

▶ BEFORE PSYCHIATRIC HOSPITALIZATION.....1

▶ UNDERSTANDING MENTAL HEALTH INSURANCE2

▶ SPRINGTIME FUN 3

▶ RECIPE3

● ISSUE 3 | ● VOLUME III | ● MAY 2006

ALTERNATIVE BEHAVIORAL SERVICES

Family LINC'S

ABS LINC'S: Linking Individuals, Neighborhoods and Clinical Services

11 Questions To Ask Before Psychiatric Hospitalization of Your Child or Adolescent

Hospitalization in a psychiatric facility is one of a range of available treatment options when a child or adolescent is mentally ill. Parents are naturally concerned and may be frightened and confused when inpatient treatment is recommended for their child. By asking the following questions, parents will gain a better understanding of the care proposed by admission to an inpatient facility:

1. Why is psychiatric inpatient treatment being recommended for our child, and how will it help our child?
2. What are the other treatment alternatives to hospital treatment, and how do they compare?
3. Is a child and adolescent psychiatrist admitting our child to the hospital?
4. What does the inpatient treatment include, and how will our child be able to keep up with school work?
5. What are the responsibilities of the child and adolescent psychiatrist and other people on the treatment team?
6. How long will our child be in the hos-

pital, how much will it cost, and how do we pay for these services?

7. What will happen if we can no longer afford to keep our child in this hospital or if the insurance company denies coverage and inpatient treatment is still necessary?
8. Will our child be on unit specifically designed for the treatment of children and adolescents and is this hospital accredited by the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations (JCAHO) as a treatment facility for youngsters of our child's age?
9. How will we as parents be involved in our child's hospital treatment, including the decision for discharge and after-care treatment?
10. How will the decision be made to discharge our child from the hospital?
11. Once our child is discharged, what are the plans for continuing or follow-up treatment?



Hospital treatment is a serious matter of parents, children and adolescents. Parents should raise these questions before their child or adolescent is admitted to the hospital. Parents who are informed and included as part of their child's hospital treatment are important contributors and partners in the treatment process.

If after asking the above questions, you still have serious questions or doubts, you should feel free to ask for a second opinion.

Understanding Your Mental Health Insurance

Insurance benefits for mental health services have changed a lot in recent years. These changes are consistent with the nationwide trend to control the expense of health care. It is important to understand your mental health care coverage so that you can be an active advocate for your child's needs within the guidelines of your particular plan. Here are some useful questions to ask when evaluating the mental health benefits of an insurance plan or HMO:

- Do I have to get a referral from my child's primary care physician or employee assistance program to receive mental health services?
- Is there a "preferred list of providers" or "network" that you must see? Are child psychiatrists included? What happens if I want my child to see someone outside the network?
- Is there an annual deductible that I pay before the plan pays? What will I actually pay for services? What services are paid for by the plan: office visits, medication, respite care, day hospital, inpatient?
- Are there limits on the number of visits? Will my provider have to send reports to the managed care company?
- What can I do if I am unhappy with either the provider of the care or the recommendations of the "utilization review" process?
- What hospitals can be used under the plan?
- Does the plan exclude certain diagnoses or pre-existing conditions?
- Is there a "lifetime dollar limit" or an "annual limit" for mental health coverage, and what is it?
- Does the plan have a track record in your area?

The following section explains terms and procedures commonly used in health plan.

Managed care refers to the process of someone reviewing and monitoring the need for and use of services. Your insurance company may do its own review and monitoring or may hire a "managed care company" to do the reviewing. The actual review of care is commonly known as "utilization review" and is done by professionals, mostly social workers and nurses, known as "utilization reviewers" or "case managers." The child psychiatrist treating your child may have to discuss the treatment with a reviewer in order for the care to be authorized and paid for by your insurance. The reviewers are trained to use the guidelines developed by your health care plan. A review by a child and adolescent psychiatrist reviewer usually must be specially requested.

The review process often takes place over the telephone. Written treatment plans may also be required. Some plans may require that the entire medical record be copied and sent for review. Reviewers usually authorize payment for a limited number of outpatient sessions or a few days of inpatient care. In order for additional treatment to be authorized, the psychiatrist must call the reviewer back to discuss the child's progress and existing problems. Managed care emphasizes short term treatment with a focus on changing specific behaviors.

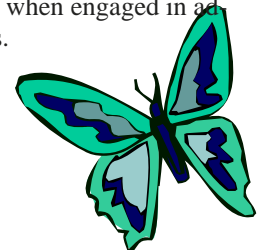
Preferred providers are groups of doctors, social workers, or psychologists which your insurer has agreed to pay. If you choose to see doctors outside of this list, (out of network caregivers), your insurer may not pay for the services. You will still be responsible for the bill. Similarly, care given in hospitals designated as "in network" is paid for by your insurance, while care given in hospitals "out of network" is usually not paid by your insurance and becomes your responsibility.

Even when using preferred providers and in network hospitals, utilization reviewers still closely monitor treatment.

Another change is the variety of services and diagnosis paid for by different plans. In the past, only inpatient care and outpatient care was covered by insurance. Now, depending upon your particular plan, other services such as day hospital, home-based care, and respite care may also be covered. These lower cost services may offer advantages to inpatient hospitalization.

