

Psychiatric Advance Directives

Writing a psychiatric advance directive is the process of deciding your own future psychiatric health care. It makes sure your wishes are carried out if you cannot speak for yourself.

Psychiatric advance directives give you choice and control in your treatment over matters you choose to address.

Why are psychiatric advance directives important?

A psychiatric advance directive is a chance to develop an effective crisis plan. You can discuss the plan with family and friends before a crisis starts. It will help you answer questions including:

- What do you want the goals of your care to be?
- What kinds of treatments do you want to keep on with or to stop?
- Who will make decisions for you?
- How can you help them make these decisions?

When should you complete advance directives?

The best time to make an advance directive is while you are of sound mind and not worried about a health crisis.

Communicating your wishes using an psychiatric advanced directive

Completing the legal papers is another important step in advance care planning. The papers name the person who will speak for you and who can express your psychiatric health care wishes. Your healthcare provider can give you the forms you need.

When the papers are complete

Keep a copy of your psychiatric advance directive for your personal records. Make several copies and give them to:

- Your doctor or healthcare providers
- The person or persons you have named as your agent (decision-maker)