized for mental health issues? When, how long, what for?
 - Did you have these issues before coming into the nursing home.
- How have you managed this condition before you came into the nursing home?



History and Physical

Each resident in a nursing home has a history and physical evaluation on file. It is usually done on admission and periodically during their stay.

- This evaluation should be a summary of the individual's medical history and current status. It lists the individual's diagnoses, medications, and treatments.
- It should include a section for family history and social history, as well as a plan for the individual's medical treatment.



Medication List

Sometimes certain medications may indicate a mental illness

Becoming familiar with some of the more common medications for major mental health issues can help to identify when someone is being treated for mental health conditions.



Partial List of Meds that MAY indicate a mental health issue

Antidepressants & Mood stabilizers	Antianxiety	Antipsychotic	
Celexa	Ativan	Abilify	Risperdal
Cymbalta	Buspar	Clozaril	Seroquel
Effexor	Lyrica	Geodan	Stelazine
Lexapro	Neurontin	Haldol	Thorazine
Luvox	Valium	Loxitane	Trilafon
Paxil	Xanax	Mellaril	Zyprexa
Prozac		Moban	
Viibryd		Navane	
Wellbutrin		Prolixin	
Zoloft			



PRI and Screen

If someone has a mental illness it should be listed on the PRI and addressed in the Screen.

The PRI (Patient Review Instrument) and Screen is an evaluation tool that determines whether or not an individual is eligible for skilled nursing care placement.

The PRI identifies the individual's level of care and the type of facility required. It includes medical conditions, treatments and medications, special diets or therapies, physical and mental abilities and limitations, ability to perform acts of daily living, and behavioral issues.

The Screen evaluates whether an individual seeking admission to a nursing home has a **mental illness**, intellectual disability and/or developmental disability, and if they do it triggers a more in-depth screening (PASRR) to determine if the individual's needs can be met in the nursing home.



PASRR- Preadmission Screening and Resident Review

- The first step in the PASRR process is to complete a Level I Screen. If there is no evidence of mental illness, intellectual disability and/or developmental disability, and the applicant is determined to be in need of nursing home care, the person may be admitted to, or remain in, the nursing home.
- A Level II PASRR evaluation is completed when the Level I screen identifies the possible presence of mental illness, intellectual disability and/or developmental disability.
- If the presence of mental illness, intellectual disability and/or developmental disability, is identified, a determination is made regarding the type of services that are needed and whether or not the services can be provided in the nursing home



UAS - Uniform Assessment System

The UAS is a comprehensive assessment instrument for home and community-based programs in New York State.

- The UAS evaluates an individual's health status, strengths, care needs, preferences and their level of care.
- The UAS guides the development of individualized long term care service plans.
- The UAS helps to ensure that individuals with long term care needs receive the right care, within the right setting
- Under the UAS multiple programs use the same assessment which leads to improved validity, reliability and continuity.
- If someone has a mental illness it should be listed and addressed on the UAS.



Possible Barriers and Concerns Related to working with individuals who have a mental illness.

- **Stigma:** Despite efforts to overcome it, having a Mental Illness can still carry a stigma. Unfortunately, negative attitudes and beliefs toward people who have a mental health condition are common. Some of the harmful possible effects of stigma can include:
 - **Reluctance to seek help or continue treatment**
 - Lack of understanding by family, friends, co-workers or others you know
 - Fewer opportunities for work, school or social activities or trouble finding housing
 - Bullying, physical violence or harassment
 - The belief that you'll never be able to succeed at certain challenges or that you can't improve your situation
- Depending upon the individual, the mental illness, and their particular situation, the following may also be concerns that impact individuals who have mental health issues:
 - Lack of supports
 - Refusal of treatment/discontinuation of treatment
 - Possible reluctance to follow the prescribed medication regime.
 - Possible problems with interpersonal relationships, landlords, neighbors, etc
 - May have problems managing community living tasks



Is Transition Possible?

As long as the individuals needs can be met, transition to the community is possible.

- Use the same initial process as you use when assessing any other need the individual may have.
 - Determine the individuals needs
 - Determine the type of formal supports available to meet the needs
 - Assess the level and types of informal support the individual has (friends, family)
 - Is the individual open to the services available?



What mental health services does the individual need to manage in the community

Case management (various levels)

Psychiatrist Services

Counseling/Clinical Services

Day Programs

Mental Health Housing Program



Possible Options for Individuals with Mental Illness

- **NHTD or TBI Waiver** with outpatient mental health services
- **MLTC** with outpatient mental health services
- **Health Homes**
- **Office of Mental Health Services-** Community Mental Health Services- SPOA Single Point of Access



TBI and NHTD Waivers and Mental Health Services

TBI and NHTD Waivers

- Having a mental health diagnosis does not necessarily preclude individuals from utilizing the TBI and NHTD Waivers.
- Many individuals on the TBI and NHTD waiver programs have mental illness diagnoses.
- As long as the individual's needs (medical and mental health) can be safely met within the community, and there is not a duplication of services, TBI and NHTD waivers may be an option



MLTC

MLTC may also be an option for individuals with long term care needs and mental health issues who wish to transition back to the community.

