

# Working with Families

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# Outline

- Why Families are Important in Psychosis Informed Care
- How to Talk with Families Experiencing Psychosis
- Example Family Meeting
- Resources + Q&A

# Why Families are Important in Psychosis Informed Care

# Navigating Care

- **95%** of people with early psychosis have family attend at least one treatment session
- **76%** of people receiving early psychosis care live with family
- Families may be the first to notice symptoms
- Families can be key to assisting with scheduling appointments, researching opportunities, and financing care



# Involvement Improves Outcomes

- Family interventions for schizophrenia **reduce relapse** compared to treatment as usual
- People with early psychosis who increase to **1+ family meetings** in the past month have greater social functioning improvements
- Collaborating with families can create a more comprehensive **understanding** of your client



# Supportive Families Make a Difference

- **Warmth** and **positive affect** are linked to lower risk for psychosis relapse
- **94%** of people in early psychosis care request family involvement
- Clients appreciate supportive and understanding families



# Challenges



# How to Talk with Families Experiencing Psychosis



# Invite the Family into the Conversation

- **Introduce** the idea to your client with a brief rationale
- **Empower** your client by asking how they would like their family to be involved
- Discuss **pros and cons** about family involvement (listen for **cultural** considerations)
- Provide **options** (family joining a session or meeting separately with clinician; levels of confidentiality)
- Request a **release of information**
- **Schedule** or revisit family contact as needed (e.g., monthly)
- Example: “Could I share an idea? It could be useful for us to speak with your family together so they can understand what you’re going through and for you to share what support would be most helpful to you. What are your thoughts?”

# A Family Member's Story

Interview with a mother of an adult son with a history of psychosis and substance use, her experiences with mental health care providers, and lessons learned.



# Interview Highlights

- Practice **compassion** and **empathy**
- Collaborate as a **team** across providers, the client, and their family
- **Value** of family perspectives
- **Communicate** updates and **resources** while respecting confidentiality
- Be **honest**
- Consistently treat clients and family with **respect** to reduce stigma and increase rapport



# Remember

- Client and family members are **experts** in their own experience
- Stay **curious** and **non-judgmental**
- Use **open-ended** questions
- Use the client and family's preferred **language**
- **Every family is different**



# Example Family Meeting

# Background

The client (Jamie, 18yo), gave their clinician (Julie) permission to meet with their mother (Michelle) alone to discuss psychosis psychoeducation and Jamie's treatment. Julie and Michelle have just finished discussing Jamie's diagnosis of schizophrenia.

What could have been better?



# Don't

Rush

Use jargon without explanation

Only discuss your agenda

Dismiss or minimize the family experience

Be overly directive

What went well?

# Do

Take the time to listen

Explain any technical terms

Prioritize what is important to the client & family

Validate their experience

Ask permission to offer information & resources

\*Best practice tip: have regular communication with family

Resources + Q&A

# Resources for Families

## *SUPPORT & SERVICES*

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- Family members often benefit from talking to therapists themselves
- Family therapy is an integrated part of specialized psychosis treatment
- Family Support Groups
  - PPAL Groups
  - Wayside Parent-Peer Partnership Program
  - NAMI Massachusetts Family-to-Family
  - Flourishing Families at BU Center for Psychiatric Rehabilitation
- NAMI Mass Compass Helpline

