



# **For the Lifespan: The Caregiver Guide**

## **Module 6**

### **Caring for Those with Depression, Anxiety, Stress, and Other Mental Health Issues**

#### **Leader Guide**

# **Module 6**

## **Caring for Those with Depression, Anxiety, Stress, and Other Mental Health Issues**

### **PURPOSE**

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Module 6 will provide caregivers of a person who has depression, anxiety, stress, or other mental health issues with more information and resources. In this module we will discuss facts about mental illness, emotional reactions that are common among family members, treatment options, and information about local programs that are available to help family members and persons with mental health issues.

### **OBJECTIVES**

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**After completing this module, participants will be able to:**

- List basic facts about mental illness and recovery.
- Identify stages of emotional reactions among family members.
- Identify community resources that provide support to families, caregivers, and individuals with mental illness.
- Describe a specific action that you will take in the following week to take care of yourself.

## SLIDE 1

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**UCare**  
**For the Lifespan: The Caregiver Guide**  
**Module 6**  
**Caring for Those with Depression, Anxiety,**  
**Stress, and Other Mental Health Issues**

### INTRODUCE

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Introduce yourself and ask each person in the room to do the same and explain their roles.

### NOTE

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Introductions are an excellent time to set the tone of the session. Be relaxed and focused. Remember names or use name tags.

### TELL

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The Participant Guide is yours to take home. There is room to write on the Guide during the session.

### ASK

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What would you like to get out of the session today?

## SLIDE 2

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### **Objectives**

After completing this module, participants will be able to:

- List basic facts about mental illness and recovery.
- Identify stages of emotional reactions among family members.
- Identify community resources that provide support to families, caregivers, and individuals with mental illness.

- Describe a specific action that you will take in the following week to take care of yourself.

## NOTE

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Refer to additional objectives requested by participants.

If participants request topics that are covered in other UCare modules, tell them they can request additional training. Point to the list of UCare modules at the end of the Participant Guide so they can see the other topics covered.

## TELL

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In this workshop we will be giving examples of our experiences that may be difficult for some. Remember to respect the confidentiality of group members. What is shared among the group should not leave the room.

Module 6 will provide caregivers of a care recipient who has depression, anxiety, stress, or other mental health issues with more information and resources. In this module we will discuss facts about mental illness, emotional reactions that are common among family members, treatment options, and information about local programs that are available to help.

## ASK

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How would you define mental illness?

## NOTE

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Write ideas on a white board or flip chart.

## SLIDE 3

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### **Mental Illness**

- Mental illness is a medical condition that disrupts a person's thinking, feeling, mood, ability to relate to others, and/or daily functioning. These medical conditions typically result in a diminished capacity for coping with the ordinary demands of life.

### TELL

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Mental illness is a medical condition that disrupts a person's thinking, feeling, mood, ability to relate to others, and/or daily functioning. These medical conditions typically result in a diminished capacity for coping with the ordinary demands of life.

### TELL

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There are several important points about mental illness to remember.

## SLIDE 4

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### **Facts about Mental Illness**

- Mental illnesses cannot be overcome through will power and are not related to a person's character or intelligence.
- Mental illnesses can strike individuals in the prime of their lives, often during adolescence and young adulthood.
- All ages are susceptible, but the young and the old are especially vulnerable.
- Without treatment, the consequences of mental illness for the individual and society include: unnecessary

disability, unemployment, substance abuse,  
homelessness, inappropriate incarceration, and suicide.

- The economic cost of untreated mental illness is more than \$100 billion each year in the United States.

— *(Adapted from the National Alliance on Mental  
Illness)*

## NOTE

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Mental illness is a difficult topic. Remind the participants that each situation is unique and challenging.

## TELL

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Mental illness is a broad term used to describe many conditions including mood and anxiety disorders, personality disorders, and psychotic disorders such as schizophrenia. These illnesses can affect every part of a person's life including work, relationships, and leisure. It can not be overcome through will power and is not related to character or intelligence. Everyone is susceptible, but the young and old are especially vulnerable. Untreated mental illness costs \$100 billion annually.

## ASK

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There are many myths about mental illness. What are some of the myths that you have heard?

## TELL

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It is best to find out the facts.

Remember that people with mental illness are not defined by their illness. They still have likes, dislikes, opinions, talents, and skills. Their rights and individuality need to be respected.

There are several strategies that can help you understand the illness. Remember that mental illness is treatable.

