

**Allegany Rehabilitation Associates  
Personalized Recovery Oriented Services**

**Title of Service:** Understanding Your Illness

**Total Number of Sessions:** 12

**Source:** Team Solutions, Workbook 3. Understanding Your Illness; Johnson McCrary, Kay. Eli Lilly. 2009.

**Duration of each session:** 45 minutes

**PROS Service: CRS Wellness Self Management**

**Target population:**

- **Diagnoses:** Mood Disorders, Bipolar Disorder, Schizophrenia, Schizoaffective Disorder, Anxiety Disorders, Substance Abuse Disorders, Personality Disorders
  
- **Barriers to be overcome:**
  - Limited insight into mental illness
  - Difficulty identifying signs and symptoms of diagnosis
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**Service Goal:**

To provide participants with education regarding symptoms and how they may reflect relapse. This group will address common feelings of individual's with mental health diagnosis along with how to promote recovery.

**Service Objectives:**

- To educate participants with common symptoms of schizophrenia and bipolar disorder
- Reasons why people may have symptoms
- Common feelings about dealing with a difficult illness
- Things people can do to promote recovery
- Signs and symptoms of a relapse
- How to handle an emergency

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**Session:** 1 Identifying the Changes

**Duration:** 45 minutes

**Service Objective(s):** Participants will identify a simple description of how the brain functions. Participants will understand that no one's brain works perfectly.

**Handouts:**

- Topic Assessment (pg.6)

**Activities:**

- Complete topic assessment (pg. 6)
- Discuss how people perceive and experience the world differently (pg. 8)
- Illustrate how people perceive differently through "phone game" (pg. 9)

**Homework:**

- None

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**Session:** 2 Understanding the Changes

**Duration:** 45 minutes

**Service Objective(s):** Participants will identify how strong emotional reactions can interfere with reaching their goals. Participants will recognize different ways others may be able to help them recognize and define emotional problems.

**Handouts:**

- Topic Assessment (pg.16)

**Activities:**

- Review Session 1
- Complete topic assessment (pg. 16)
- Discuss changes that challenge understanding (pg. 18)
- Discuss how brain processes emotions (pg. 19)
- Self evaluation of barriers to seeking treatment (pg. 20)

**Homework:**

- Participants will write down memories of the thoughts they had when they were emotionally upset.

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**Session:** 3 When Personal Changes May Be Symptoms

**Duration:** 45 minutes

**Service Objective(s):** Participants will be able to identify that some thoughts and feelings that cause problems for them may be symptoms of their illness. Participants will be able to identify a cause of mental illness. Participants will understand that developing a mental illness is not something they caused.

**Handouts:**

- Topic Assessment (pg. 25)

**Activities:**

- Review Session 2
- Review homework
- Complete topic assessment (pg. 25)
- Discuss whether problems or symptoms are what is bothering (pg. 27)
- Group discussion on some symptoms require medication (pg. 28)
- Express that developing a mental illness is no one's fault (pg. 29)

**Homework:**

- Participants will write down what they understand about why they have been having problems lately.

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**Session:** 4 Acceptance

**Duration:** 45 minutes

**Service Objective(s):** Participants identify ways acceptance is an action step towards getting better. They will understand that accepting mental illness is a process that takes time.

**Handouts:**

- Topic Assessment (pg. 35)
- Discovering Things About Yourself (pg.41)

**Activities:**

- Review Session 3
- Review homework
- Complete topic assessment (pg. 35)
- Discuss early acceptance (pg. 37)
- Read Michael's story and discuss (pg. 38)
- Discuss that acceptance takes time (pg. 39)

**Homework:**

- Participants will complete "Discovering Things About Yourself" worksheet (pg. 41)

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**Session:** 5 Symptoms are Important to Diagnosis and Recovery

**Duration:** 45 minutes

**Service Objective(s):** Participants will identify what a symptom is. They will understand the role of prescriber. Participants will recognize that a mental illness is a brain disease.

**Handouts:**

- Topic Assessment (pg. 45)

**Activities:**

- Review Session 4
- Review homework
- Complete topic assessment (pg. 45)
- Discuss what symptoms are and why they are important (pg. 47)
- Identify and evaluate symptom (pg. 48)
- Symptom monitoring (pg. 49)

**Homework:**

- Participants will discuss with prescriber the next time they meet on which symptom(s) they should watch for. Participant will tell treatment team when the identified symptoms start to happen.

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**Session:** 6 Symptoms Checklist (Part 1)

**Duration:** 45 minutes

**Service Objective(s):** Participants will identify any positive and negative symptoms. They will recognize any cognitive symptoms they may have.

