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The OptumHealth Behavioral Solutions of California (OHBS-CA) enrollee newsletter

Summer 2013

What Is a Mental Health Specialist?

Mental health specialists help people with mental health and mood problems. They are experts with special training who have obtained proper licensing in mental health. Some may get special training to work with children or teens. Some may get special training to work with couples, families or seniors. Some get special training for problems like alcohol and other drug use. There are different types of mental health specialists. They may offer advice, talk therapy, and support and empathy. They may also offer specialty services dependent upon their profession or training.

Psychiatrists

A medical doctor who has received additional training in mental health after graduation from medical school is called a psychiatrist. Look for M.D. or D.O. after their name. Psychiatrists can identify mental health problems. They ordinarily prescribe medicines and order medical tests. They may also offer talk therapy or give information to help people improve their total mental health.

Counselors, Social Workers and Therapists

These specialists have a master's degree. They also have a license to help people with their mental health.



They can identify mental health problems. While these specialist do not prescribe medicines, they do provide advice, support and empathy. They can offer talk therapy and support your recovery by assisting you in developing coping skills and assisting you in overcoming difficulties. These include Licensed Professional Counselors (L.P.C.), Licensed Clinical Social Workers (L.C.S.W.), and Licensed Marriage and Family Therapists (L.M.F.T.).

Psychologists

A psychologist has a doctoral degree, but it is a different degree from that of a psychiatrist. Look for Ph.D. or Psy.D. after their name. They also have a license to help people with their mental health. A psychologist can identify mental health problems, and may offer special tests for doing this.

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The information and therapeutic approaches in this newsletter are provided for informational and/or educational purposes only. They are not meant to be used in place of professional clinical consultations for individual health needs. Certain treatments may not be covered in some benefit plans. Please check your benefits.

These specialists do not prescribe medications; however, they also offer talk therapy, give advice, and can support your recovery by assisting you in developing coping skills and overcoming difficulties.

Nurse Practitioners

Nurse practitioners have a master's degree and are licensed to practice nursing. Look for A.P.R.N. or P.M.H.N.P. after their name for example. They can identify mental health problems. They can also prescribe medicines and order medical tests.

Help for ADHD

If you have a child with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), your child may be getting help from many people. Be sure to make regular visits to your healthcare providers for medicine, counseling and total health check-ups.

Children may see therapists, doctors, and school counselors. Your family might see a family counselor. It is important to see these people and that they coordinate your child's care. If your doctor prescribes medicine for your child, be sure to give it as prescribed.

The following are tips for getting the best help for a child who has just started taking medicine for ADHD:

- Have at least one visit with your child's doctor within 30 days of starting the new medicine.
- Use the medicine prescribed by your child's doctor for at least seven months.



- Visit your child's doctor regularly but not less than at least two times in the nine months after their first visit. Some doctors request to see their patients four times in the first six months.¹

Want to learn more? Visit www.liveandworkwell.com and login. Click the “BeWell Health & Well-Being” button on your screen. A list of topics will pop up, including ADHD in the center column under “Conditions by Name”. There are also many areas on this website to support you in having a healthy and happy child and family.

You can call us for copies of tips for ADHD and to get help for your family. Use the Mental Health Services phone number on your health insurance card.

¹ Based on HEDIS® 2013 Technical Specifications and American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry Practice Guidelines for ADHD.

Medicine for Depression

Do you see a doctor or nurse for medicine for depression? Regular visits are important. Also, seeing a mental health specialist for talk therapy in addition to taking medicine may help more than medicine alone.

Tell your doctor, nurse and/or mental health specialist if you:

- feel better
- have symptoms that you think may be side effects, e.g, fatigue, difficulty sleeping, increase or decrease in appetite. (Sometimes it's hard to tell if what you are feeling is a symptom of depression or side effect from the medicine. That's why it's important to tell your doctor, nurse or mental health specialist.)
- are having trouble taking your medicine
- have questions about your medicine

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- are thinking about changing or stopping your medicine.
- are thinking about hurting yourself or someone else
- notice that your depression seems worse²

Keep taking your medicine, even after you start to feel better. Stopping too early may cause your depression to return. Stopping suddenly may make you feel worse. Experts advise people taking medicine for depression to:

- Stay on your medicine(s) for at least six months after you start to feel better. Talk to your doctor or nurse about how long you should stay on your medicine.
- Visit your doctor, nurse and/or mental health specialist regularly. Ask your doctor or nurse how frequent your visits should be.³

Call your doctor or nurse immediately if you are having trouble breathing,

have hives or itchy skin, or think that you may be having an allergic reaction to your medicine. Don't take more of the medicine until you talk to them.

