



Mental Health Advance Directives

An Important Tool for Empowerment and Communication

What does a mental health advance directive mean for you?

A mental health advance directive is a legal document you can complete to express your needs and preferences for mental health treatment in case you are unable to make or communicate your decisions in the future. If you are living with a serious mental illness (bipolar disorder, schizophrenia, etc.), consider completing a mental health advance directive during a period of wellness or recovery. You can communicate what types of treatment you do or do not want and appoint an individual (health care agent) to assist with your health care decisions.

Benefits of having a mental health advance directive



Provides clear instructions about medication and treatment to guide decision making



Improves communication between your medical, support, and treatment networks



May help you avoid unwanted treatment or admission to a hospital



Enhances your recovery



Your mental health advance directive can include the following:

- ✓ Preferred hospital(s) and service provider(s)
- ✓ Person(s) you have authorized to make health decisions and with whom information may be shared or not shared
- ✓ Any allergies, adverse reactions, and other health issues
- ✓ Specific treatment preferences
- ✓ Desired visitors

How to get started

Talk to your care team (psychiatrists, therapists, case workers, etc.) – they can help you complete a mental health advance directive. **You and two witnesses will need to sign the document, which is valid until you make changes or revoke it.**



For more information visit: health.maryland.gov/bha/Pages/Mental-Health-Advance-Directives.aspx