

Strive for continuity of care!

- Obtain history of community treatment and medications.
- Contact previous providers.
- Provide consistent treatment across facilities.
- Avoid medication interruptions during transfers from prison to prison.

Respect your patients!

- Remember that you are treating a person, not just a prisoner, in need.
- Reflect on how much power you have and use it in the service of recovery – you can be a rare, positive force for change just by treating someone with respect.
- Recognize that the trauma of being incarcerated impacts a person's mental health.

Respect their family members!

- Work from a broad definition of family.
- Remember that family members are experts in their loved one's history.
- Keep in mind the multiple challenges families face in visiting their loved ones. For some, these barriers are insurmountable.
- Recognize that family members may be experiencing vicarious trauma and a deep sense of powerlessness from the experience of their loved one being in prison.

Take care of yourself!

- Recognize the impact that working in a punitive environment has on you, just as the trauma impacts people who are incarcerated and their family members.
- Develop a support system that helps to rejuvenate you and enable you to continue to do this important work.

Family Members: Active Partners in Mental Health Recovery

Training Takeaways

Support your patient's support system!

- Ask each patient about family involvement in treatment when s/he begins receiving services. Consistent with your patient's wishes, have a comprehensive release of information signed that allows for communication with OMH staff at all prisons and CNYPC.
- Continue to revisit patient's interest in family member involvement during the course of treatment.
- When a family member contacts you, reengage the patient about consenting to the release of information.
- Alert family if patient decides to revoke consent of release of information.
- Take information from and listen to family members, even if you aren't authorized by your patient to give them any information in return.

Keep families informed!

- Contact family when significant events occur.
- Renew contact with family after each transfer from prison to prison or hospital to prison.
- Explain OMH level changes to families.
- Provide family members with clear procedures:
 - o For contacting unit chief and staff;
 - o For filing complaints, including a process for families to receive a response; and
 - o For reporting crises, including a process for families to receive a response.