Want to learn more? Visit www.liveandworkwell.com and login. Then click on the "BeWell Health & Well-Being" button on your screen. A list will pop up. Click on "Depression." You can call us for copies of depression tips and to get services. Use the Mental Health Services phone number on your health insurance card.

² Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance (www.dbsalliance.org)

³ American Psychiatric Association (APA), Treatment of Patients With Major Depressive Disorder, Third Edition, Nov. 2010

Hospital Care for Mental Health Problems

Most people with mental health problems can be seen in a doctor's or mental health specialist's office. However, there are times when people need to be admitted to a

hospital. Sometimes problems are so bad that a person can't cope with everyday living (e.g., working, taking care of family, taking care of dressing and feeding oneself). This may include thoughts of hurting oneself or hurting someone else.

Sometimes signs of depression may come back or get worse, or new signs appear. This is called relapse and can result in hospital treatment.⁵ Stopping relapse is important so that one does not need to enter the hospital.

Mental health problems may require ongoing treatment. The good news is that there are many treatments for mental health problems. There are many things to do to prevent relapse and stay out of the hospital. Tips include the following:

- Learn about your problem and treatments.
- Take your medicine(s) as prescribed by your doctor or nurse.

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How Teamwork Can Help You

Your brain is part of the rest of your body. When you allow your mental health specialist and medical doctor (Primary Care Physician or PCP), to talk to each other and give you advice, they may be able to help you with your treatment. One way to make this possible is to sign a Confidential Exchange of Information Form. Tell your mental health specialist how to call your PCP and other healthcare providers.

Some reasons why working together is important are:

- You may be getting medicines from your psychiatrist and PCP. Some medicines do not work well together. Your doctors need to know everything you are taking.
- When medical problems and mental health problems happen at the same time, having your

healthcare providers work together may be helpful to recovery.⁴

You can find the OptumHealth Behavioral Solutions of California Confidential Exchange of Information Form on www.liveandworkwell.com (click the "Forms" link at the top of any page when logged in). Your clinician can get a copy at www.providerexpress.com. The information your healthcare providers share is private to the fullest extent permitted by law.

List the names of all your healthcare providers. Share this list with each person you listed and ask them to work together.

⁴ Institute of Medicine (US) Committee on Crossing the Quality Chasm: Adaptation to Mental Health and Addictive Disorders. Improving the Quality of Health Care for Mental and Substance-Use Conditions: Quality Chasm Series. Washington (DC): National Academies Press (US); 2006. ⁵ Coordinating Care for Better Mental, Substance-Use, and General Health.

- Do not stop your medicine(s) without talking to your doctor or nurse.
- If you are having side effects from your medicine(s), talk with your doctor or nurse.
- Go to your follow-up visits. After you leave the hospital, it is important that you have a visit with your doctor within seven days and at least two follow-up visits during the first month.
- If old signs of depression come back, get worse, or you have new signs, talk to your doctor or nurse as soon as possible.
- Create a plan with your doctor, nurse or treatment team to help you with new problems.
- Write down your feelings and thoughts each day so that you and your doctor or nurse can see any possible issues.
- Live a healthy lifestyle with proper eating, regular exercise, and good sleep.
- Learn and practice healthy ways to cope with stress.

- Avoid alcohol and drugs.
- Do not spend too much time alone. Spending time with your friends and family can help you feel better.
- Make time for work, family and friends, hobbies and fun activities.⁶

At the time of hospital discharge, your doctor will tell you when you should be seen in his/her office or the office of another health professional. It is important that you schedule and keep this appointment within 7 days of leaving the hospital.⁶

⁵ Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance (www.dbsalliance.org)

⁶ The National Institute of Mental Health (www.nimh.nih.gov)

Why Use an In-Network Specialist?

- It usually costs less to go to an in-network specialist or hospital. You will usually have lower payments for visits in-network compared to out-of-network.
- In-network specialists and hospitals have worked with us and understand how to request

benefit coverage and how to submit claims. They will submit claim forms to us so you do not have to.