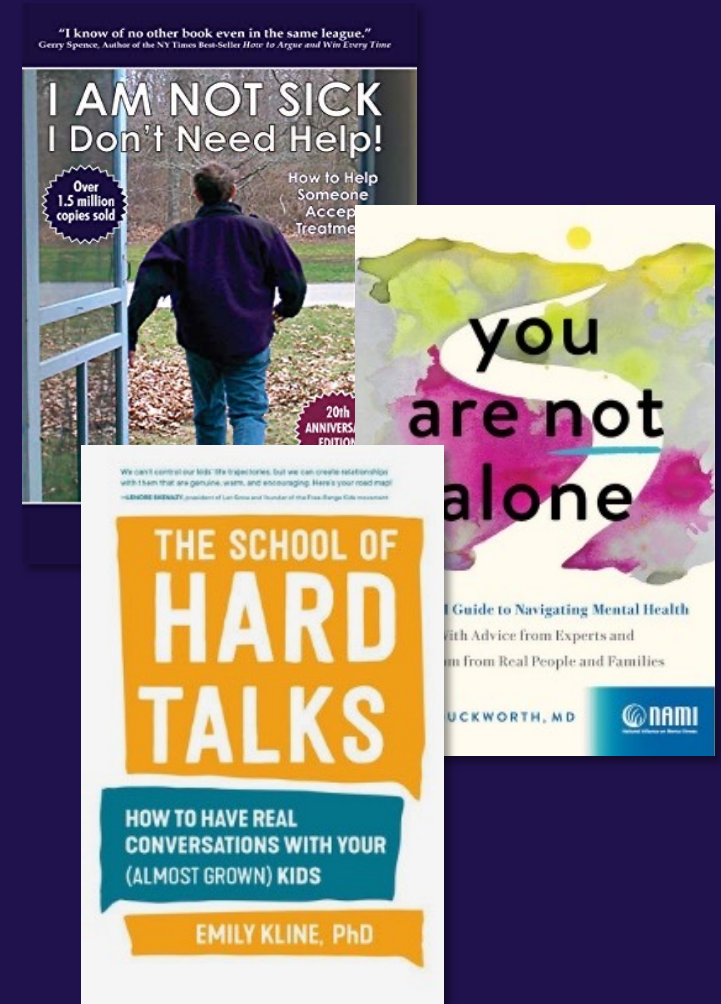
## *LEARN ABOUT PSYCHOSIS*

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- MAPNET Family Resources:  
<https://www.mapnet.online/information-and-resources>
- Levels of Care for Psychosis in MA  
[https://www.mapnet.online/s/Psychosis-Continuum-of-Care-Doc\\_071423.pdf](https://www.mapnet.online/s/Psychosis-Continuum-of-Care-Doc_071423.pdf)
- CEDAR Clinic Educational Resources  
<https://cedarclinic.org/what-is-psychosis/>

# Resources for Families

- Living Well With Schizophrenia: Accepting Your Loved One's Mental Illness: [youtube.com/watch?v=aaqSM\\_WLk1w](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aaqSM_WLk1w)
- Books
  - “You Are Not Alone: The NAMI Guide to Navigating Mental Health” by Ken Duckworth
  - “The School of Hard Talks: How to Have Real Conversations with Your (Almost Grown) Kids” by Emily Kline
  - “I Am Not Sick, I Don't Need Help! How to Help Someone with Mental Illness Accept Treatment” by Xavier Amador
- The School of Hard Talks Online: [handholdma.org/what-can-i-do/the-school-of-hard-talks-online-lessons-from-motivational-interviewing-for-everyday-families](https://handholdma.org/what-can-i-do/the-school-of-hard-talks-online-lessons-from-motivational-interviewing-for-everyday-families)
- Crafting Support Project Family Webinars: [www.youtube.com/@craftingsupportproject](https://www.youtube.com/@craftingsupportproject)
- CBHI Knowledge Center: [handholdma.org](https://handholdma.org)



# Resources for Clinicians

- M-PATH: [www.mpathcares.org](http://www.mpathcares.org)
- MAPNET: [www.mapnet.online](http://www.mapnet.online)
  - Training Toolkit: [www.mapnet.online/psychosis-training-toolkit](http://www.mapnet.online/psychosis-training-toolkit)
  - All past trainings: [www.mapnet.online/past-events](http://www.mapnet.online/past-events)
  - Common Comorbidities Series
    - Substance Use: <https://www.mapnet.online/events/2022/6/3/early-psychosis-and-substance-use-key-skills-for-recovery>
    - OCD: <https://www.mapnet.online/events/2022/2/25/ocd-psychosis-or-both>
    - Trauma: <https://www.mapnet.online/events/2022/10/21/treating-youth-with-early-psychosis-and-trauma-related-disorders>
    - Suicidality: <https://www.mapnet.online/events/2022/6/17/harm-risk-assessment-in-clinical-practice>
    - Autism Spectrum: <https://www.mapnet.online/events/2023/3/24/diagnosis-and-treatment-of-psychosis-in-autism-spectrum-disorder>
- NAVIGATE Family Education Program (2020):  
[https://navigateconsultants.org/2020manuals/family\\_2020.pdf](https://navigateconsultants.org/2020manuals/family_2020.pdf)

## Family Education (FE) Manual

This manual guides the family clinician in how to help relatives gain the necessary knowledge base, attitudes, and skills to cope effectively and to support their loved ones progress towards recovery; the manual includes handouts for family members and clinical guidelines for the Family Clinician.

[Original \(2014\)](#)[Updated \(2020\)](#)



Q&A

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