

SELF-ADVOCACY TOOL #2: COMMUNICATING WITH MY TEAM

When you go to a treatment visit, they ask you: "How are you feeling? What are your thoughts? What are you having problems with?" A person can have a wide range of thoughts and feelings when they first meet with their care provider. These are just a few examples: excitement, nervousness, indifference, or hopefulness.

This tool might help you identify what you want from your treatment visit.

MEETING WITH YOUR COUNSELOR OR OTHER TEAM MEMBER

Meeting regularly with a counselor or other team member might help you navigate life choices and challenges. These conversations can support you to identify your goals and take concrete steps to meet them.

Use the spaces provided to take notes about the questions below:

If you have had any previous counseling or other treatment experiences, what that experience was like?
Examples: What helped you? What did not help you? How did you know?

What would you like in a counselor or other treatment team member? For example, would you prefer a treatment team member who shares your values, beliefs, worldviews, gender or any other important qualities?

How do you think a counselor or other treatment team member might help you? For example, someone to talk to, someone to help with challenges, provide education, help you obtain resources like housing, financial assistance, etc.

If you have them, what are your immediate or long-term life goals?

What kinds of activities or resources might help make treatment sessions most successful for you?

Some examples:

- involving your family/friends
- being physically active in the session (example: going for a walk with your counselor)
- role playing or sand box with figures
- being creative (example: bring in your artwork or music)
- using "homework" in between sessions to practice some of the ideas you learn during these visits
- learning about things that have helped other people in similar situations
- having an animal present
- having a hot or cold beverage
- meeting in a particular place other than your team member's office

MEETING WITH YOUR TREATMENT TEAM MEMBER

Treatment can be helpful to our recovery and/or sense of well-being. This worksheet will help you and your team understand what you do and don't want from your treatment. Treatment can include counseling, medicine, occupational therapy, peer support or housing support. Together, you will be able to determine if the treatment would be truly helpful in supporting YOU.

I'm using this sheet to talk with my:

- Medical provider or nurse practitioner
- Other treatment team member (counselor, occupational therapist, peer support specialist, family member)

Learning how to decide what to focus on during treatment visits can help you meet your treatment goals. For some people taking some time to reflect on what you would like to discuss before a treatment visit can help make that happen. Other people prefer to work with their treatment provider during a visit to decide what is best to focus on that day.

Here are some topics to think about to help you get the most out of your visit. You can use the space below to jot down some notes, if you like:

- my goals and what matters to me
- latest research on how the brain works
- medication options and side-effects
- alternative options that might help me feel better
- how to cope with stress
- what to expect in the future

What are your hopes about what medication or other treatments like counseling, occupational therapy, peer support and housing/employment support will do for you?

Do you have any concerns about how medication or other treatments like counseling, occupational therapy, peer support and housing/employment support might affect you?

Does taking medication or participating other forms of treatment like counseling, occupational therapy, peer support and housing/employment support seem to be having effects that you like?

Does taking medication or participating in other forms of treatment like counseling, occupational therapy, peer support and housing/employment support seem to be having effects that you don't like?

Imagine that treatment is working for you. What would that look/feel/sound like? What would you be doing differently? Feel free to write it out below and/or draw a picture.

