

Client Guidelines for Advance Directives for Mental Health Care

1. What is an Advance Directive for Mental Health Care?

An Advance Directive is a written document that expresses your preferences about mental health treatment.

2. What are the advantages of having an Advance Directive for Mental Health Care?

An Advance Directive for Mental Health Care makes your treatment preferences known. An Advance Directive will improve communication between you and your psychiatrist and other treatment providers.

3. Why would I need to prepare an Advance Directive for Mental Health Care?

You would prepare an Advance Directive for Mental Health Care if you are concerned there might be a time when your illness may interfere with your ability to understand treatment options or to communicate your preferences for different treatment options. The Advance Directive for Mental Health Care states your preferences and can also be used to name a friend or family member to make treatment decisions for you when you are incapable of doing so.

4. Is my Advance Directive a legal document?

Yes. The New Jersey Advance Directives for Mental Health Care Act became law on March 22, 2006. The New Jersey Division of Mental Health Services also requires that mental health providers help clients understand the law and provide resources if they are interested in preparing an Advance Directive.

5. What should I do if I want more information or want to prepare an Advance Directive?

You can ask your clinician for a copy of the Advance Directive form from the New Jersey Division of Mental Health Services. The clinician can help you to understand and complete the forms. Your clinician cannot witness your signature on the form so you will need to have it witnessed by someone other than your treatment providers.

6. How do I register my Advance Directive?

You can contact the Division of Mental Health Services for a username and password which is limited only to you and your mental health care representative. They can be reached at (609) 777-0700.

7. Who has access to my Advance Directive through the registry?

Only you, the mental health care representative whom you name in the Advance Directive and a mental health care provider are allowed to see the registry.

8. Who is authorized to have access to the registry?

Only Division of Mental Health staff, declarants, licensed independent practitioners and mental health screeners certified by the Division are permitted access to the registry. They are required to keep all information provided CONFIDENTIAL.

<https://www.mhanj.org/psychiatricadvancedirectives/>