

WHAT SORT OF QUESTIONS SHOULD I BE ASKING?

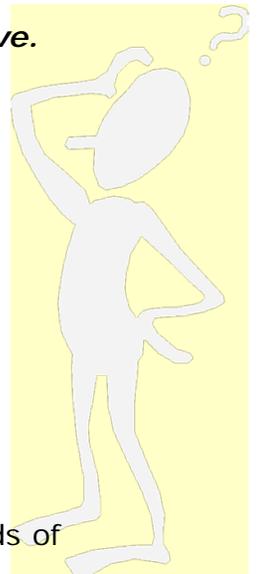
Caring for someone with a mental illness is a new experience for most people. Often it is a role they never expected or imagined they would need to take. It is often an area that is new to them, and they are unsure of the types of things they need to know and the types of questions they need to be asking.

Mental Health Professional/Team – The Psychiatrist, Psychologist, Case Manager or GP can provide information to you in terms of what your relative is experiencing. (On the Central Coast this worker may be part of the Home Based Treatment Team, or the RAFT team). Sometimes because of confidentiality, mental health professionals will not be able to discuss some of the issues affecting your relative. However, you can still let him/her know of your concerns.

In your capacity as carer, you may have information & insight that could assist the health professional better care for your relative.

Some useful questions to ask mental health professionals:

- What are the side effects of the medication?
- What other treatment options are available/
- How do I find out more about my care recipients mental illness?
- What do I do if there is a crisis?
- Are there support groups that will help my relative, or help me?
- What can I do if my relative refuses to take medication?
- Is there any place that can help my relative with accommodation?
- Is there anything or any place that can assist with the social needs of my relative?
- Is my relative able to work at the moment? Who can help him/her look for a job?
- What are the rights of my relative when s/he is in hospital?
- What are my rights as a carer?



Relative - In your role as a carer, it is often easy to forget to simply ask the person you are caring for if they are happy with the assistance you and others are providing. It is easy to start 'telling' the person what they 'should' be doing. This approach or attitude may negatively affect your relationship. To prevent this just ask for their opinion. It is often a good idea to bring up some of the following issues when the person is well and willing to talk;

- Are you happy with the mental health worker? Would you like a second opinion?
- Would you like to speak to someone else, if it is difficult to discuss things with me?
- When you are experiencing psychosis (or going through a difficult time), what can I do to help? ... Or what do I say that will help? What don't I say?
- How else can I help you?

Taken from '[Caring for Someone with a Mental Illness](#)'. Information used with permission from the NSW Mental Health Information Service **1300 794 991**