

Supporting someone with a mental illness is a new experience for most people. In new situations we often don't know what we need to know, which means we sometimes don't know the most useful questions to ask. Below is a list of questions which may be helpful.

- What is my relative or friend being treated for?
- What medication has been prescribed for them?
- What is the dosage, and when and how often do they have to take it?
- How long before the medication takes effect?
- Are there any side-effects to the medication?
- What can they do to help manage any side-effects?
- What other treatment options are available?
- Is there anything else that may be helpful?
- What are my rights, and the rights of my relative or friend, when they're in hospital?
- Are there support groups or services that can assist us?
- What happens when my relative or friend is given leave or discharged?
- How can I support my relative or friend in their recovery?
- What do I do if I feel like I need help?
- Is there anything else I should know or look out for?

## Privacy and confidentiality

The team involved with your relative or friend may not be able to answer all of these questions unless your relative or friend has given them permission to share information with you. Even without this permission though, the team can answer general questions about mental illness, treatment and services.

If you have been nominated the Primary Carer of your relative or friend under the Mental Health Act, then there is certain information that the treating team must communicate to you. This includes information about their admission, their legal status and any unauthorised absence from the unit. The treating team should also talk with you about your relative or friend's discharge and any subsequent treatment or other arrangements, and provide information about medication if you ask for it.

