

Getting Your Loved One into Treatment A Step-by-Step Plan

At the NAMI-CM Education Meeting on March 13, psychiatrist Mark Komrad took us through his very helpful book, *You Need Help!* Here are the basics:

Is there a mental health problem? The key thing to watch for is a “change from baseline” problems functioning at work, school, or home.

Your Goal: getting an evaluation is the first and hardest step. Offer to make the appointment, pay or pre-pay, and/or go along, even just to sit in the waiting room.

Approaching the subject:

- Prepare the way; designate a special time in advance.
- Find a place that is emotionally neutral.
- If feeling unsafe, find a semi-public place.
- Ask to be listened to and taken seriously.
- Do not do by mail, email, or text—must be in person.

Tips for success:

- Acknowledge that this is uncomfortable.
- State the importance of preserving your relationship.
- Assure them of your love and concern.
- Share your own feelings of love, fear, helplessness.
- Describe specific thoughts, feelings, behaviors that concern you.
- Avoid words like crazy, sick, abnormal.
- Don't suggest a specific diagnosis.
- Be prepared to tolerate anger without getting defensive.
- Ask for an evaluation as a gift to you or children.
- If you have a history, share your own treatment experience.

Remember, this may take some time and a few tries.

Be sure you're not enabling. It is often mistaken for helping.

For much more information, *You Need Help! A Step-by-Step Plan to Convince a Loved One to Get Counseling* is available at www.komradmd.com or Amazon.

