

Effective Communication

Families have the right to caring staff who understand that mental illness and addiction affects the whole family.

Family members need to have their voices heard with respect to their family member and may also need support for themselves.

Effective communication with healthcare professionals ensures all relevant information is incorporated into the plan of care. It can decrease stress for you and your family member.

Health professionals can:

- Give information about mental illness and recovery
- Support you in your role in the recovery process of the person receiving services
- Direct you to appropriate reading material and community resources such as family support groups and peer support.

Please refer to Brochure #3 entitled Supporting the Supporters – Communicating with Health Care Professionals.

About this Project:

Families are an important part of a person's recovery and well-being. The Schizophrenia & Community Integration Service (SCIS) are committed to strengthening the role of families at each step of a person's recovery. This brochure was developed by family members and health care professionals and is one in a series of nine including:

1. Caregivers – How Are You?
2. Managing Relapse
3. Communicating with Health Care Professionals
4. Encouraging Medication Adherence
5. Fostering Independence
6. Goal Setting – How to Help?
7. Mental Health System Navigation – What You Need to Know in Urgent Situations
8. Treatment and Consent to Share Information
9. Overcoming Resistance and Supporting Positive Change

St. Joseph's
Healthcare  Hamilton

Schizophrenia & Community
Integration Service

**St. Joseph's Healthcare Hamilton
Schizophrenia & Community
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Treatment and Consent to Share Information

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Supporting the Supporter

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Treatment

The Health Care Consent Act (HCCA) defines treatment as care -provided to an individual related to their health condition, including discussions about medications, physical health and community treatment plans.

In the HCCA, treatment does not include assessments related to: a person's capacity to consent to treatment, manage property or finances; a person's diagnosis or health history; admissions to hospital or other facilities; housing; or personal services.

Before starting treatment, physicians have an obligation to assess capacity to treatment, and to obtain consent from the person receiving services. The capacity of an individual can change during treatment. For consent to treatment and information sharing, the patient must be able to understand information relevant to the treatment and to appreciate foreseeable consequences.

If the patient is determined to be incapable, a Substitute Decision-Maker (SDM) is appointed. The SDM is a person who has the legal authority to make decisions.

Key Legislation

1. Mental Health Act (MHA)
2. Health Care Consent Act (HCCA)
Subsection 4(1) – Capacity
3. Substitute Decisions Act (SDA)
4. Personal Health Information Protection Act (PHIPA)

Sharing Information

It is important for family caregivers to know that the person receiving services determines who to share information with. If the person is incapable of providing consent, the designated SDM determines who can receive information.

With Patient Consent: The family should be included in care planning and treatment upon admission and throughout the period of care (including both inpatient and outpatient).

Without Patient Consent: When the patient does not wish his/her family to be contacted and does not provide consent to share information, health professionals cannot provide any personal or clinical information. However, they can speak with caregivers and offer general information and resources.

Ontario hospitals, when contacted, can inform families and caregivers of the following: Whether or not the individual is at the hospital/clinic; the clinic/unit on which the individual is receiving care; and the general health status of the individual.

Privacy legislation does not prevent families from sharing personal health information and baseline knowledge of their family member's illness. Consent or permission from the person receiving care is not required for healthcare staff to listen to your thoughts and concerns.

St. Joseph's Healthcare Hamilton (SJHH) Policies & Documents include (but are not limited to):

- Guidelines for Family & Staff Communication Regarding Suicide Risk and Prevention Planning.
- Privacy of Personal Information Regarding the Requirements of Confidentiality
- Consent to Treatment Regarding the Role of the Substitute Decision Maker
- Family Information Handbook
- Family Charter of Rights

These can be accessed through SJHH website (www.stjoes.ca/) or from the SJHH West 5th Family Resource Centre (Level 1).

Specific policies are available upon request through your care team at SJHH.

Contacts

1. SJHH Patient Advocate
905-522-1155 x36246 or x35514
2. SJHH Chief Privacy Officer
905-522-1155 x 35088
3. Psychiatric Patient Advocate Office
1-800-578-2343
4. Patient and Family Collaborative Support Services
905-522-1155 x 39559