- Our in-network specialists and hospitals have been screened to ensure that they have met the minimum quality standards required by the governing agency.

How can you find an in-network provider?

Log on to www.liveandworkwell.com. You can search for specific criteria such as:

- Type of mental health specialist
- Male or female
- Ethnicity
- Special training
- Language

If you need help, please call the toll-free mental health services number on your health insurance card.

When a Loved One Comes Home from the Hospital: Frequently Asked Questions and Answers for Families

What can I expect once my loved one comes home?

Having a loved one go to a hospital for a mental health problem is hard for everyone. What happened before the hospital stay was probably hard for the family. There may be hurt or angry feelings. Now that your loved one is doing better, there is more work to do to continue improved mental health.

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Your loved one may need more treatment, and you and other family members may need help as well.

What about counseling?

Part of the hospital discharge plan includes making a follow-up appointment within 7 days of discharge with the doctor or another mental health specialist. It is very important that your family member make and keep that appointment. The best plan is to ensure your loved one visits with a mental health specialist within seven days of leaving the hospital.⁷ Almost everyone who is hospitalized for mental health can also benefit from talk therapy. Talk therapy can help in many ways. Your loved one can learn:

- to notice when signs of illness are increasing
- ways of coping; this may help them stay out of the hospital in the future
- the importance of taking prescribed medicine
- to live life to the fullest even with a mental health condition⁸

It is best that your loved one visits with a mental health specialist as soon as possible. If your loved one needs help setting up a visit with a mental health specialist, call us as soon as possible. Use the mental health services number on your insurance card.

What about medicines?

Unless their personal doctor tells them differently, it's best that your loved one keeps taking their medicine as directed by the doctor or nurse at the hospital.⁸ The hospital may have set up a follow-up visit with a psychiatrist (doctor). A psychiatrist can check on how the medicine is helping and make changes if needed.

From the psychiatrist, your loved one can learn:

- the role of medicine in helping live a full life with few symptoms

- to recognize and cope with any side effects of the medicine
- about any changes to the medicines that may be needed⁹

Sometimes people may ask their family members to help them remember to take medicines. This can be one way to help your loved one.

⁷ National Committee for Quality Assurance, HEDIS® 2013 Technical Specifications

⁸ Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance (www.dbsalliance.org)

⁹ <http://healthyminds.org/Main-Topic/What-is-a-Psychiatrist.aspx>

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How Soon Is Your Visit?

When you ask for a mental health visit, how long should you wait to be offered an appointment? How long should you wait for an alcohol or drug abuse counselor or program?

TYPE OF VISIT	WAIT TIME
Emergency with life at risk	None
Emergency with no risk to life	Less than 6 hours
Urgent	48 hours or less (some states except California, require less than 24 hours)
Routine	Up to 10 business days

There are new rules for wait times if you live in California. They are listed in the table above. If your mental health specialist agrees, you may be able to wait longer. In the future, we may ask you if you have been pleased with how long you have had to wait for a visit.

We offer mental health specialists and hospitals in your area. We also offer counselors and programs for alcohol and other drug use. When you call for help, your wait for a visit should match the wait times in the above table.¹⁰ If you are unhappy about how long you have to wait, you can file a complaint by calling the toll-free mental health services number on your health insurance card.

We list mental health specialists on our website www.liveandworkwell.com. Sign up for an account, at no added cost, to search our list. The list offers names, phone numbers, and addresses of in-network mental health specialists. You can also see what types of help are offered.

If you can't get to our website, or need help scheduling a visit, please call OptumHealth Behavioral Solutions of California. Call the toll-free mental health services number on your health insurance card.

¹⁰ California Department of Managed Health Care

Leaving the Hospital: What Now?

It is important to visit with a mental health specialist soon after leaving the hospital. It is important to talk to the specialist about how to stay in good mental health.

At the time of hospital discharge, a follow-up appointment will be scheduled. After leaving the hospital, it is best to visit a mental health specialist within seven days.¹¹ This improves the chances of maintaining good mental health.

We can help you schedule a visit. If you need help finding a mental health specialist, call us. We can help you find a specialist to visit. We can also help you schedule a visit. Call us using the mental health services phone number on your health insurance card.