## SLIDE 5

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### **Feelings and Stages of Reactions**

#### **Common Feelings:**

- Guilt/Shame
- Fear
- Anger/Frustration
- Sadness

#### **Stages of Reactions:**

- Stage 1: Being in Crisis
- Stage 2: Learning to Cope
- Stage 3: Moving Toward Acceptance

## ASK

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How do you feel about caring for someone with mental illness?  
Or how do caregivers for individuals with mental illness often feel?

## TELL

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Caring for someone with a mental illness is a complex and demanding role, and it is normal to experience a range of feelings about it. Initially, you may experience disbelief, ("This can't be happening"). Later, you may develop seemingly conflicting feelings of anger, shame, and love. It's important to know this is normal, and that no feelings are right or wrong. You may move from being in crisis to coping to accepting.

## ASK

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How is caring for someone with mental illness similar to the grieving process? Different than the grieving process?

## TELL

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The following is an article on the role of caregivers for people with mental illness from the healthyplace.com website <http://www.healthyplace.com/parenting/stress/role-of-caregiver-for-people-with-mental-illness>. We will cover and discuss most of the information.

## SLIDE 6

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### **Understanding the Illness**

- What are the characteristics of the illness?
- Talk to physicians and mental health professionals.
- Keep a diary of problems or symptoms.
- What are the warning signs of a relapse?

## TELL

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Talk to mental health professionals and physicians. Keep a diary of problems or symptoms. If you search the internet for information, use well-respected and researched sites such as the National Alliance for Mental Illness, or NAMI, and the National Institute of Mental Health, or NIMH.

## ASK

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Why is it important to talk with knowledgeable professionals?  
What does “relapse” mean? Why is that important to know?



## SLIDE 7

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### **What are Treatment Options?**

- Medication
- Cognitive Behavioral Therapy
- Counseling
- Group Therapy
- Self-Help Approaches
- Stress Management
- National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) website:  
[www.nimh.nih.gov](http://www.nimh.nih.gov)
- National Alliance for Mental Illness (NAMI) website:  
[www.nami.org](http://www.nami.org)

## TELL/DISCUSS

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This slide lists different treatment options. Remember that multiple treatment options may be useful. Treatment options (and medication) may need to be changed over time. Which ones have you found useful? Write down your questions and take them with you when you see a medical professional so you can collect the information you need.

NIMH and NAMI have helpful information on their websites about symptoms and treatment.

## SLIDE 8

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### **Medications and Side Effects**

- Ask a doctor or pharmacist for help.
- Write down the medicine's name; what it is for; how long it needs to be taken; what happens if a dose is missed; what to do if side effects arise; how it could interfere with

other medications including over-the-counter and herbal supplements; how it could affect any other illnesses; what should be avoided; and the cheapest brand.

## TELL

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Write down the medicine's name; what it is for; how long it needs to be taken; what happens if a dose is missed; what to do if side effects arise; how it could interfere with other medications including over-the-counter and herbal supplements; how it could affect any other illnesses; what should be avoided; and the cheapest brand. Discuss all of the medications, possible side effects, and other information with a doctor or pharmacist.

## SLIDE 9

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### **Understanding the Mental Health System**

- Talk to your primary care doctor for a referral to a mental health professional (if the care recipient doesn't have one).
- Know your insurance options for treatment.
- Find out what the county mental health system offers.
- Identify local professional and community support services.

## TELL

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Find out what insurance options you have, what the county mental health system offers, and what other support services are available. You may have already taken these steps. Keep a list of phone numbers handy, including the crisis team, doctor or psychiatrist, hospital, support groups, etc.

## SLIDE 10

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### **Fostering Communication**

- Try to have an open posture, without crossing your arms, pointing, putting your hands on your hips, or waving, which may appear aggressive or confrontational.
- Try not to raise or lower your voice.
- Don't interrupt or finish sentences.
- Don't argue with any delusions, change the subject.
- Share feelings in a non-confrontational way.

## TELL/ASK

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The way you communicate can make a big difference, even though it can be challenging at times. This slide has some tips to improve open communication. It helps to stay calm and share your feelings in a non-confrontational way. It may also help to say, "Tell me how you would like to respond." Do you have any other suggestions?

## SLIDE 11

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### **Problem Behaviors**

- A person with mental illness is still responsible for his or her actions.
- You might need to agree on what is and is not acceptable behavior.
- Discuss with a professional which behaviors to expect and which need to be accepted.
- Discuss the situation. Work together on a solution. If it is not working, talk to a doctor, manager, or counselor about what to do.

## TELL

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Persons with mental illness are still responsible for their actions. You might need to agree on what is and is not acceptable behavior, for example, you may agree that your friend/relative can smoke cigarettes in the home, but not use illegal drugs. It may help to discuss with a mental health professional what possible behaviors to expect and which need to be accepted as part of the illness. Some behavior can be harmful or distressing either to the person, your relationship, or others. You may need to decide how to approach these issues. Be aware of your own personal boundaries and discuss the situation with your friend or relative. Work together on a solution. If the agreed solution is not working, talk to a doctor, case manager, or counselor about what you can do.