A limiting feature of some mental health care plans is a low lifetime maximum or a low annual dollar amount that can be used for mental health care. (i.e. Once this amount is used, plan coverage ends.) You, as parent or guardian, are responsible for paying the non-covered bill. If your child/adolescent needs continued care, you may need to seek help from your state public mental health system. This usually means changing doctors which may disrupt your child's care

It is important to understand as much as possible about your particular insurance plan. Understanding your coverage will put you in a better position to help your child. Sometimes you may need to advocate for services that are not a part of your plan, but which you and your child's psychiatrist feel are necessary. Advocacy groups may provide you with important information about local services. The support of other parents is also useful and important when engaged in advocacy efforts.



BOOK MARKERS



Fun In the Rain

Do you hear the pitter patter? Here the little raindrops falling down. Can you see the splashing water? All the little raindrops on the ground. Time to get our big umbrellas, we don't want to get our hair all wet. If you wear your boots and raincoat, We will go outside and splash a bit!



Spring Is Here

*The days of Spring are here,
Warm, sunny days are near,
Flowers and bees,
and birds in trees.
The days of spring are here.*



Springtime Fun



Springtime is here! Our children could spend their days in front of the television or they could be using their imaginations to create projects that are reflection of their own unique talents.

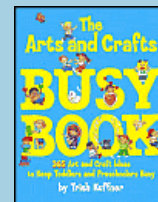
Creative and artistic are not the same thing. Creativity is an approach to life. Creative thinkers know that problems have many different solutions. When they encounter an obstacle, they find a way around rather than giving up. They have to be willing to take risks as they learn new skills. These are important life skills that need to be encouraged in children.

For some ideas that encourage creativity, check-out your local craft stores, the book lists at an area library, or visit websites like the ones listed below:

www.familyfun.com
www.creativekidsathome.com
www.kidsdomain.com

This Month's Featured Book

*The Arts and Crafts
Busy Book*
by
Trisha Kuffner



"Strawberry Yogurt Popsicles"

Makes 12 popsicles

- 2 cups fresh (chopped) or frozen strawberries
- 2 cups low fat vanilla yogurt
- 12 small paper cups
- 12 wooden sticks



Directions:

1. Combine strawberries and yogurt. Mix well.
2. Fill cups with mixture. Cover cups with plastic wrap or tin foil.
3. Insert a stick through the plastic wrap or tin foil.
4. Freeze popsicles until firm.
5. Gently tear away paper cup from frozen yogurt popsicle before eating.

* Remember to supervise children while eating popsicles and throw away sticks after eating.

Alternative Behavioral Services

ALTERNATIVE BEHAVIORAL SERVICES

240 Corporate Boulevard
Norfolk, VA 23502
(757) 459-5454 Fax (757) 474-3232

Centralized Admissions
(877) 227-7000

VIRGINIA BEACH PSYCHIATRIC CENTER

1100 First Colonial Road
Virginia Beach, VA 23454
(757) 496-6000 Fax (757) 481-0484

THE PINES RESIDENTIAL TREATMENT CENTER (VIRGINIA)

Crawford Campus
825 Crawford Parkway
Portsmouth, VA 23704
(757) 393-0061 Fax (757) 397-5673

Brighton Campus
1801 Portsmouth Blvd
Portsmouth, VA 23704
(757) 398-0363

Kempsville Campus
860 Kempsville Road
Norfolk, VA 23502
(757) 461-4565 825 Crawford Parkway

CRAWFORD FIRST EDUCATION

825 Crawford Parkway
Portsmouth, VA 23704
(757) 391-6675 Fax (757) 391-6651

THE PINES SOUTH CAROLINA

Charleston Campus Corporate Office
225 Midland Parkway
Summerville, SC 29485
(843) 851-5015

Midlands Campus
200 Ermine Road
West Columbia, SC 29170
(803) 791-9918

FIRST HOME CARE CORPORATION

1634 London Blvd
Portsmouth, VA 23704
(757) 393-7200 Fax (757) 391-6786

FOUNDATION HOUSE GROUP HOME

231 Hatton Street
Portsmouth, VA 23704
(757) 393-6638

FOUNDATION HOME AND COMMUNITY

1634 I Street NW
Suite 201
Washington, DC 20036
(202) 737-2554

FHC CHATTANOOGA

7351 Standifer Gap Road
Chattanooga, TN 37421
(423) 499-9007 Fax (423) 499-9757
(800) 264-4750 (24-hr referral line)
(877) 227-7000 (residential admissions)

PANAMERICANO

P. O. Box 1398
Cidra, PR 00739
(757) 739-5555
Fax (757) 739-5544

VIRGIN ISLANDS BEHAVIORAL SERVICES

183 Anna's Hope Christiansted
St. Croix, VI 00820
(340) 773-6445
Fax (340) 773-3389

Helpful Websites

www.absfirst.com

Foster Families Website
<http://fhcweb.absfirst.com>



The Pines Residential Treatment
Center 825 Crawford Parkway
Portsmouth, VA 23704

