

TIPS FOR ENGAGING INDIVIDUALS WITH PSYCHOTIC ILLNESS IN TREATMENT

With the right treatment people affected by psychotic illness can and do live successfully.

Promote recovery. Provide information and resources. Instill hope.

- Always encourage individuals to be active participants in their treatment. Ask them about their strengths, interests and immediate needs and how they prefer to communicate and receive information and support.
- A direct conversation with an individual is the best source of information about his or her mental health. A person's medical records are only one source of information; they may not be complete or reflect the current status of an individual's mental health.
- Recognize that a person experiencing psychosis may find it difficult to tell what is real from what is not real. Understand that the delusions and/or hallucinations are very real to the person. Do not dismiss, minimize or argue with the person about their delusions and/or hallucinations.
- Try to empathize with how the person feels about their beliefs and experiences, without stating any judgments about the content of those beliefs and experiences.
- Avoid confronting, criticizing, blaming, joking, laughing at or using sarcasm with the person experiencing psychosis.
- Be honest and do not make promises that cannot be kept.
- Communicate in a brief and uncomplicated manner and repeat things if necessary. You may need to break up your meeting into segments, meet on several different days or take breaks. Consider asking the individual if they would like to communicate via social media, text, telephone or facetime.
- After you speak, allow ample time for the person to digest the information and respond. Try to limit the number of decisions an individual has to make during a single conversation. If the person shows limited feelings, it does not mean that he or she is not feeling anything.
- Ask the person about what they have done in the past that has been helpful.
- Determine whether the person has a supportive social network (family members, friends, peers) and if they do, encourage them to utilize these supports.
- If the person decides to seek additional treatment or help, make sure that he or she is supported emotionally and practically in accessing services.
- Be aware that the person who is experiencing psychotic symptoms may deny that there is anything wrong or may not want treatment.
- Understand that unless a person with psychosis meets the criteria for involuntary committal procedures, they cannot be forced into treatment. Never threaten the person with hospitalization.
- Remain patient, friendly and keep lines of communication open. People experiencing psychosis often need time to make decisions about treatment and they may be more inclined to seek help in the future.



**BEST PRACTICES
IN SCHIZOPHRENIA
TREATMENT CENTER**
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Best Practices in Schizophrenia Treatment (BeST) Center
NORTHEAST OHIO MEDICAL UNIVERSITY

BeST Practices

FIRST Coordinated Specialty Care for First Episode Psychosis

Family Education and Support

Cognitive Behavioral Therapy for Psychosis

Integrated Primary and Mental Health Care

Cognitive Remediation

Pharmacotherapy for Schizophrenia

To join the BeST Center in promoting innovation and restoring lives
of people affected by schizophrenia, please contact:

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