## SLIDE 12

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### **Empower the Person**

- Relate to the person as an individual, not just in terms of the illness.
- Include the person in decisions about treatment, if possible.
- Recognize the difficulty of the situation.
- Acknowledge the person's strength and abilities to face the situation to minimize feelings of powerlessness.

## TELL

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Make any decisions about treatment with the person, if at all possible. Acknowledge the person's strength and abilities to minimize their feelings of powerlessness and better deal with the situation.

## TELL

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Caring for someone with mental illness may be additionally challenging because of the stigma around mental illness. You may need to educate others about mental illness.

It is easy for your own needs to get lost when you are caring for someone with mental health challenges. It is critical that you take care of yourself!

## ASK

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Why is it so difficult to take care of your own needs?

## TELL

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We are going to look at a Self-Care Checklist and I would like you to comment on strategies that you think would be helpful.

## SLIDE 13

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### **Self-Care Checklist**

- Do I have someone I trust to talk to about my experience?
- Do I get enough breaks from caring?
- Have I got regular times for relaxation?
- Am I getting regular exercise?
- Am I eating regular nutritious meals?
- Do I get enough sleep?

## ASK

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Of the items on the Checklist, which do you think are the two most important ones for a caregiver? Why?

Now we are going to talk about how you might take better care of yourself.

## SLIDE 14

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### **Taking Care of Yourself**

- Taking Breaks – You must recognize your limits. You need a break sometimes.
- Health – Try to get regular exercise, get enough sleep, reduce stress, keep your sense of humor, and eat a healthy diet.
- Relax – Listen to music you enjoy, do yoga, meditate, or read.

## SLIDE 15

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### **Support**

- Find someone who is non-judgmental that you can talk to about what is really going on.
- Sharing experiences can give you comfort and strength. Do NOT become isolated.
- Local support groups are often available.
  - Check with NAMI Utah.
  - Local Center for Independent Living.
  - 211.

## ASK

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It will be helpful if you have a support system while you are providing care for someone else. It is very important that you don't become isolated. You might have someone you can talk to that is non-judgmental. Others have found that support groups are very helpful. Check with NAMI Utah, your local Center for Independent Living, or 211.

## SLIDE 16

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### **Planning**

- Makes things more manageable.
- Figure out a day-to-day routine.
  - It helps to add structure, such as regular meal-times.
  - Introduce gradual changes.
  - Include time for yourself.
  - Include the person.

## SLIDE 17

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### **Planning Ahead**

- Make sure that you have a plan of action in case of an emergency.
- Keep an up-to-date list of medications.
- Find someone who can step in on short notice.
- Note behavior/health changes and get assistance fast.

## ASK

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Have a written plan of action in case of emergencies, including a list of medications and a person(s) you can call to step in. Get help as soon as possible if a person's health or behavior deteriorates.

## SLIDE 18

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### **Serious Concerns**

- If health or behavior deteriorates, get help as soon as possible. Symptoms to watch for include:
  - hallucinations,
  - withdrawal,

- severe mood swings,
- religious obsessions,
- delusions, and
- excessive alcohol and drug use.

## TELL

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Symptoms to watch for include hallucinations, withdrawal, severe mood swings, religious obsessions, delusions, and excessive alcohol and drug use.

## SLIDE 19

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### **Suicide**

- Take talking about suicide, or signs of suicidal behavior seriously. Ask the person directly if they are suicidal. Say you want to get help and do it immediately. Signs:
- Talking about suicide.
- Feeling hopeless or worthless.
- Giving away belongings.
- Risk taking.
- Withdrawing.
- Saying goodbye and tying up affairs.
- Suddenly feeling happy or at peace.

## ASK

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At times your friend, relative, or care recipient may feel suicidal. Be aware of the warning signs of suicide which include talking about suicide, feeling hopeless and/or worthless, giving away personal belongings, risk taking, withdrawing, tying up affairs and saying goodbye, or suddenly feeling happy or at peace. Take suicide thoughts and behavior seriously: ask the person directly



if he or she is suicidal. Explain that you want to help. Get help for yourself.

## SLIDE 20

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### **Recovery**

- The best treatments for serious mental illnesses today are highly effective.
- Yet, treatment is not a “cure” and symptoms can come and go in cycles.
- Between 70 and 90% of individuals have significant reduction of symptoms and improved quality of life with a combination of medication and psychosocial treatment and supports.
- Recovery may be accelerated with early treatment and protect the brain from harm.

