

A check-list for people with mental health problems

Questions to ask your psychiatrist

Psychiatrists have, in the past, often not explained things clearly to their patients. This means that you may not have found out what you need to know.

This check-list is designed to help you get the information you need concerning your illness and treatment.

You may be able to get some of the information you need from other members of the team who are involved in your care.

Not everyone will need all the answers to all these questions. You may have questions that are not covered in this leaflet. Even so, it should help you decide what you do need to know.

About the diagnosis

What illness do I have (diagnosis)?

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If a diagnosis has been made

What symptoms and signs suggest this?

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What is known about the causes of this illness?

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What is likely to happen in the future? Will it get better or worse?

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Where can I get written information about this illness?

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If a diagnosis has not yet been made, what are the possibilities?

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Are there any other tests that might be needed?

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What tests have already been done?

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Are there any physical problems that have been found?

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About care and treatment

What are the aims of the care and treatment?

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Who will be responsible for me (keyworker)? What exactly will they do?

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Who else will be involved in my treatment?

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How often will the psychiatrist see me?

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What are your plans for my treatment?

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How long will it take?

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Would psychotherapy (talking treatments) of any sort be helpful?

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If so, is it available locally?

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What happens if I refuse treatment?

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Am I on the Care Programme Approach?

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If so, why?

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What does this mean?

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Will my family be involved in discussions concerning my care and treatment?

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How can I get in touch with you?

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How can I arrange to see you?

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Who do I contact if I am worried about something?

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Who do I contact in an emergency?

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How can I get a second opinion about my treatment and care?

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Are there any local support/self-help or advocacy groups that I could get in touch with?

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What should the benefits of this medication be?

Short-term:

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Long-term:

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What are the possible side-effects of this medication?

Short-term:

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Long-term:

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Why have you chosen this particular drug?

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Will I have to take it for the rest of my life?

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Are there any other drugs that could be used if this one does not work?

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What signs or symptoms might mean that the dose should be changed?

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What will happen if I stop the medication?

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Do you have any written information about this medication?

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Hospital treatment

If I have to go into hospital, which one would it be?

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What arrangements will be made for my care after I leave hospital?

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Other questions

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With grateful thanks to Dr Philip Timms for producing these leaflets