- Follow the same process you always follow when referring someone for MLTC Services
- Contact the MLTC plan to determine
 - If mental health services are provided under the plan?
 - If they are, what are the details of these services?
 - What is the process to access them?
- If mental health services are not included in the MLTC plan, the State Medicaid plan should cover them. If you are unsure, contact your county mental health office and they should be able to confirm this, or direct you to who can.



Health Homes

Another option for individuals with Mental Illness is the Health Home Program. Health Homes are a program, under DOH for Medicaid recipients with complex medical, behavioral, and long term care needs. The Health Home program is designed to help ensure that participants receive the specific services and care, they need to maintain and improve their health.

The Services Provided by the Health Home Include:

- comprehensive care management,
- health promotion; transitional care including appropriate follow-up from inpatient to other settings,
- patient and family support,
- referral to community and social support services,
- use of health information technology to link services.



More on Health Home Services

Each participant is assigned to a Care Manager who oversees their care and services. This includes:

- Coordinating any health care providers, mental health, or substance abuse providers that the individual may need.
- Making appointments with doctors or a specialists .
- Assisting with locating housing
- Making referrals for social services (such as food stamps, Medicaid transportation, Heap etc)
- Looking into other community programs that may be beneficial.
- Transition Assistance: Depending on the situation Health Homes may be able to assist people transition from the nursing home back into the community.



Health Home Eligibility

- Medicaid eligible/active Medicaid; and
- Two or more chronic conditions; or
- One single qualifying condition of either HIV/AIDS or a Serious Mental Illness
- An individual must also be assessed and found to have significant behavioral, medical, or social risk factors to deem them appropriate for Health Home services.



Health Homes Misc. Info

- Some individuals who enroll in a health home are eligible for MFP Open Doors because their Health Home services are provided under an MLTC plan.
- You cannot receive both Waiver and Health Home Services as it is considered a duplication of services.
- As always you can still provide assistance whether or not the individual is eligible for Open Doors
- Contact the Health Home Program in your area to discuss their services and the possible options available with your local program.



OMH Services - SPOA

New York State Office of Mental Health is very large, multi-faceted mental health system that service more than 700,000 individuals each year. OMH has many services and programs to assist individuals with mental health issues.

Some of the services include:

- Residential Treatment
- Day Treatment
- Case Management
- Housing
- Clinic Treatment
- Vocational Programs
- Recovery (substance abuse) Programs



SPOA - Single Point of Access

- To ease access to mental health services, OMH has designed a Single Point of Access (SPOA) within each county across New York State.
 - To access any of OMH services you can contact the SPOA in your area to make a referral.
- Referral forms can be found on the OMH Website.
- Referrals are reviewed by a team of providers and the goal is to select the best program to meet the individuals needs and desires. The goal of SPOA is to create a system that promotes recovery-oriented services, which are widely available, flexible, personally tailored and responsive to individual needs
- Depending upon the services the participant receives, they may or may not be eligible for MFP Open Doors. Often the level of service provided through a SPOA referral would not be within the realm of Waiver or MLTC services so they would not be eligible for Open Doors. However, depending upon the specific situation they may be.
- As always you can still provide assistance whether or not the individual is eligible for Open Doors



Things to Remember

- Individuals who experience mental health conditions can, and do, transition back into the community, there are just additional services and supports that need to be considered and arranged.
- Contact your local mental health resources to determine the specifics about program/service options in your area, and how to access these services.
- Feel free to call NYAIL any time for ideas, suggestions, assistance or guidance.



Mental Health Resources

New York State Office of Mental Health Resources

- **NYS Office of Mental Health website:** www.omh.ny.gov/
 - Information regarding mental health disorders, treatment options, local and other services.
 - On this website under "Consumers and Families" there is a long list of topics you can click on for additional information. On this list check out
 - Behavioral Health Information – Publications on a variety of Mental Health disorders
 - Find a Mental Health Program – A county directory of mental health services
- **Local Mental Health Directors (Offices) by County:** Locate your Office of Mental Health, their website, info on local mental health services etc.
[www.clmhd.org/contact local mental hygiene departments/](http://www.clmhd.org/contact-local-mental-hygiene-departments/)
- **Mental Health Programs by County:** <http://bi.omh.ny.gov/bridges/index>
- **SPOA (Single Point of Access) Contacts by County:**
www.shnny.org/images/uploads/SPOA-listings.pdf
- **SPOA Universal Application:**
[www.omh.ny.gov/omhweb/guidance/hcbs/universal referral form.pdf](http://www.omh.ny.gov/omhweb/guidance/hcbs/universal-referral-form.pdf)



Resources Continued

Health Homes

- **NY State Health Homes: General Information about Health Homes**
www.health.ny.gov/health_care/medicaid/program/medicaid_health_homes/
- **Health Home Contacts by County:**
http://www.health.ny.gov/health_care/medicaid/program/medicaid_health_homes/contact_information/

Mental Health Information and Advocacy

- **National Alliance on Mental illness (NAMI)** – www.nami.org/
Not for Profit providing education, advocacy, information, and support to the millions of Americans affected by mental illness.





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