Psychosocial Treatments

Psychosocial treatments include different types of psychotherapy and social and vocational training, and aim to provide support, education and guidance to people with mental illness and their families. Psychosocial treatments are an effective way to improve the quality of life for individuals with mental illness and their families. They can lead to fewer hospitalizations and less difficulties at home, at school and at work.

Types Of Psychosocial Treatments

Psychotherapy

Often called talk therapy, psychotherapy is when a person, family, couple or group sits down and talks with a therapist or other mental health provider. Psychotherapy helps people learn about their moods, thoughts, behaviors and how they influence their lives. They also provide ways to help restructure thinking and respond to stress and other conditions.

Psychoeducation

Psychoeducation teaches people about their illness and how they’ll receive treatment. Psychoeducation also includes education for family and friends where they learn things like coping strategies, problem-solving skills and how to recognize the signs of relapse. Family psychoeducation can often help ease tensions at home, which can help the person experiencing the mental illness to recover. Many of NAMI's education programs are examples of psychoeducation.

Self-Help And Support Groups

Self-help and support groups can help address feelings of isolation and help people gain insight into their mental health condition. Members of support groups may share frustrations, successes, referrals for specialists, where to find the best community resources and tips on what works best when trying to recover. They also form friendships with other members of the group and help each other on the road to recovery. As with psychoeducation, families and friends may also benefit from support groups of their own.

Psychosocial Rehabilitation

Psychosocial rehabilitation helps people develop the social, emotional and intellectual skills they need in order to live happily with the smallest amount of professional assistance they can manage. Psychosocial rehabilitation uses two strategies for intervention: learning coping skills so that they are more successful handling a stressful environment and developing resources that reduce future stressors.

Treatments and resources vary from case to case but can include medication management, psychological support, family counseling, vocational and independent living training, housing, job coaching, educational aide and social support.

Assertive Community Treatment (ACT)

Assertive community treatment (ACT) is a team-based treatment model that provides multidisciplinary, flexible treatment and support to people with mental illness 24/7. ACT is based around the idea that people receive better care when their mental health care providers work together. ACT team members help the person address every aspect of their life, whether it be medication, therapy, social support, employment or housing.

ACT is mostly used for people who have transferred out of an inpatient setting but would benefit from a similar level of care and having the comfort of living a more independent life than would be possible with inpatient care.

Studies have shown that ACT is more effective than traditional treatment for people experiencing mental illnesses such as schizophrenia and schizoaffective disorder and can reduce hospitalizations by 20%.

Supported Employment

Work can be an essential step on the path to wellbeing and recovery, but challenges that come with mental illness can make it more difficult. There are programs, however, designed specifically to help with work readiness, searching for jobs and providing support in the workplace.

Vocational Rehabilitation (VR)

VR provides career counseling and job search assistance for people with disabilities, including mental illness. VR program structures vary from state to state. To learn more about your specific state program, visit your [state’s VR agency](http://wdcrobcolp01.ed.gov/Programs/EROD/org_list.cfm?category_cd=SVR).

Individual Placement And Support (IPS) Supported Employment

IPS programs are evidence-based programs that help people with mental illness locate jobs that match their individual strengths and interests. Once an individual locates a job, IPS programs provide continuous support to help the person succeed in the workplace. IPS Supported Employment teams include employment specialists, health care providers and the individual with mental illness. If the individual agrees, family members or a significant other may be part of the team.

Clubhouses

Clubhouses are community-based centers open to individuals with mental illness. Clubhouse members have the opportunity to gain skills, locate a job, find housing, and pursue continuing education. Members work side-by-side with staff to make sure the program operates smoothly. Members also have the opportunity to take part in social events, classes and weekend activities.

Case Management

Living well with a complicated health condition (physical or mental) can require working with a number of medical providers and support resources. Case management can help individuals coordinate these services.

A case manager has knowledge of local medical facilities, housing opportunities, employment programs and social support networks. He or she is also familiar with many payment options, including local, state and federal assistance programs. This person can serve an important role in helping you or your family member get the best treatment possible.

A case manager will assess your needs and explain what resources are available in your area. He or she will explain the process of applying for services and help you collect the necessary documents to prove eligibility. A case manager will then keep in touch with you to ensure that you continue to have your treatment needs met. How to fill out official forms, how to get transportation to appointments—these are all questions a case manager can help with.

Case managers are professionals with certification in case management or degrees in social work. They are typically employed by large health insurance companies or by local county and state governments. If you are staying in a hospital or your doctor has recommended a case manager, you may automatically receive a call from one. If you do not have a case manager and would like to, ask about the process of getting one. Your best bet is to call your state or county department of health, social services or aging.

Remember that your case manager is there to work with you for your benefit. Ask questions and if you don't understand the answers, ask again. A good case manager can't guarantee you'll get every resource you apply for, but he or she should definitely keep you informed and listen to your concerns.