

Illness Management & Recovery

Implementation Resource Kit



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Information for Public Mental Health Authorities

Evidence-Based Practices

Mental Health Authorities are under increasing pressure to provide interventions that have demonstrated positive outcomes for people who have experienced psychiatric symptoms. This is often easier said than done. Many agencies are finding it overwhelming to locate and evaluate the research, find user-friendly materials to implement the intervention, locate training opportunities for staff, plan organizational change and set up the programs themselves.

To help implement effective treatment programs, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) jointly provided funding for a project to identify and implement interventions that are supported by research evidence, i.e., “Evidence-Based Practices.”

The Illness Management and Recovery Program is an Evidence-Based Practice.

The Illness Management and Recovery Program is based on research which has shown that by learning more about managing mental illness, people who have experienced psychiatric symptoms can take important steps toward recovery. Specifically, there is evidence that people can:

- ▶ Learn more about mental illness.
- ▶ Reduce relapses and rehospitalizations.
- ▶ Reduce distress from symptoms.
- ▶ Use medications more consistently.

The Illness Management and Recovery Program provides a structured approach for practitioners to help people move toward recovery.

The program consists of a series of weekly sessions where practitioners help people who have experienced psychiatric symptoms to develop personalized strategies for managing mental illness and achieving personal goals. The program can be provided in an individual or group format, and generally lasts between three to six months. It is designed for people who have experienced the symptoms of schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, and major depression.

The content of the sessions focuses on the following nine topic areas:

- ▶ Recovery strategies
- ▶ Practical facts about schizophrenia, bipolar disorder and major depression
- ▶ The stress-vulnerability model and treatment strategies
- ▶ Building social support
- ▶ Using medication effectively
- ▶ Reducing relapses
- ▶ Coping with stress
- ▶ Coping with problems and symptoms
- ▶ Getting your needs met in the mental health system

The Illness Management and Recovery Program provides materials to guide practitioners step-by-step.

The Illness Management and Recovery Program incorporates the main components of effective illness management programs and provides materials that are user-friendly both for practitioners and for people who have experienced psychiatric symptoms. The following components are included:

- ▶ Educational Handouts for Illness Management and Recovery, written for people who have experienced psychiatric symptoms. They contain practical information, summaries, check lists, and planning sheets for each of the nine topics listed above.
- ▶ The Practitioner's Guide for Illness Management and Recovery, which provides practical suggestions for each handout, including how to help people develop and practice strategies, how to help people develop and pursue recovery goals, and tips for responding to problems that may arise during sessions.
- ▶ A fifteen minute video to introduce the program.

- ▶ Brochures written for people who have experienced psychiatric symptoms, for family members, and for practitioners.
- ▶ Fidelity scales to measure faithfulness of program implementation.
- ▶ Outcome measures to assess the impact of the program.

For more information

Visit our website at www.mentalhealthpractices.org.