¹¹ National Committee for Quality Assurance, HEDIS® 2013 Technical Specifications

“When a Loved One Comes Home from the Hospital” continued from page 5

Does he/she really need more treatment? Everything seems so much better!

After hospital treatment, the patient and family may think that nothing more is needed. This can be especially true with teens, but it applies to everyone. It is very important that your loved one follow up with all treatment recommendations.

My family member was referred to another type of treatment. What does that mean?

Often people are “stepped down” to treatment between inpatient treatment and outpatient therapy. This allows the person to have help while getting back to daily routines.

Partial hospitalization (sometimes called day treatment), residential treatment, or intensive outpatient treatment may be advised for your loved one. If that’s the case, then it is best that they attend this stepdown treatment exactly as recommended. You may have questions or concerns about such things as getting your loved one to treatment. If so, call us for help in finding answers.

This has been really hard. I could use some help myself.

There are many ways to get help for yourself and your other family members. Some examples are:

- National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) offers online and local information and support. To learn more, go to www.nami.org on the Web.

- Al-Anon and Alateen offer support for family members of those who have drug or alcohol problems. To learn more, go to www.al-anon.alateen.org.
- For self-help guides and tools, visit our website at www.liveandworkwell.com and login. Click on “Tools & Programs” under the Quick Links area.

You may call us for help with your mental health benefits. We can assist in finding help for you. We may also help your family to get treatment, either alone or as a family. Although this is a hard time, it can also be a time to see hope for the future.

Liveandworkwell.com Online, Anytime Support for Life’s Changes, Stresses, Challenges and Disasters!

Did you know that you have access to professional care, self-help and an array of educational information online to support your wellbeing? Liveandworkwell.com is your confidential member wellbeing portal and is worth a visit. It is full of clinician reviewed articles, multimedia, search tools and interactive programs. You and your family can use it anytime. Your use is not individually reported and does not become part of your medical record.

What’s in it for me at www.liveandworkwell.com? 24/7 On-Line Convenience and Privacy! (Some features are based upon your benefit coverage.)

- Find a mental health specialist with the Clinician Search tool located under the Quick Links area.

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- The Claims & Coverage toolkit in the Quick Links area is your 24/7 self-service area for understanding your benefits and submitting or managing behavioral health claims and payments without having to call.
- Learn skills for helping your children deal with bullies, fears, friends and fitness in the Resources section under the Quick Links area.
- Visit any of the 150 Centers in the LiveWell, BeWell and WorkWell tabs. Here you’ll find Stress Center, Relationship and Divorce Centers, Caregiving Centers, Financial or Legal Centers, Recovery and Resiliency Centers and more.
- Check out the interactive tools: Screenings for symptoms, Moving Through Depression Personal Empowerment Program, Suicide Prevention Education Program, Eldercare Resource Finder, online Create a Will program, online Advanced Care Directive (Living Will) and more!

How do I use Liveandworkwell.com?

Go to www.liveandworkwell.com and create a personal login (to be able to use all of your online resources) or enter anonymously with your access code. You can get your organization’s access code from your HR department or use the search tool located just above the access code box. Live and Work Well!



Getting Help for Alcohol and Other Drug Problems

Each year, millions of people suffer from alcohol and other drug use.¹² These problems hurt children and adults. Alcohol and other drugs cause health, work and school problems. Stopping alcohol and other drug use can lead to a better life. Help for you or a loved one can start with talking with a doctor, nurse, or counselor.

If your doctor, nurse or counselor says you have an alcohol or other drug problem:

- Start getting help right away.
- Go to at least four visits with an alcohol or drug counselor or outpatient program in the first month.^{13, 14}
- Add a self-help group like AA (www.aa.org), Narcotics Anonymous (www.na.org) or SMART Recovery (www.smartrecovery.org) to your alcohol or drug recovery or treatment plan.

If you have a loved one with alcohol or other drug problems, you may need support. Groups like Al-Anon, Alateen (www.al-anon.alateen.org), and Nar-Anon (www.nar-anon.org) can help.

The website, www.samhsa.gov, offers many free tips and tools to help with alcohol and other drug problems. It’s offered by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Do you want to learn more? Please visit www.liveandworkwell.com for more information. Sign up for access, at no added cost. Then click on the “BeWell Health & Well-Being” tab on your screen. A list will pop up. Click on the “Addictions” header and then choose “Alcoholism” or “Drug Use” for more information on these topics.

