

## The Family Guidelines

**GO SLOW** Recovery takes time. Rest is important. Things will get better in their own time.

**KEEP IT COOL** Enthusiasm is normal, but keep it toned down. Disagreements are normal but keep these toned down too.

**KEEP IT WARM** Family bonds are meaningful and important. Stay connected. Use kind words, nurturing, respectful, supportive and loving but not detached.

**GIVE EACH OTHER SPACE** Time out is important for everyone. It's okay to reach out. It's okay to say "no". Allow your relative to withdraw when they need to, and learn to recognize the behaviors that signal this need.

**SET LIMITS** Everyone needs to know what the rules are. A few good rules keep things clear.

**IGNORE WHAT YOU CAN'T CHANGE** Let some things slide, but don't ignore violence.

**KEEP IT SIMPLE** Say what you have to say clearly, calmly and positively.

**FOLLOW THE TREATMENT PLAN** This is an action plan for treating the illness. If medication is part of the treatment, family psychoeducation and/or other interventions, then follow this plan to aid in recovery.

**CARRY ON BUSINESS AS USUAL** Re-establish family routines as quickly as possible. Stay in touch with family and friends.

**TAKE CARE OF YOU** Families need to take care of themselves, too. It's difficult to care for someone else if you are not taking good care of yourself. It's important to "recharge" one's own battery.

**AVOID STREET DRUGS AND ALCOHOL** They make symptoms worse, can cause relapse and prevent recovery.

**PICK UP ON EARLY WARNING SIGNS** Note changes. Develop a list of early warning signs that may indicate your relative is relapsing. Discuss with your family member and their provider in order to head off a relapse.

**SOLVE PROBLEMS STEP BY STEP** Follow a sequential process to resolve concerns.

**LOWER EXPECTATIONS TEMPORARILY** Use a personal yardstick to compare last month to this month instead of last year to this year.