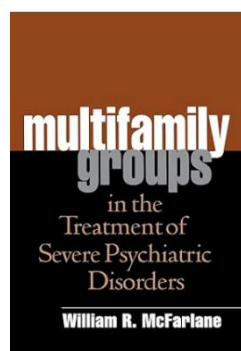


# Supporting your loved one during their recovery from a Mental Health Episode

1. **Go slow:** recovery takes time, rest is important, things will get better in their own time
2. **Keep it cool:** enthusiasm is normal, keep it toned down, disagreement is normal, but keep it toned down too, limit interactions that overstimulate the person with the illness
3. **Give each other space:** time out is important for everyone, it's OK to reach out, it's OK to say no, Allow for withdrawal when needed.
4. **Keep it simple:** say what you have to say clearly, calmly and positively.
5. **Ignore what you can't change:** Let some things slide; Don't ignore threatening, violent, or psychotic behavior; Agree on an action plan ahead of time to avoid a major crisis if it can't be ignored.
6. **Follow the treatment plan:** this is the action plan for treating the illness; if medication is part of the treatment and other interactions, then follow this plan to aid in recovery.
7. **Avoid street drugs and alcohol:** they make symptoms worse, can cause relapse and slow recovery; They have negative effects on the brain; Encourage an open dialogue if family member is using

8. **Carry on business as usual:** re-establish family routines as quickly as possible; In any long-term illness, families must adjust their living style, be on the lookout for problems and keep on living their lives.
9. **Set limits:** everyone needs to know what the rules are; a few good rules keep things clear.; develop agreed upon rules for living together; structure makes keeping it cool and warm possible.
10. **Pick up on early warning signs:** develop a list of early signs that indicate your relative is relapsing; discuss what these are with your family member and provider as it helps head off a relapse;
11. **Solve problems step by step:** follow a sequential process of resolving concerns
12. **Lower Expectations Temporarily:** After an acute psychotic episode, the person with illness needs an extended period of recovery in which they cannot function as well as they did before the episode.

McFarland, B. (2004). *Multifamily groups in Treatment of Severe Psychiatric Disorders*. Guilford Press.



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