## TELL

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The best treatments are highly effective for most individuals, but symptoms can still come and go. Many individuals with mental illness are on several medications and may also be on medications for other health conditions (heart problems, arthritis, diabetes, asthma, etc.). Knowing potential drug interactions and reviewing them with a pharmacist or doctor is critical. Recovery may be accelerated with early treatment and protect the brain from harm. Next we will discuss community resources. If you are aware of any other good ones, please let us know.

## SLIDE 21

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### **Community Resources - NAMI**

- Community resources provide support to families and individuals with mental illness.
- NAMI has a free 10-week course for consumers, a 3-6 week Basics Education Class, and a 12-week Family-to-Family Education Program.
- NAMI also offers support groups and more.
- [www.Namiut.org](http://www.Namiut.org) or 801-323-9900.

## TELL

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There are some very good community resources that can help your family to find the information you need. We will briefly review several. More are listed in your Participant Guide. The first one is NAMI. Has anyone here contacted them or taken one of their classes?

## SLIDE 22

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### **Mental Health America**

- Mental Health America is a non-profit dedicated to helping all people live healthier lives, with 240 affiliates nationwide. Their website provides information on mental health.
- 800-969-6642 or 1-800-273-8255.
- [www.mentalhealthamerica.net/go/home](http://www.mentalhealthamerica.net/go/home).

## SLIDE 23

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### **National Institute of Mental Health**

- The NIMH works to improve mental health through biomedical research on mind, brain, and behavior. Their website offers extensive information on mental health.
- Website: [www.nimh.nih.gov](http://www.nimh.nih.gov).
- E-mail address: [nimhinfo@nih.gov](mailto:nimhinfo@nih.gov).
- Phone: 1-866-615-6464 (toll-free).

## SLIDE 24

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### **SAMHSA**

- Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.
- SAMHSA is within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, and helps people with mental health and substance use disorders, supports their families, prevents costly behavioral health problems, and promotes better health.
- Helpline: 800-662-4357, Phone: 1-877-726-4727, Publications: 1-877-726-4727.
- <http://www.samhsa.gov/prevention>.

## SLIDE 25

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### **Summary**

- Caring for someone with a mental illness can be difficult and frustrating, but it can also be rewarding.
- Don't get discouraged or give up.
- Try the tips mentioned in this training.
- Use all the resources available to you.
- Connect with professionals and support groups.

- Don't forget to care for yourself.

## TELL

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Caring for someone with a mental illness may be difficult and frustrating but may also be rewarding. Don't get discouraged. Use all the resources available and connect with professionals and support groups. Don't forget to care for yourself!

## SLIDE 26

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### **Take a Break – Today I Will:**

- Take a walk outdoors or go to the gym
- Read or watch something I like
- Write in a journal or to friends or family
- Take a hot bath or shower
- Read the comics or a funny book
- Call a friend or family member
- Meditate or pray
- Use respite services
- Talk to a friend, family, or therapist
- Have lunch with friends or family

## TELL/ASK

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It's important that you take breaks when you can! This slide lists different simple ways you can take a break. Are there any others you can think of?

## SLIDE 27

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### **Things to Remember**

- Remember to take good care of yourself by staying positive, exercising regularly, getting enough rest, eating

nutritiously, using good body mechanics, keeping a sense of humor, relaxing and doing some things you enjoy when you can.

- Always believe in yourself and your abilities.
- Remember that you have the strength, courage, compassion, and wisdom to succeed.
- Thanks for your participation.

## **TELL**

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Remember to always take care of yourself! Make sure you exercise, get enough sleep, eat healthy, laugh, and do the things you enjoy when you can. Believe in your abilities! You can do this! You have the strength, courage, compassion, and wisdom to succeed! I hope this training has been helpful! Thanks for being a great audience!

## **UCARE MODULE TOPICS**

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1. Providing Personal Care
2. Dementia and Memory Loss
3. A) Caring for Older Adults with Chronic Health Issues
3. B) Caring for Children with Special Health Care Needs
4. The Accessible Home
5. Taking Care of the Caregiver
6. Caring for those with Depression, Anxiety, Stress, or Mental Health Issues
7. Community Supports for Remaining at Home
8. Working Effectively with In-Home Service Providers
9. Keeping Your Home and the Person You Care for Safe
10. Eating Healthy for Life
11. Assistive Devices: Tools to Help You
12. Legal and Financial Matters: What You Need to Know

For more information, please visit: <http://www.ucare.utah.gov>

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For more information, please visit: <http://www.ucare.utah.gov>,  
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