**Handouts:**

- Topic Assessment (pg. 54)
- Symptoms Checklist (pg. 57-59)

**Activities:**

- Review Session 5
- Review homework
- Complete topic assessment (pg. 54)
- Identify reasons to identify identify symptoms (pg. 56)
- Complete Symptom Checklist (pg. 57-59)

**Homework:**

- None

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**Session:** 7 Symptoms Checklist (Part 2)

**Duration:** 45 minutes

**Service Objective(s):** Participants will be able to identify depressed and manic symptoms that they may have. Participants will recognize mixed manic symptoms that they may have.

**Handouts:**

- Topic Assessment (pg. 64)
- Symptom Checklist (pg. 66-68)
- Recording Symptoms (pg. 69)

**Activities:**

- Review Session 6
- Complete topic assessment (pg. 64)
- Complete symptoms of depression (pg. 66)
- Complete symptoms of mania (pg. 67)
- Complete symptoms of mixed mania (pg. 68)
- Complete recording symptoms (pg. 69)

**Homework:**

- Participants will discuss checklist from session 6 and 7 with a family member or a friend so they will have a better understanding of their symptoms.



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**Session:** 8 Reasons for Symptoms in Mental Illness

**Duration:** 45 minutes

**Service Objective(s):** Participants will identify three ways brain chemicals carry messages in the brain. Participants will identify how medicine might correct brain chemical imbalance and improve their symptoms.

**Handouts:**

- Topic Assessment (pg. 74)
- Paper for Homework

**Activities:**

- Review Session 7
- Review homework
- Complete topic assessment (pg. 74)
- Illustrate diagram “What Brain Chemicals Are Supposed to Do” (pg. 77) (participants will need to draw for homework)
- Discuss how the brain receives information (pg. 78)
- Group discussion on the way the brain processes information (pg. 79)
- Discuss how making decisions can be difficult (pg. 80)

**Homework:**

- Participants will create a poster with a diagram to teach others about how the healthy brain works.

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**Session:** 9 Making the Diagnosis

**Duration:** 45 minutes

**Service Objective(s):** Participants will name things a prescriber must consider when making a diagnosis. Participants will identify reasons why it is important to regularly monitor symptoms and talk about them with their prescriber.

**Handouts:**

- Topic Assessment (pg. 85)

**Activities:**

- Review Session 8
- Review homework
- Complete topic assessment (pg. 85)
- Give each participant a piece of puzzle, as a group they will solve the puzzle of how a diagnosis is made
- Discuss how symptoms are important in making correct diagnosis (pg. 87)
- Other factors in making a diagnosis (pg. 87-89)

**Homework:**

- Participants will write down thoughts about their diagnosis and symptoms.

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**Session:** 10 Mental Illness Test Your Knowledge

**Duration:** 45 minutes

**Service Objective(s):** Participants will be able to identify myths about and truths about mental illness.

**Handouts:**

- Topic Assessment (pg. 94)

**Activities:**

- Review Session 9
- Review homework
- Complete topic assessment (pg. 94)
- In game form, split participants into two groups. Each participant will take a turn to go to white board. Facilitator will read true/false questions. Participant will write answer on the board after discussing with their group. (pg. 96-98)

**Homework:**

- None

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**Session:** 11 Feelings

**Duration:** 45 minutes

**Service Objective(s):** Participants will be identify feeligns that they had when they were diagnosed with their illness. Participants will identify stages of adjustment to having a serious illness.

**Handouts:**

- Topic Assessment (pg. 103)
- Rating Feelings (pg. 107)

**Activities:**

- Review Session 10
- Complete Topic Assessment (pg. 103)
- Discuss coping with illness and recognizing feelings (pg. 105)
- No fault, no shame, and no blame (pg. 106)
- Complete “Rating Feelings” worksheet (pg. 107)
- Discuss reacting to feelings (pg. 108)

**Homework:**

- Participants will write down their emotions at each stage of their journey through their illness; Denial, Anger, Depression, Grief, and Acceptance. They will think about what they have learned from their experiences.

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**Session:** 12 Reducing Risk of Relapse

**Duration:** 45 minutes

**Service Objective(s):** Participants will be able to identify residual symptoms. They will identify early warning symptoms that they are likely to have if they are in danger of relapse.

**Handouts:**

- Topic Assessment (pg. 113)

**Activities:**

- Review Session 11
- Review homework
- Complete topic assessment (pg. 113)
- Discuss danger of relapse (pg. 115)
- List residual symptoms (pg. 116)
- List early warning symptoms (pg. 117-118)

**Homework:**

- None