Do you need help finding a counselor or program? Call us using the mental health services number on your health insurance card.

¹² Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. (2010). Results from the 2009 National Survey on Drug Use and Health: Volume I. Summary of National Findings (Office of Applied Studies, NSDUH Series H-38A, HHS Publication No. SMA 10-4856 Findings). Rockville, MD.

¹³ American Psychiatric Association, Treatment of Patients With Substance Use Disorders, Second Edition

¹⁴ Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (www.samhsa.gov)

Living with Bipolar Disorder

If you have bipolar disorder, you know how hard the mood swings can be. One minute you feel “on top of the world” and able to do anything, but you feel down and worthless later.

The following tips may help you live with bipolar disorder (BD):

- Learn all you can about your illness and share what you learn with your friends and family.
- Follow a steady sleep pattern.
- Set up and follow daily routines.
- Do not use alcohol or illicit drugs.
- Take your medicine as directed by your doctor or nurse.
- Talk to your clinician about “early warning signs” and how to look for them.
- Keep track of your moods.

- Listen to feedback from others.
- Know what stressors put you at risk for return of symptoms.
- Try to reduce your stress at work.
- Seek support from family and friends.¹⁵

Medical experts tell people taking medicine for BD to stay on it for at least six months.¹⁶ Talk therapy and recovery programs may also help.¹⁶

Talk with your doctor or nurse about how long to take your medicine and how to not miss any doses. Talk to your doctor or nurse about any problems that you think are caused by your medicine.

For more information, visit www.liveandworkwell.com and login. Then click on the “BeWell Health & Well-Being” tab on your screen. A list will pop up. Click on “Bipolar Disorder”. You can call us

for copies of bipolar disorder tips and to get services. Use the Mental Health Services phone number on your health insurance card.

The Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance offers helpful tips for living with BD. You can also find local support groups. Visit www.dbsalliance.org and select “Find a Support Group Near You.”

If you don’t have access to the Web, or need assistance with finding help, call us using the mental health services number on your health insurance card.

¹⁵ National Institutes of Health, Bipolar Disorder, Pub. #09-3679

¹⁶ American Psychiatric Association. Treatment of Patients with Bipolar Disorder, 2nd Edition, Nov. 2005

Your Member Rights and Responsibilities

You have the right to:

- Receive information about OptumHealth Behavioral Solutions of California and our network
- Be treated with dignity and respect
- Privacy and your information is confidential to the fullest extent permitted by law
- Reasonable access to care regardless of: race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, age, or disability
- Be part of decisions about your treatment plan
- Discuss treatment options regardless of cost or benefit coverage
- Have family help make your treatment plan
- Be told of your rights in a language you understand
- Voice complaints or appeals about OHBS-CA or the services OHBS-CA provides

- Make recommendations to us about our rights and responsibilities policy

You have the responsibility to:

- Give information, to the extent possible, to your clinician and managed care company, to help them provide care
- Follow the treatment plan you agreed to
- Talk about your concerns
- Be part of making your goals

You can call the toll-free mental health number on your member card or in your benefit booklet to ask for a paper copy of your rights and responsibilities. You can also ask your clinician to get you a copy from www.providerexpress.com.

The California Language Assistance Program

OptumHealth Behavioral Solutions of California serve members from many cultures. These members may speak a language other than English. We want to be sure that language is not a reason to not get care.

For members who speak and read a language other than English, OptumHealth Behavioral Solutions of California offers language assistance at no cost to the member. OptumHealth Behavioral Solutions of California have interpreters for members. We can also translate certain documents in writing.

If your preferred language is not English, call us at the mental health services phone number on your health insurance card to tell us your preferred language. If you have already given us this information, you don't need to contact us again.

For help with language at any time, you may use the mental health services phone number on your health insurance card.

OptumHealth Behavioral Solutions of California Public Policy Committee

OptumHealth Behavioral Solutions of California leads a Public Policy Committee. In California, this Committee is required by law. Members can bring their comments about OptumHealth Behavioral Solutions of California to this Committee. Mental health specialists from OptumHealth Behavioral Solutions of California are also on this Committee.

The Committee talks about what your mental health plan does. You are able to give ideas and suggestions about the services you get.

