

IRIS



Involve family

Receive collateral information from them

Inform them of their loved one's status and general mental health/substance use facts

Support family so they can support their loved ones.

PAU – Family “Cheat Sheet” – The Family Policy In Brief – “IRIS”



General

- Engage in as much two-way communication as possible
- Use clinical judgment, use common sense and operate in good faith
- Document discussions and decisions.
- Understand that “family” or “family member” is defined by the patient, i.e. it does not have to be a blood relative or someone related by marriage
- Spend at least 10 minutes close to admission time with family members
- Where possible, hold family meetings at least once during the stay

Involve

- Treat family as part of the care team. Assume that family involvement is the default
- Recognize and value the unique contributions of family, their strengths and expertise
- Support family where you can; they are an important, often the main, support for the patient
- Ask patients “What family member would you like to have involved while you stay here?” and document the information
- Discuss with the patient the value and role of family members’ involvement in treatment for recovery.
- If patients do not want to involve anyone even if there are family members, explain that we will not share any personal details, only what is needed to help them get better, e.g. if they live with their sister, explain that she may need to know the basics of the medication regimen once the patient comes home. This is sharing information for “consistent purpose” on a need to know basis.
- Look for opportunities for contact with family members.

Receive

- Receive information offered by family; clinical judgment will tell you what information is most helpful
- Actively solicit collateral information
- When requested by family to keep their information confidential, document the information but mark it ‘confidential’

Inform

- Give family the PAU brochure
- No matter what the consent situation, you can always share general information about the nature of mental illness and associated issues
- Ensure family members understand the process of moving from PAU to other units or community care
- Ensure family knows about the first follow up appointment and whom to contact during this transition.
- Provide resource information to families

Support

- Ask family if they have support to assist them through this difficult time
- What does family need to know to support the patient?
- Give them a copy of the Family Connections newsletter and point out the information about family support on the PAU brochure