

# Shared Decision Making *in Mental Health*



## TIPS

*For Mental Health  
Administrators*

## Bringing Shared Decision Making to Your Organization

This tip sheet offers ways to introduce shared decision making as a policy and practice in mental health agencies, as well as some sources for tools and additional information.



*Shared decision making pairs full information and decision making tools with respectful two-way conversation between a person and his or her service provider.*

The following 4 strategies can help you bring shared decision making to your organization.

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1

### *Increase Awareness and Understanding of Shared Decision Making.*

Shared decision making is an emerging best practice in health care and has been specifically recommended for use in mental health services by the Institute of Medicine. It is consistent with and enhances practices such as person-centered planning, recovery-oriented services, and consumer-driven care.

A good way to start building awareness is to establish a forum to share information and discuss implementation within the agency. See the resources on the back page to get you started. Discussions should involve both people who use services and those who provide them.

You may want to consider developing the skills and knowledge of an internal “champion” who can help others gain confidence in the use of this practice. Shared decision making can also be promoted through newsletters, meetings, and other communications.

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2

### *Make Shared Decision Making an Expectation for Agency Providers.*

You can increase the use of shared decision making by creating a policy statement supporting its use and by embedding the practice within standard practice activities. This could include providing and promoting the use of specific tools, requiring documentation of shared decisions in treatment/service plans and other clinical records, and expecting it as a documented part of the informed consent process.

3

### *Prepare Staff to Use Shared Decision Making in Daily Practice.*

Providers need basic information and your support to enhance their knowledge and comfort with shared decision making. Some may need help with such skills as exploring decisional conflict, helping individuals clarify and access full information about options, and accepting individuals' final decisions.

Research suggests that peer support is a useful component of shared decision making, whether as part of a decision support center or as a designated peer service. Peer supporters can help individuals prepare before meetings, use paper/pencil or electronic tools, talk through concerns, or find information.

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### *Select Tools to Support Shared Decision Making.*

SAMHSA has created an interactive decision aid that allows individuals to compare common anti-psychotic medications used to treat mental health conditions. It also helps them consider services and a variety of wellness activities as part of an overall recovery plan. The program generates a short printable report that can be shared with providers. The SAMHSA decision aid is available at no cost online as well as on a CD-ROM that can be loaded onto a computer in your waiting rooms, decision support centers, and peer-run programs.

Also available are a series of 1-page, downloadable “cool tools” that include worksheets, a medication side effect checklist, questions to ask about recommended medications, and conversation starters.

Another tool is a step-by-step general decision making workbook called, *What Is Right for Me? Making Important Decisions in Everyday Life* which is designed for individuals to use alone or with support. A companion workbook titled, *Supporting Choice: Helping Someone Make an Important Decision*, is designed to help a supporter to guide a person through the process of making a difficult decision.

## *Learn More about Shared Decision Making.*

This Tip Sheet is part of a series of materials developed by the Federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) to help make shared decision making a routine part of mental health services. You can find more information and resources for shared decision making at <http://store.samhsa.gov>.

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### The materials available at this web site include:

- Videos and archived webinars about shared decision making,
  - An interactive decision aid about antipsychotic medications,
  - Step-by-step decision support workbooks,
  - Cool Tools and worksheets,
  - Brochures and informational issue briefs, including one expanding on shared decision making in organizations.
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### Here are some other resources you may find helpful.

- The Ottawa Health Research Institute (OHRI) offers a free tool kit on implementing shared decision making in health care settings at <http://decisionaid.ohri.ca>.
  - Journals that publish articles about shared decision making in health and mental health include Psychiatric Rehabilitation Journal (<http://www.bu.edu/cpr/prj>), Psychiatric Services (<http://psychservices.psychiatryonline.org>), and Patient Education and Counseling (<http://www.pec-journal.com>).
  - The Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center's Center for Shared Decision Making features a wealth of resources at <http://www.dhmc.org>. Included are a glossary of terms and links to online resources about shared decision making.
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This publication may be downloaded or ordered at <http://store.samhsa.gov>. Or, please call SAMHSA at 1-877-SAMHSA-7 (1-877-726-4727) (English and Español).

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