The Committee meets every three months. If you would like to be on this Committee, please call OptumHealth Behavioral Solutions of California. You may talk to Eileen Innecken, Sr. Director of Regulatory Affairs and Compliance, at 619-641-6907.

Get an Early Start on Mental Health

We offer prevention programs for three common problems:

- Depression
- Alcohol and drug use and addiction
- Attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder

Each program has:

- a screening you can take
- information about the problem
- self-help guides and tools

You can learn how to use the program on our website. You may also receive information by mail.

If you receive one of our mailings, we hope you find it useful. If you do not want to receive any more information by mail, just call the telephone number listed in the mailing.

To learn more:

- Visit <http://prevention.liveandworkwell.com>
- Call the toll-free mental health services number on your health insurance card. You can also call us for a paper copy of the information.
- Ask your mental health specialist to get information for you on www.providerexpress.com.



Quality at the Core

We review our quality improvement (QI) program each year. We set goals for service and care. We can give you a summary of our progress in meeting our goals. You can get a copy of our QI program description. Call us to get a paper copy. Use the mental health services phone number on your member card or in your benefit booklet.

About Your Privacy and Confidentiality

We protect your privacy to the extent required by law. You can get a paper copy of our rules on how we collect, use and share your health information. Call the mental health services number on your health insurance card or in your benefit booklet.

Have You Moved?

To make sure you continue to receive mail from OptumHealth Behavioral Solutions of California, tell your employer that you have moved. Your employer will send OptumHealth Behavioral Solutions of California

your new mailing address.

ID Cards for Mental Health Services

By California law, health plans and insurers must issue an identification (ID) card to each member. The information on the ID card must tell the member how to access mental health benefits. The ID card is issued to members upon enrollment or whenever there is a change in the member's coverage.

OptumHealth Behavioral Solutions of California provides mental health services to members of certain medical health plans. It is the responsibility of the member's medical health plan to issue the cards. The information on the ID card includes at least 1) the name of the medical health plan; 2) the member's ID number; 3) a toll-free telephone number where members or providers may call for assistance with mental health services; and 4) the health plan's Internet website address.

How We Make Decisions About Benefit Coverage

All our staff follow strict rules when they decide about approval of benefits. Decisions are based on what your benefits cover and your medical need. We do not reward staff or healthcare providers for saying "no" to care or service. We do not give financial rewards to our staff or healthcare providers to make decisions that result in less care or service than is needed.

How to Appeal a Decision

You can appeal if you are not pleased with a decision we make about your care or benefits. The notice that you get about our decision tells you how to appeal. You can also call us to learn how to file an appeal.

You may also have the right to an independent medical review (IMR) by the Department of Managed Health Care (DMHC). This right is for certain final decisions made by us. If your IMR request is eligible, it will be reviewed by the DMHC. We will do what the DMHC decides. We will carry out its instructions.

If you are not sure if your appeal can go to IMR, or if you have questions about appeals, please call us. Call the toll-free mental health services number on your health insurance card or in your benefit booklet.



Recovery is Real

There was a time in the not too distant past when receiving a mental health diagnosis seemed equal to a death sentence. “My life is over”, some of us cried, “I will never have a meaningful job, a family, or any of the things that make life enjoyable.”

Pat Deegan talks about the days when she was told by mental health professionals that the best she could look forward to was a job inside the state hospital cleaning the bathrooms.

Well those days are over.

Pat has her Ph.D., and frequently consults with mental health authorities for countries like New Zealand, England, Scotland and Australia. She owns her own company and has won many awards for her innovations. Learn more about Pat <https://www.patdeegan.com>.

Recovery is real.

The American Psychiatric Association, the American Psychological Association, the National Institute of Mental Health and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Administration of the United States government now all agree: recovery is a reality. And recovery is defined as “A process of change through which individuals improve their health and wellness, live a self-directed life, and strive to reach their full potential.”¹⁷

So the good news is that anyone living with a mental health diagnosis can live a full and meaningful life. It may not occur quickly. It may not be simple. But it can happen.

