

# *Illness Management & Recovery*

*Implementation Resource Kit*



**EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICES**  
*Shaping Mental Health Services Toward Recovery*

DRAFT VERSION  
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## Information for Mental Health Program Leaders

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### **What is the Illness Management and Recovery Program?**

The Illness Management and Recovery Program consists of a series of weekly sessions where practitioners help people who have experienced psychiatric symptoms to develop personal strategies for coping with mental illness and moving forward in their lives. This is a model for people who have experienced symptoms of schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, or depression. It is appropriate for people at various stages of the recovery process. The program can be provided in an individual or group format and generally lasts between three to six months.

Practitioners for Illness Management and Recovery can come from a wide range of clinical backgrounds, including but not restricted to the following: social work, occupational therapy, counseling, case management, nursing, and psychology. All practitioners providing the program will need training and ongoing supervision.

### **Is the Illness Management and Recovery Program an evidence-based practice?**

The Illness Management and Recovery Program is based on research which has shown that people who have experienced psychiatric symptoms can show improvements in:

- ▶ Knowledge about mental illness
- ▶ Reducing relapses and rehospitalizations
- ▶ Coping more effectively and reducing distress from symptoms
- ▶ Using medications more effectively

## What is the role of family members and other supporters in this program?

With the person's permission, family members and other supporters may participate in one of more of the following ways:

- ▶ Read the educational handouts used in sessions
- ▶ Participate in selected sessions
- ▶ Assist in developing relapse prevention plans
- ▶ Participate in homework assignments
- ▶ Help the person pursue their recovery goals

## What are the benefits for Community Mental Health Centers that provide the Illness Management and Recovery Program?

Mental Health Centers are under increasing pressure to provide interventions that have demonstrated positive outcomes for people who have experienced psychiatric symptoms. But it is often very time-consuming to locate and evaluate the research and to find user friendly, step-by-step materials that can be used implement and measure the outcomes of the intervention. The Illness Management and Recovery Program makes it possible to provide an evidence-based practice in a comprehensive and easy-to-use format.

## What is provided in the Illness Management and Recovery Program?

- ▶ Educational Handouts for Illness Management and Recovery, written for people who have experienced psychiatric symptoms. These handouts contain practical information, summaries, check lists, and planning sheets for nine topic areas, as listed in the following section of this brochure.
- ▶ The Practitioner's Guide for Illness Management and Recovery, which provides practical suggestions for each handout, including how to help people develop and practice coping strategies, how to help people develop and pursue recovery goals, and tips for responding to problems that may arise during sessions.
- ▶ A fifteen minute introductory video.
- ▶ Informational brochures for people who have experienced psychiatric symptoms, family members and practitioners.
- ▶ A fidelity scale to measure whether the program is being implemented as designed.
- ▶ Outcome measures to assess whether the program is having a positive impact on participants.

## What topic areas are covered in the program?

Educational handouts are provided for the following nine topics:

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

## For more information

Visit our website: [www.mentalhealthpractices.org](http://www.mentalhealthpractices.org)