

#GettingThrough the first few days

Staff Guidance

Introduction

#GettingThrough the First Few Days sets out important information family members need when their child or young person (CYP) has been admitted to a CAMHS inpatient unit. It is part of a wider collection of guides created by and for families in collaboration with the NHS. Taking the time to talk through this information can help to build trust from the outset and provide the reassurance families need.

How it works

The booklet has six sections to be completed by the family AND the staff member together. The subjects were chosen by families based on their experiences of the admission process. Each section consists of common questions or prompts that families had either found helpful or wish they had known. You can add further information or details that are relevant to your unit.

Getting started:

A permanent and experienced member of staff should complete the information with the family. This is in addition to the existing admission procedures.

- Find a quiet space for you and the family and offer them a cuppa. Explain it's probably going to take 15 minutes.
- Introduce yourself and your role and ask the family how they wish to be called.
- Give families the choice as to who fills in the booklet – you or them.
- Avoid acronyms and abbreviations and keep it simple. Be open and honest.
- The most important thing about this process is connecting with the family. Listen to them and what they have to say.
- Discuss with the family if there are any communication needs and if the booklet is needed in another format, address that directly with your service.

Section 1: What's going to happen in the first few days?

Remember the family are likely to be worried, stressed and exhausted. This may be their first time visiting an inpatient unit, which can be very strange and unsettling. Tell the family a little about routines and life on the unit.

Section 2: Things to help my child settle in.

The family are likely to be the experts on their child. Find out the things that are important such as triggers or strategies and how best to communicate with their child. The information shared in this section can be crucial in

helping the child settle in and feel safe. If something is not possible please be honest about this.

Section 3: Practical things

If the unit has a list of things the child can bring, please give it to the family now and explain anything that may seem odd to them e.g., no hairbrushes. Understanding the practical arrangements about eating and sleeping can be reassuring.

The family are likely to have been on a long and difficult journey in the run up to admission. They may feel out of their depth or even embarrassed. Let them know they are not alone. Invite them to join any parents' groups you have and/or share support information.

Section 4: Visiting

The first night at home without your child can be very distressing. Before they leave, families should know when they will see their child next. Share top tips for visiting and think back to the first time you came to the unit – could you work out which bell to press to get in? Is it different at the weekend? Where can parents park?

If your unit has particular processes to go through, such as searching families, if visits are supervised or no outside food is allowed, let the family know.

Section 5: Getting in touch

Good communication - both between families and their child and between families and the unit - is key to a positive admission. You might want to explain how the unit communicates any incidents or give guidance on what a family should do if their child calls them in distress. Explain how families will be informed about medication, treatment and diagnosis.

Section 6: Contact information

This section can be filled in by you in advance – talk it through anyway. Ensure any important information is included such as good and bad times for families to call the unit.

Further information and support for families:

More detailed information, support and advice has been developed to help families through the next stage of their child's inpatient stay.

www.england.nhs.uk/getting-through/

What happens next?

Make a copy of the completed leaflet. Give the original to the family and keep the copy on the ward where it is easily accessible.