People living with mental health issues, who are now in recovery, often share wisdom about the things that helped them move toward wellness. A few pieces of wisdom often shared include:

- Don’t just take a pill and wait for something to happen. Yes, medication can make a huge difference in managing symptoms. But you also have to “work your wellness.” Liveandworkwell.com has a range of self-paced recovery programs in the areas of depression and substance-use disorders, and has links to great online tools like symptom trackers, wellness recovery plans (WRAP), smart phone apps, and other things that you can use to work your wellness. Taking a pill and sitting back, expecting it to work magically like an aspirin is likely to fail. You need to work your wellness.
- Don’t stop taking your pill(s) without working with your doctor. Medicines may take up to 6-8 weeks for you to benefit from the full results. Medicines help reduce the intensity of symptoms, but they do not “cure” you of something like Bipolar Disorder or Schizophrenia. So not taking your medicine anymore “because you feel better” is a recipe for major problems. If the medicines have uncomfortable side effects or if you want to reduce the medicines you are taking, you need to work in close partnership with your doctor.

- Add support. Mental health issues can be isolating. People do not necessarily understand what you are experiencing. There are thousands of online and face-to-face groups where you can meet people who have also “been there.” You can learn from others, feel less alone and share your own wisdom. You can find links to many popular groups on liveandworkwell.com. It’s tempting to skip this step. However, research shows engagement in peer support, decreases hospitalization, increases treatment adherence, increase engagement in treatment, and decreases social isolation — all good things when moving toward recovery.

It’s okay to have feelings about living with a mental health condition, but do not let those feelings cause you to give up on your plans to “live a self-directed life, and strive to reach (your) full potential.” Recovery is a reality. Working your wellness, partnering with your doctor on medication decisions, and adding social support to the equation can help you move toward recovery more quickly.

For more about recovery, visit www.liveandworkwell.com and login. Then click on the “BeWell Health & Well-Being” tab on your screen. A list will pop up. Click on “Recovery & Resiliency.”

¹⁷ <http://www.samhsa.gov/newsroom/advisories/1112223420.aspx>

How to Contact Us

Our offices are open Monday through Friday. Our hours are from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., except on holidays. You can call the toll-free number on your insurance card to learn about your benefits or get approval for care. OptumHealth Behavioral Solutions of California offers a no added cost language assistance for members who speak a language other than English. Our offices have toll-free numbers for members with hearing impairments. You can also get help with services or ask questions. A Care Advocate can answer your questions about services and our decisions. Our staff will tell you their name, title, and where they work.

If you have an emergency or urgent health concern, seek immediate attention or call 9-1-1. You can always contact one of our Care Advocates 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. You can even speak to a Care Advocate on weekends and holidays. To call us, use the toll-free mental health services number on your health insurance card or in your benefit booklet.

Want More Info?

- OptumHealth Behavioral Solutions of California
www.liveandworkwell.com
Call the mental health services number on your health insurance card
- The National Institute of Mental Health
www.nimh.nih.gov
866-615-6464 or 866.415.8051
Telecommunications Device for Deaf (TDD)
- National Mental Health Information Center
www.samhsa.gov
877-726-4727 or 800-487-4889
Telecommunications Device for Deaf (TDD)
- Department of Managed Health Care Help Center
www.dmhc.ca.gov
888-466-2219 or 1-877-688-9891
Telecommunications Device for Deaf (TDD)

Help for Recovery from Mental Illness

- Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance
www.dbsalliance.org
800-826-3632
- National Alliance on Mental Illness
www.nami.org
800-950-6264
- Mental Health America
www.mentalhealthamerica.net
800-969-6642

Help for Recovery from Alcohol or Other Drug Abuse

- Alcoholics Anonymous
www.aa.org
(800) 870-3795
- Narcotics Anonymous
www.na.org
(800) 992-0401
- Al-Anon and Alateen
www.al-anon.alateen.org
888-425-2666
- SMART Recovery
www.smartrecovery.org
866-951-5357

* OptumHealth Behavioral Solutions of California does not recommend or endorse any treatment, medications, group, organization, entity, or type of clinician, specific or otherwise. Except for liveandworkwell.com and providerexpress.com sites identified herein, no other site referenced herein is an affiliate of OptumHealth Behavioral Solutions of California. The information featured in this newsletter is not meant to provide medical advice or other health services. It is not meant to replace professional advice or imply coverage of specific clinical services or products. The information is for educational purposes only and is not a substitute for professional health care. Consult your health care professional concerning your specific health needs, treatment or medications. Certain treatments may not be covered in some benefit plans. Check your health plan regarding your coverage of services.