



Here is a printable checklist for you to utilize when speaking with your Psychologist

The Following are questions to ask the treating physician about your family member which don't conflict with confidentiality laws in most states. If you fail to learn anything from the treating physician, try another doctor at the program or hospital where your family member is getting treatment.

- What is your diagnosis? What is the nature of this illness from a medical point of view?
- What is known about the cause of this particular illness?
- How certain are you of this diagnosis? If you are not certain, what other possibilities do you consider most likely and why?
- Did the physical examination include a neurological exam? If so, how extensive was it, and what were the results?
- Are there any additional tests or exams that you would recommend at this point?
- Would you advise an independent opinion from another psychiatrist at this point?
- What program of treatment do you think could be most helpful? How will it be helpful?
- Will this program involve services by other specialists (i.e. neurologist, psychologist, allied health professionals.)? If so, who will be responsible for coordinating these services?
- Who will be able to answer our questions at times when you are not available?
- What kind of therapy do you plan to use, and what will be the contribution of the psychiatrist to the overall program of treatment?
- What do you expect this program to accomplish? About how long will it take, and how frequently will you and the other specialists be seeing the patient?
- What will be the best evidence that the patient is responding to the program, and how soon will it be before these appear?
- What do you see as the family's role in this program of treatment? In particular, how much access will the family have to the individuals who are providing the treatment?
- If your current evaluation is a preliminary one, how soon will it be before you will be able to provide a more definite evaluation of the patient's illness?
- What medication do you propose to use? (Ask for name and dosage level and write it down.) What is the biological effect of this medication, and what do you expect it to accomplish? What are the risks associated with the medication? How soon will we be able to tell if the medication is effective, and how will we know?
- Are there other medications that might be appropriate? If so, why do you prefer the one you have chosen?
- Are you currently treating other patients with this illness?
(Psychiatrists vary in their level of experience with severe or long-term mental illnesses, and it is helpful to know how involved the psychiatrist is with treatment of the kind of problem your relative has.)
- When are the best times and what are the most dependable ways for getting in touch with you?
- How do you monitor medications and what symptoms indicate that they should be raised, lowered or changed?
- How familiar are you with the activities of the NAMI–San Francisco or NAMI–California?